

Leading Little Lambs (Transforming Preschoolers into Prophets)

Room Dynamics/Warm and Welcoming: The room begins with you. Are you warm and welcoming? Is there a smile on your face? 55% of all communication is non-verbal. Help “tuck” new people into the room by 1. Introduce yourself to the child and tell them how happy you are that they are joining your class. 2. Show parents how to sign in. 3. Have an activity to engage the kids. 4. Say the child’s name and give them a complement. 5. Bridge them to another child. Take them to a friendly child and introduce them. Have a designated greeter in the room that is warm, friendly, and an extrovert. This is the first **touchpoint** for your church and the first impression of your ministry to the parents and the children. You never get a second chance to make a first impression. (Daniel analogy)

Make the Room Inviting: Be there early to pray and prepare. (Mark 1:35, Luke 22:11-12) Is the room clean, warm/cool, decorated with kid-friendly art, colorful? (Matisse, drawing with scissors) Are tables and chairs at kid-height? Make color crayons and paper available. Provide crayon-cups for every child. Play kid-friendly worship music when kids arrive. Have all your supplies and handouts ready. If you have 10 minutes to chop down a tree; spend 7 minutes sharpening your axe.

Make the Room Safe: Make sure plug-covers are on outlets, choking hazards are put away, no broken or sharp items, no items that cause chaos are in the room like speakers or stands that can fall over.

Pray for Them: Pray for your kids each week. (John 17:9) You might be the only one praying for them. Pray that God saves them, protects, provides, and helps them grow closer to Jesus every day. (2 Peter 3:18) Have kids pray to God and expect God to answer their requests. (Jeremiah 33:3)

Know Your Passage: Read the passage 40 times to know it inside and out. (Psalm 1:2-3) Ask yourself questions that a preschooler might ask about the passage. What did it feel, smell, taste, or sound like? Answer the questions they have about the passage and the ones you came up with too. This will help them understand the passage more and bring the passage to life.

Know Your Kids: (Introverts vs Extroverts) Choose the extroverts to act out the Bible passage or hold something for you as you teach. Ask the introverts to help get supplies, hand out papers, or assist in other quiet ways that will let them feel helpful and a part of the class without being intimidated. You don’t want to embarrass or mortify a quiet kid by asking them to do something out of their comfort zone. (John 10:14) “I am the Good Shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep know Me.”

Transition with Imagination: You lose more time in transitions than any other activity. Say your Bible verse as you march like soldiers, walk the line, the ground is lava, alligator tightrope, sharks, and planks. If you make the transitions fun, you will captivate their imagination.

Movement is Mandatory: Children learn through movement. We must never expect an exploratory, curious, energetic kid to sit still for 30 minutes. Are we out of our minds? Build in movement to let out some energy. We are made to move. Have kids get up and get down three to five times throughout the lesson. “Let’s walk around Jericho!” “Quick, get under the table!” “The Canaanites are looking for the spies!” “Jump and shout, ‘Hosannah!’ for Jesus as he rides in on the donkey.”

Memory Verse Ideas: (Psalm 119:11, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Romans 10:17) As you read the verse have the kids slowly melt to the ground. While repeating the verse have the kids slowly get louder or quieter. Have the kids erase one word at a time until it is fully erased. Wiggle as you say the verse like your made of

Jell-O. Hot potato verse, throw a soft object, whoever catches it says one word of the verse and passes it. Clap at certain words while you say the verse.

Mystery Box/Bag: Teach with objects you reveal from your mystery box. This piques the interest of the children, stimulates their imaginations, and keeps their attention. Have kids guess what's inside. Have each object help illustrate a key idea in the lesson. This helps the kids connect the idea to a real object.

Set the Stage: Create a location or destination. An umbrella becomes a tree really easy. A sheet becomes a tent. A chair becomes a throne. A bucket becomes a well. A squirt bottle and fan become a storm. An upside-down table becomes a boat.

Always Hold a Bible: The children must see their teacher using the Bible, reading the Bible, and referencing the Bible throughout the lesson. (Psalm 19:10) This helps the children learn the importance of knowing God's word, reading God's word, and revering God's word. Show them God's word is precious. (John 17:17, Romans 10:17)

Teach With Concrete Ideas, No Abstractions: (Preoperational Stage, 2-7, Piaget) Kids are more literal and egocentric. Don't use metaphors, idioms, or similes. "God really got them out of a pickle." Define key terms. "God **resurrected** Jesus." "God **sanctifies** us!" "**Repent** from your **sins**." "You must be **born again**."

Change Them to You: Make the passage personal and connect it to their lives. The children are egocentric and see the world through their own lives and have a hard time imagining someone else's point of view. "Just like Noah, **you** can stand for God and tell others about God at school." "Just like Joseph, **you** can forgive people who treat **you** badly and hurt **your** feelings." "Just like Jesus, you can pray for others, even for the people who are hard to love." "Jesus died for **you!**" (Gospel)

Story Time Dynamics: Pictures are worth 1,000 words. Use posters, felt boards, cliffhangers/leave them wanting more: R.L Stein's brother always left him on a cliffhanger as a child. Three parts to a story, the beginning, the middle, and the twist.

Classroom Management: Make it playful: Create rituals and routines that work. As you get up and down use a chant. "Take a seat, take a seat, take a load off your feet!" "On your feet, on your feet take a load off your seat!" **Statues:** The teacher says, "statues," and the kids freeze until you have given instructions for what comes next. **Prayer Pose:** This phrase teaches the kids to sit up, fold their hands, stop talking and look at you. Clean up song: "Clean up, clean up everybody everywhere, clean up, clean up, everybody do your share."

Memorable Good-Bye: Tell each child one thing they did that you liked or enjoyed about their time in your class as they leave. Express your enthusiasm about seeing them next week and how you will be praying for them.

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