

## TEACHING CHILDREN IN FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

While there are many different ways to organize your teaching time, we suggest including the following:

- **Singing Time (10-15 minutes)**—often this time can be done as an entire fellowship group, in which the children sing songs with the adults.
- **Memory Verse Time (10-15 minutes)**—use the IPEAR method listed below to teach children the HeartGuard verse of the week.
- **Lesson Time (15-25 minutes)**—depending upon the age of the children, you may teach the entire lesson or only part of the lesson.
- **Prayer Time (10-15 minutes)**—pray with the children each week and as much as possible connect the prayer time with the lesson application.
- **Activity Time (15-30 minutes)**—we've tried to provide you with activities that appeal to different age groups.

Below is a description of how to lead the memory verse, lesson, and prayer time.

### MEMORY VERSE TIME

Each week, we encourage you to work with the children on their HeartGuard verse, which can be found on the front page of the website—[www.fouroakschurch.com](http://www.fouroakschurch.com).

#### *I-Introduction*

Introduce a concept in the verse using a question, story, or object lesson

#### *P-Presentation*

Read the verse from the Bible.

#### *E-Explanation*

Discuss the major points of the verse. Explain any confusing words.

#### *A-Application*

Provide at least one way the children can apply the verse to their lives.

#### *R-Repetition*

Read the verse on a big piece of paper. Then play one of the verse repetition games to learn it.

### SAMPLE LESSON: 1 SAMUEL 16:7B

(this sample is taken from a lesson in Child Evangelism Fellowship curriculum)

#### INTRODUCTION

How would you feel if a substitute teacher came into your classroom, did not have her hair combed, her clothes were wrinkled and there were a few holes in her shoes? What would you think if there was a wrestling match and one wrestler was about 5 foot tall and about 115 pounds, but the opponent was twice his size and weight?

When we see someone, we make judgments and decisions based on what we see on the outside.

Now what if that teacher was the most interesting and exciting teacher you had ever met? Or what if the little wrestler won the match?

## **PRESENTATION**

Read I Samuel 16:7b

## **EXPLANATION**

When the Lord calls us to Him, he does not call us based on looks, or the way we walk or talk. He does not look at our size and shape. He does not look at the color of our skin, or how smart we are. He does not care if we are great at art or a fantastic sports superstar. He does not choose pastors, leaders, or teachers by what we see on the outside, but what He sees in the heart.

What are some things in the heart that we cannot see by looking at someone from the outside?

## **APPLICATION**

What do we want the Lord to see in our hearts? (allow children to give a couple answers)

Who is the only one who can change our hearts? (God)

Let's ask the Lord to change our hearts.

Also, consider talking about how faith in Christ and salvation changes the "scene" of our hearts

## **REPETITION**

Read the verse on a large visual. Allow the kids to read it with you.

Play a review game (see below)

### **Verse Repetition Games**

#### **Preschool or Elementary**

##### **Stop and Go**

*Explain that you'll use two hand signals to direct children in saying the verse. Hold your hand up and pull fingers toward you in a beckoning motion to indicate "go"; hold it palm side out to indicate "stop." Start with the signal for go. Children then begin saying verse—reference, verse, reference—until you signal to stop. Signal go again to continue the verse. Repeat the verse a few times, alternating go and stop signals, then let children who volunteer lead the activity.*

##### **Teacher Says**

*Have the children repeat the verse while following your directions; e.g., "Teacher says, put your hands on your head." Keep the activities simple so the children are thinking about the words while they repeat them. Other examples: pat your head, march in place, clap your hands, close your eyes, nod your head, stand on one foot.*

##### **Who's Next?**

*On six to eight cards, write who will say the verse; e.g., all the boys, all the girls, everyone wearing shoelaces, all who like ice cream, whoever likes sports, all who like to talk on the telephone, everyone who came to class today, everyone who enjoys writing on a chalkboard. Place the cards in a paper bag and allow a child to choose one. All who fit that category stand and say the verse together. Continue to have the children draw cards and repeat the verse.*

##### **Popcorn**

*Have the children stand; place a chair in front of them. Beginning with the reference, say part of the verse then stop and sit down. The children then "pop up" and continue the verse until you pop up, at which point they stop and sit down. When you stop and sit down, they pop up again to continue with the verse. Continue to repeat the verse, always saying the reference at the beginning and end.*

### Follow the Leader

*Have the children repeat the verse as they copy the movements you make—e.g., jump on one foot, move arms in a circle, march in place. Let several children take turns choosing an action and leading the class as they all say the verse. Repeat as time and interest allow.*

### Jump Up!

*Divide the class into four groups. All say the reference together. Then point randomly to the groups to jump up and say the next phrase. All repeat the reference again at the end. Repeat the process without using the visual.*

### Circle Time

*Children line up or sit in a circle. Going around the circle or down the line, each child stands up and says a word (or phrase) of the verse and then sits back down. If you have a lot of children, you could divide the children into two teams and see who can finish faster.*

### Choir Director

*As the verse is said, the teacher holds out hands as if directing a choir. Hold hands high for “loud,” place finger on lips for “soft,” rotate hands rapidly for “fast” and hold hands low for “slow.” Repeat several times, allowing volunteers to direct the choir.*

### Elementary only

#### Verse Toss

*Line up the class in two rows so the children are facing each other. Start at one end, having the children toss a beanbag or other soft object back and forth between rows until it reaches the other end. As each child catches the object, everyone repeats the next word of the verse. Reverse the direction of the object each time it reaches the end of the rows. Repeat several times.*

#### Clap a Word

*Choose one child to stand behind the visualized verse, turning his back to the visual and the class. Choose another child to point to a word on the visual. Lead the children in reciting the verse but when you get to the chosen word, clap instead of saying it. The child behind the verse visual then tries to guess what the word was. Continue the game, each time having the two children choose others to replace them.*

#### Verse Scramble

*Print the words of the verse on colored card stock. Have the children hold them in scrambled order. Choose a volunteer to unscramble them. Repeat the verse together each time it is unscrambled. As a variation, time each child as he unscrambles the verse. See who can do it the fastest.*

#### Turn Around

*Ask for volunteers to line up in front of the class, each child holding the words of part of the memory verse. Repeat the verse together using the visuals several times. Then have one child at a time turn his back to the class as they continue to repeat the verse. Continue until all have their backs to the class.*

#### Erase a word

*Write the memory verse on the board. Erase the verse a word at a time each time, asking the children to say the verse.*

### Circle Time

*Children line up or sit in a circle. Going around the circle or down the line, each child stands up and says a word (or phrase) of the verse and then sits back down. If you have a lot of children, you could divide the children into two teams and see who can finish faster.*

### Hot Potato

*Have children stand on the floor in a circle. The first child says the first word of the verse and bounces a ball to anyone in the circle. The child receiving the ball says the second word of the verse and so on.*

### Verse Relay

*Divide the children into two teams. Place a chalkboard, white-board, or large sheet of paper at a distance from the starting line. Hand the first child of each team a writing implement and on the shout of "Go" they run to the writing surface and write the first word of the verse. Then they return to their team and hand the writing implement to the second person. The first team to finish writing the verse correctly wins.*

## **LESSON TIME**

Here are some suggestions in understanding the curriculum and preparing for and teaching each lesson.

### **AGE FOCUS:**

These lessons are written on an older elementary level. If the children in your group are younger, you will need to modify the lesson to meet their developmental level.

### **KEY THEME:**

The key theme is the major truth taught in the lesson and should be the main idea that children remember about the lesson. In order for children to remember the main theme, we recommend repeating it throughout the story at least 7 times.

### **VISUALS/MATERIALS:**

The visuals or materials used in the lesson are listed in order. Most of the visuals used are common objects although a few may require some searching or adaptation.

Children are visual, not just auditory learners, so it is important to teach with visuals. Although the lessons can be taught without using the visuals, they will not be as interesting, as understandable, or have as great an impact without the visuals.

### **PREPARATION:**

The primary preparation needed for each lesson is spiritual preparation. If you shortcut the spiritual preparation, you may end up teaching from your head rather than your heart. This also will help you be more enthusiastic in your teaching. In addition, considerable time should be spent in prayer. Preparation of materials and visuals is often minimal, but very necessary.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Each lesson starts with an introduction intended to prepare the children for the lesson focus by laying a foundation for understanding what will be taught. To that end, the introduction often deals with concrete, "real life" examples. It is necessary that the ideas of the introduction be developed in terms and pictures that children can understand.

The introduction exists solely to be a bridge into the lesson and to capture the child's interest in the lesson. A common pitfall is to spend too much time on the introduction and other illustrations in a lesson with the result that the Biblical content then must be rushed. Therefore, it is necessary

to progress through the introduction quickly.

Sometimes sentences are typed in *italic* to suggest a particular wording of a concept. Those not in italic are thoughts to be conveyed in your own words. [Scripture portions are also in italic.]

### **LESSON FOCUS:**

It is very important to involve the children in the lessons, so interaction between the teacher and children is highly encouraged. Rather than tell children the concepts in the lesson, as much as possible, lead children to discover the concepts. Ask many questions and encourage children to think, draw conclusions, look up answers for themselves, etc. Many of the lessons state, “Make the following points...” Rather than tell children these points, ask questions where possible to help them discover truth. If a child’s answer does not lead in the right direction, you will need to adapt your questions in order to steer the children to the points you are trying to make.

Be sure to use the Bible to look up the passages and to teach with an open Bible before you. Children should also be encouraged to bring their Bibles to class, to look up the scripture in the lessons and to read the scripture aloud when possible (see idea for Sword Drills below). Make the use of the Bible during the lesson necessary for children who can read. Children need to discover favorite Bible verses, and to develop a familiarity with and an affection for the Word of God. Turning to the Bible needs to become “second nature” to them.

While we are the leaders and have thoughtfully prepared, we do not want to communicate to children that “we” are the source of truth. Rather, it is important to demonstrate that the answers are in the Word of God, establishing the Bible as the authority. God is the source of truth, and we want to create in children the habit of turning to the Bible to know truth. Our words do not have the same authority as the Word of God. Teaching with a scripture portion printed on a piece of paper is not the same as teaching with an open Bible in front of you and in front of the children. We want children to be familiar With Scripture and to treasure the Word of God.

Often the lesson contains illustrations in order to emphasize a point or to help the children to understand spiritual truth. It is very important to connect these illustrations with the Biblical truth being presented. However, you may think of a better illustration than the illustration mentioned in the curriculum, so feel free to make substitutions. Some substitutions are unique to a particular situation or church and will communicate better than a “generic” illustration. When substitutions are made, it is very important to keep in mind the truth being illustrated and to make sure the illustration correctly portrays that truth. As with the introduction, it is important to keep these illustrations brief.

### **SWORD DRILLS:**

Occasionally, a scripture reference is given which children who are able to read can find in the Bible. If children are familiar with the books of the Bible, this can be of higher interest if the directive of looking up the scripture passage is given in the form of a sword drill.

You may make up your own rules for sword drills or you may use the following suggestions:

1. Start with the command to “Draw swords”. (You may want to explain that the term “sword” comes from the reference to the Word of God as a sword in Ephesians 6:17.) At the

- command to draw swords, children should hold their Bibles by the binding up in the air.
2. State the reference clearly and slowly.
  3. Children repeat the reference.
  4. Give the command “Charge!” Children are free to start looking for the verse as soon as the command to charge is given.
  5. When a child has found the verse, he may stand up. Children should not find the chapter and then stand up to look for the verse. Children should have their fingers on the verse in order to stand up.
  6. The first person to find the verse may then read the verse after the teacher has given other children adequate time to find the verse.

To make sword drills more interesting, you may want to split the class into teams, and give points to each team accordingly. If the same child or children consistently win the sword drills, you may want to vary the stipulations in order for other children to have a chance to read the verses. For example, you may stipulate that a reference is only for second graders, for girls only, or for anyone wearing green, etc. In order to avoid having the same children repeatedly “winning” the sword drill and reading the Scripture portion, it is not necessary to have the first child to find the passage be the reader; choose the fifth child, for example, or a child that rarely participates.

## **PRAYER TIME**

The teacher should come up with 1-2 questions (usually a praise/thanks and a request) that you can ask the children in order to help them personally apply the lesson. For example, if the theme is “God is faithful and always keeps His promises,” ask the children to tell one promise that God has kept to them and one thing that they are having a hard time trusting in God about. Always ask for progress reports on prayer requests in the following weeks and praise God for any answers.