

# Preparing to Teach Bible



The purpose of Children's ministry has always been to communicate the truth of God, as revealed in his scriptures, to young people at an age appropriate level.

Those who see your work as glorified childcare or "keeping the kids quiet" are, inadvertently, sending the message that God's kingdom is unwelcoming to those under a certain age, a message Jesus quite clearly ruled out in Matthew 19!

But scripture can be tricky to grasp for every age, and sometimes it feels like we need a PhD in Theology to work out how to teach a preschooler. Other times, the passage can feel so familiar it's hard to get excited. While the old adage of reading around the passage is often the simplest way to help, here are three other ways of reframing passages to teach passages.



**Find a new perspective!** The Bible gives us lots of room to move our viewpoint. It's often useful to identify all the characters, who is speaking, who is on the sidelines. Could the story be told with a different voice? When you look at David and Goliath from the Philistine camp, it looks very different; the character of David pales before the might of God. Imagine telling the story of Jesus's temptation from the view of the sand dunes or perhaps an angel taking watch in Heaven. Also, speaking from a different time frame allows us to show outcomes of actions rather than leave the story hanging outside of the big Bible narrative.



**Place it in History!** Historical study on a basic level makes a big difference. Social history can place a story and inform you of the important factors through the witnesses eyes. Where in time was the story placed? How can what the clothes, food, and social rules were can shape the events? Fishermen were amongst the hardest hit by the tax collectors in gospel times, and the Sabbath rules make Jesus's actions even more scandalous. Also, go wide on the personal history of the characters, the other times they appear in scripture. Their past and future shape how we see the actions in a given story. Mordecai was a descendant of Saul who had fought the Malachites, Haman's people; the story is an important echo of events..



**Explore its applications!** Often we choose the controlling action in a story in a bid to get the children to, or not to, repeat it. Acts of the Bible aren't always repeatable, but the emotions and motivations often are. I had always taught John the Baptist linked to baptism, but it's as easily linked to humility. Here was the great "new Elijah," so humble that he wouldn't dare to untie the sandal of Jesus. I've never baptised anyone, but I can show humility. Equally, the negatives aspects can also be positive; Saul's blindness was a gift, for his eyes opened in more ways than one. Examining the ways of worship and discoveries made can also lead to a huge array of applications that can move passages from the dry page and into everyday action.

Feel like you've taught that story a thousand times?  
Fresh eyes on a Bible Passage

Find a new  
**Perspective**  
Other characters  
Looking back in time  
Heavenly view  
3<sup>rd</sup> party

Find a new  
**History**  
Linking story  
Part in world history  
Part in the Big Bible Story  
Cultural symbolism

Find a new  
**Application**  
Reclaim teaching as a process of discovery  
Emotions  
How it worships  
Revelation about God  
Motivations

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