

WAYS CHILDREN LEARN
Children's Ministry
Resource Ministries
By Jean Stephens

The Bible tells us in Psalm 127:3 (NIV) that '...children are an heritage from the Lord.' The word heritage here also means: assignment, stewardship.

ASSIGNMENT: Something (a job) that we have been given to do

STEWARDSHIP: Managing, taking care of that which belongs to another

In other words we have been given an assignment from the Lord, the stewardship of our children. It is a very big responsibility and on that we must take very seriously.

As we look at ways children learn, I believe we need to reaffirm to ourselves that children are important, that they are people; individuals with needs, desires, hurts, love, abilities, and potential in God's economy.

We as teachers, workers with children, parents, must depend on God for His divine wisdom and insight in teaching the 'heritage from the Lord', to our children. In Judges 13:8 (NIV), *"Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."*

Children derive their character more by learning environments than by heredity. The early years of a child set the tone for his whole life. He develops and changes more in the first six years than any other time in his life. The importance of a good learning environment for our children is vital.

- I. Learning is a process
 - a. Perception
 - i. Common ground of communication
 - ii. On their level
 - iii. How they feel about it
 - b. Problem solving
 - i. A child's response in making decisions and choices
 - c. Application – applying what he has learned to daily living; becomes a part of him/her.
 - i. Memorization – beginning, not the end
 - ii. Understanding – intellectual
 - iii. Explain – express what they know to someone else
 - iv. Lives – shows, expresses it in his daily living

- II. Ways to learn

- a. Imitation – modeling process
- b. Repetition – teachers get bored long before the children do
- c. Relating new learning to something already known
- d. Participating in first-hand experiences
- e. Using more than one of the senses
- f. Experiencing feeling of satisfaction and success
 - i. Setting goals and completing
 - ii. Participating the planning

III. Bible Stories

The story should be presented in such a way that the children can understand it and fit it into their lives and activities. Be sure the Bible story is a lesson with a definite and applicable point of truth, not just a story. Stories can and should be told in many different ways and different aids and props. Some examples are:

- a. Telling the story using supplied visual aids.
- b. Flannelgraph
- c. Puppets
- d. Object lessons
- e. Children relating the story to the teacher
- f. Children acting the story out after reading it
- g. At times it is appropriate to read the story directly from the Bible, such as the Christmas story from Luke 2

IV. Present-day Stories

This is the idea of using everyday situations made into stories that relate to the children and help them to see how they can and should react in similar situations in their own experiences.

V. Bible Learning Activities

The purpose of Bible Learning Activities, is to stimulate and give application to the truths and concepts taught in the Bible and present-day stories. They are not to be something to just fill up the time or just something to take home and show Mommy and Daddy. They should reinforce or put into action the theme of the lesson or unit being taught. Some examples of Bible Learning Activities are:

- a. Games
- b. Puppets
- c. Acting out (skits)
- d. Map study
- e. Murals
- f. Frieze
- g. Collage

h. Mobiles

VI. Worship

Worship is a time when the children can experience the presence of God on their level. It is a time of learning how to express their love to Jesus. The children can learn to express their praise in different ways such as singing, clapping hands, raising hands, and dancing. This can also be a time of real fun and relaxing for the children. Remember that children are very sincere and uninhibited in their praise and worship. It is important to encourage and cultivate this in them.

VII. Giving

Children need a time when they can express their love and concern for others by giving of themselves, their possessions, and their money. It is a way in which they can learn the principle of sacrifice, perhaps by doing without something they have wanted in order to give for a special need. Also, they will have opportunity to learn the principle of sowing and reaping; seeing how God's blessings come to them when they give to others and to the Lord.