

StAK Training

Exploring the bible with children

Tuesday 6th September 2011

Aim

❖ To find new ways in which we can explore the bible with children during our group times

Bite size Training:

- **[5-10 mins]** How to be a great small group leader (return to the slides re our ethos)
 - How can we structure our times so that children learn to act like Jesus not just hear about him?
- **[30 mins]** Spirituality and the Bible / Exploring the Bible with children / other?

Introduction

Imagine this; you turn up on a Sunday morning for SJ Club with your well thought out plans. You have 3 activities to squeeze into the session each with a set outcome. You have a few questions with 'right' answers that you want the children to say and by the end they will have written down the truth of the session having read a large portion of the bible. But instead of all that happening, the almighty God, the awe-inspiring creator of everyone and everything, who is above and beyond all time and space and place turns up. He has something to say to Mia, Jacob, Becca, Henry, Josh, Kane, Aiden, Beth, Katie and all the other children in your care. He has some very important news to tell them. He wants to let them in on his plans and to draw them into the work of bringing people back to himself...How would that happen? Through set questions with set answers? Through reading and writing? Maybe. But given that children use all their senses and learn in many different ways, it's likely that he will do this in some other creative way. So how can we create the environment for God to do this, for children to encounter God in inspiring, life changing ways? That's what I will try to solve tonight!

Clues from the Bible—what does it say about itself?

- ❖ 2 Tim 3.16 All Scripture is breathed by God—no one comes face to face with God and stays the same—as we open the bible with children we can expect to all hear from God and be changed—it's life changing—be prepared
 - What do these verses tell me about the Bible (2 Tim 3. 15-17)
 - What is the Bible for?
 - How might these observations affect the way I handle the Bible with children. Or the way they handle it for themselves?
- ❖ The Bible is the true story of God saving his people through Jesus
- ❖ The Bible has many different types of writing in it and children need to read and understand these in slightly different ways. 'The Bible is true' means slightly different things depending on whether you are referring to a historical writing, or an image in a poem or true teaching about living for God from one of the epistles
- ❖ The Bible helps faith in God to grow
 - Believing faith
 - Trusting faith

- Doing faith
- –Heads, hearts, hands

Basic Guidelines

...about us

- ❖ We are role models: Use your own bible—let them see it is used and yours and you treasure it
- ❖ We are learners
- ❖ We are clarifiers: “I don’t know but let’s both try to find out more”

...about the children

- ❖ We can let them be themselves, ask them what they think, to ask questions
- ❖ We can help them to handle the Bible skillfully too

...about the Bible

- ❖ Anticipate meeting God: pray before you read
- ❖ Let the Bible speak for itself
- ❖ Can be heard, read or seen

Practical Ideas

bible chat time:

- ❖ share experiences of Bible, what you have read this week, ask the children what they have read—link to Snapshots/Little Yellow Book etc. Give the message that the Bible is ‘alive and active’ (Hebrews 4.12)

reflection time

- ❖ After reading a passage or story, ask open questions, not looking for that one right answer:
 - What do you think this tells us about God?
 - How do you feel after hearing that?
 - Why do you think this happened?
 - What do you think God was saying to the people involved?
 - What do you think God might be saying to us now, here, today?
 - What do you want to say to God now?

active listening

- ❖ Ask the children to look out for clues or certain things in a passage e.g. clues about God, clues about ‘David’, clues about ‘Goliath’ then feed back and share

simple meditation

- ❖ Quiet music in background then either read a passage to them, or they read to themselves a few times. If something catches their attention they can stop reading or listening and repeat that part a few times, Next they tell or ask God what has come to mind. They can say the Lord’s prayer. They can share what happened if they want to

set the scene

- ❖ E.g. With the good Samaritan, the children need to know what a 'Samaritan' is so introduce him as 'the traveller's enemy' and 'the enemy of the listening crowd' and explain how Jews and Samaritans didn't get along before telling the story. You could also use a modern day parable

five stories running in parallel

- ❖ God's story (the big story of the Bible)
- ❖ The Bible story (the actual narrative)
- ❖ The children's own story (their life and how it connects with Bible/God)
- ❖ Our own story (How God has used this part of the Bible to change our lives)
- ❖ The story of other Christians (from our Church, country, globally, historically)

good questions to ask...

The following question suggestions are based on the three parts of faith; head, heart, hands.

Ask big questions (Head faith)

These are open questions to encourage children to think and wonder rather than getting them to say the right answer

- ❖ From this Bible story, who is God?
- ❖ What is God like in these verses?
- ❖ What has he done?
- ❖ Or what is he doing?
- ❖ Or what will he do?
- ❖ What does God want and what doesn't he want?
- ❖ What will it be like to live with this God?
- ❖ What do you want to say to God now?

Heart faith

- ❖ How does this story make you feel? Why?
- ❖ Can you see any new reason in this story to love and trust God?
- ❖ Is there something special you want to say to God?

Hands faith

- ❖ From this story, is there something you want to do for God or that God wants you to do?
- ❖ Is there someone that you need to talk to about something or do something for?

encourage frequent encounters (heart faith)

Heart faith probably comes more from meeting with God than talking about him so encourage the children to encounter God regularly. This can be through reading their Bible, keeping a record of the way God is with them, praying. We don't want children to feel they have to read their Bible every day out of a sense of duty or fear but out of a love for it and God.

Maybe one session you could spend 10-15 minutes going through a Snapshots session with the children

explore the 5 s's

So having looked at the chatty type of stuff, here are some ideas of exploring and remembering the Bible in non-book ways. We are hoping to create Bible memories which are vivid reminders of what the children have learnt. In this way, the children carry more of the Bible with them as they go

The five S's are Song; Story; Slogan; Symbol(image); Scheme(action)

(Psalm) painting (Song)

This is about responding to a poem(Psalm) through art. The idea is that you read a Psalm aloud to the children a few times and let them paint what they see in their mind's eye using colours, texture, materials to express their thoughts, feelings and understanding. They can add words if they want to. You could ask questions such as, Is this a happy Psalm? Is God angry? What is it telling us about God? They can show and tell if they want to. This could be done with a story or other type of Scripture or with a Hymn/Chorus/song etc

God song (Song)

This is about the children writing a song in response to the Bible story/passage. A good focus would be to write about God, expressing what the particular passage says he is like. With younger children, use a simple rhythm or rhyme or clapping sequence where the children can fill in a gap e.g. Two claps to 'God is' and then children can add in their ideas.

Sum up slogan (Slogan)

Sum up in a shout or slogan the main point of a passage. E.g. 'Just do it' or make up simple actions or both

Paint or draw (symbol)

Read a passage 2 or 3 times asking the children to look out for what particularly strikes them or grabs their attention. Let the children draw it with no further prompting. Share the drawings to see what the group noticed the most

Read a passage 2 or 3 times asking the children to imagine that they are there. Allow them time to draw what they can see happening. Then ask them; 'So what is happening that we can see?' This last question might help them to look behind the action at what God is doing in it.

Serious play (scheme)

Games that re-tell the story or explore the theme further e.g. Tomb relay

godly play