



# LEVELS

of Bible Skills

# Developing Bible Skills for a Lifetime

## The Bible is:

- God's living Word.
- God's revelation of Himself.
  - about Jesus.
    - true.
    - trustworthy.
  - about salvation.
    - eternal.

## The Bible is More

## The Bible:

- shows us how to live in ways that please God.
- helps us know who God is by showing us Jesus' life as an example.
- tells stories that teach us about God, Jesus, creation, family, church, and others.
- tells us how to treat other people, relate to people, love, praise, be grateful, and live.
- helps us learn from the mistakes of others and helps us know God's Commandments.
  - shows us how to forgive, love, rejoice, and pray.

As we think of the Bible and children, our thoughts and beliefs about the Bible come from our own personal experiences with it. We want our children to have a Bible, use it, and learn from it. We want it to be the treasure to them that it is to us. How do we help that happen? How do we develop Bible skills from birth through sixth grade that will last a lifetime?

**First**, use the information contained in this brochure to help you and your church encourage and guide the development of Bible skills in children. As you read and study this material, begin to think of ways you can implement the ideas and suggestions into your ministry. Bible skills are more than finding verses quickly or saying verses from memory. Children who learn to use their Bibles can become teenagers and adults who know how to study their Bibles, to use it in times of trouble, and to make good decisions.

**Second**, start where each child is and begin with basic skills he can handle. A teacher of a 1- or 2-year-old will hold the Bible and tell him that the Bible is a special book. The teacher of a kindergarten child will show her a Bible phrase in the Bible and say the phrase with her. A third grade teacher may guide a child to say the books of the New Testament from memory.

**Third**, develop skills by instruction and demonstration. Children learn by doing. They can hear a verse and repeat it. They can find a book in the Bible by saying the books in order and looking for the book in their Bibles. They can hear a word and its definition and then look it up in a Bible dictionary. Children learn by multiple exposure and by working with the verses and books in the Bible.

**Fourth**, practice makes perfect. Like any other skill, the more children use their Bibles to find books and references, the more they will feel comfortable with their Bibles. The more they feel comfortable with their Bibles, the more they'll use them. Children need an opportunity to use their Bibles every time they come to church.

**Fifth**, work with parents to encourage Bible skill development in the home. Parents can help by reading to a preschooler a Bible story from the *Read to Me Bible for Kids*. They can guide a second grader to find the Bible story in her own Bible. They can work with a preteen to set aside time each day for his own quiet time. Parents can model good Bible skills when they take their own Bibles to church and conduct their own quiet times. Parents can conduct a family Bible time. Go to [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com) for suggestions.

Building Bible skills for a lifetime begins now. Study the chart, and discover what girls and boys can learn. Start today to build lifetime skills so each child can "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15) HCSB®.

# Using Bible Skills With Preschoolers

Teachers at church and parents have the opportunity to introduce preschoolers to God's special book, the Bible. This is accomplished through the use of Bible verses and phrases, which are portions of Bible verses that are paraphrased or restated using words preschoolers understand. Teachers and parents can repeat Bible verses as girls and boys engage in everyday activities. For example, as Maria arranges fresh flowers in a plastic vase, the teacher might say: "Maria the Bible says, **'God made the flowers.'**"

The goal for using Bible verses with preschoolers is to help make life application, not memorization. However, if an older preschooler hears the same Bible verse several times in the context of an activity, the child may be able to remember that Bible verse. In fact, teachers often encourage preschoolers to remember Bible verses by asking them to complete a Bible phrase, such as "**Jesus said, 'You are My \_\_\_\_\_ (friends).'**"

Bible verses and phrases used with preschoolers contain concrete facts. The purpose is for preschoolers to apply biblical teachings to their own lives. "Jesus is the Lamb of God" may be confusing to literal-minded preschoolers, but "Jesus is God's Son" communicates the same truth.

As preschoolers learn that the Bible's teachings apply to their lives, they also need to know that the Bible verses they hear are actually in the Bible. Teachers can do this by placing Bible markers at the correct references. As teachers talk about Jesus' birth, they can open the Bible to Matthew 2:1 and point to the verse.

Using Bible verses with young children gives adults opportunities to reinforce the truth that the Bible is a special book.

## Using Bible Skills With Grades 1-6

Bible skills mean standing in line, following commands, and finding references quickly, right? Not exactly, sometimes practicing Bible skills takes the form of Bible Drill. But most of the time, developing Bible skills takes place on Sunday morning or Sunday night as children use their Bibles in Sunday School or Discipleship Training. Let's peek inside a third grade Sunday School department to see what's happening.

As girls and boys gather for Bible study, they begin to place the book cards of the Old Testament in one bag and the book cards of the New Testament in another bag.

Later the children find the Book of Matthew in their Bibles and locate chapter 3. Then they look in the first verse for the name of a person (John the Baptist). The teacher may explain that the Bible story is about the time when John the Baptist baptized Jesus. She might ask two children to find Mark 1:9-11 and two other children to find Luke 3:21-22. The children discover that all three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—describe Jesus' baptism. After the Bible story, the children find Matthew 3:17 and read the verse from their Bibles. When they discover differences from one translation or version to the other, the teacher will make sure they understand that even though some words may be a little different, the message is the same, God was pleased with Jesus, His Son, and delighted in Him.

When the children find the memory verse, Romans 6:4, in their Bibles, the teacher guides them through the verse, explaining the words and what they mean. Then they play a game to learn the words of the verse.

In small groups the teacher guides the group to Romans 6:4 again and leads a discussion about baptism and what it symbolizes. After a quick review of the verse, The children find Acts 2:41; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47-48; and Acts 16:15,33 in their Bibles to discover Bible people who were baptized.

When did children develop Bible skills on that Sunday morning? They worked on Bible skills during the entire session. Each time a child found a reference in his Bible or looked up a verse to discover information, he was practicing Bible skills. He was becoming more comfortable using his Bible. He was building on those foundations for lifelong Bible uses.

# Levels of Bible Skills

As you read this chart, keep the following in mind:

- Chart includes Basic and Advanced skills. The Advanced skills are in bold.
- Arrows indicate concepts that will be reinforced during the years indicated.
- For a better understanding of skills developed in early childhood years, you may wish to start with the oldest age group and work backward.

<b>Babies–2s</b>	<b>3s–Pre-k</b>	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Grades 1-2</b>	<b>Grades 3-4</b>	<b>Grades 5-6</b>
Knows the Bible is a book.	Knows that the Bible is a book that people use at church and home.	Knows that the two main parts of the Bible are the Old Testament and the New Testament.	Can locate the two main parts of the Bible—the Old Testament and the New Testament.	Can identify if a book is in the Old or New Testament.	Can identify all the books of the Old Testament and all the books of the New Testament.
Hears names of some of the books of the Bible.	Hears the names of many of the books of the Bible	Begins to pronounce the names of the books of the Bible.	Can pronounce the names of all the books of the Bible.	Can pronounce some of the names of Bible people, places, and things mentioned in the Bible.	Can pronounce most of the names of Bible people, places, and things mentioned in the Bible.
Can touch, hold and turn the pages of the Bible.	↑	↑	Can locate several books in the Bible without assistance. <b>Can locate all the books in the Bible.</b>	Can locate some the books in the Bible and many of them in a limited time frame. <b>Can locate all the books of the Bible in a limited time frame.</b>	Can locate all the books of the Bible in a limited time frame.
Can help open the Bible to a marked verse or story.	↑	Can begin to understand that a Bible reference includes a book, chapter, and verse.	Can read Bible references and locate the specific verse or passage.	Can find information asked for by reading a verse or passage.	Can begin to tell others the meaning of the biblical content of a verse or passage.
Can say some Bible words and repeat short phrases (3-5 words).	Can repeat and remember simple Bible verses.	Can repeat and remember simple verses. <b>Can remember simple verses with Bible references.</b>	Can memorize Bible verses. <b>Can quote up to twelve individual verses when given the reference.</b>	Can memorize short Bible passages. <b>Can quote up to twenty-five individual verses when given the references.</b> <b>Can complete a verse and give the reference when started by a parent or leader.</b>	Can memorize Bible passages. <b>Can quote up to seventy-five individual Bible verses.</b>

<b>Babies-2s</b>	<b>3s-Pre-k</b>	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Grades 1-2</b>	<b>Grades 3-4</b>	<b>Grades 5-6</b>
Can listen to brief Bible stories.	Can recall some Bible story people and Bible facts.	Remembers and can retell a familiar Bible story.	Becomes familiar with the contents of specific books such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The book of Genesis tells about God and His creation.</li> <li>• The Book of Psalms contains songs about God.</li> <li>• The Gospels tell about Jesus.</li> </ul>	Is able to locate from memory often used Bible passages and memory verses such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Model Prayer (Matthew 6, Luke 11)</li> <li>• The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20)</li> <li>• The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, Luke 6)</li> </ul> <b>Is able to locate Bible passages in a limited time frame.</b>	Is able to locate Bible passages in a limited time frame.
Associates God and Jesus with the Bible.	Knows that the Bible is a book that tells about God and Jesus.	Knows the Bible tells about God and Jesus.	Knows the Bible tells that God sent Jesus to earth because He loves all people.	Knows that the Bible tells about God's plan of salvation.  <b>Can memorize God's plan of salvation.</b>	Can memorize God's plan of salvation. Knows how to use the Bible to tell someone about God and Jesus.
Hears the name of God and Jesus.	Knows the name of God, Jesus, and some Bible people.	Remembers the names of familiar Bible people.	Identifies some of the names of the people in the Bible.	Can find the names of prominent Bible people in the books where their stories are recorded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniel (Daniel)</li> <li>• Moses (Exodus)</li> <li>• Jesus (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)</li> </ul>	Can identify prominent Bible people by the books in which their story is recorded.
Can hear Bible verses at home	Can participate in family devotional times.	Can use the Bible at home.	Can use the Bible for daily Bible reading	Can increase her skills of using the Bible, both devotionally and as a resource to guide her daily living.	Can establish the discipline of daily Bible reading
Can hear Bible verses that relate to his everyday activities	Can begin to apply Bible verses to his life.	Can apply Bible verses to his life.	Can discover and apply truths in a Bible verse.	Can discover and apply truths in a Bible passage.	Can apply biblical principles to personal and social issues.
Hears that God told people to write the Bible.	Hears that people wrote God's words in the Bible.	Knows that people wrote God's words in the Bible.	Identifies some of the books of the Bible by the names of the writers.	Can identify Bible writers who wrote multiple books.	Can use Bible study resources to gather information about Bible writers.

Babies–2s	3s–Pre-k	Kindergarten	Grades 1-2	Grades 3-4	Grades 5-6
		<p>Knows each main part of the Bible is divided into smaller parts called books.</p>	<p>Can begin to know all the books of the Bible in order.</p> <p><b>Knows all the books of the Bible in order.</b></p>	<p>Knows all the books of the Bible in order.</p> <p><b>Knows and can say all the books of the Bible in order in a limited time frame.</b></p>	<p>Knows and can say all the books of the Bible in order in a limited time frame.</p>
			<p>Can begin to master naming the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments.</p> <p><b>Can name the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments.</b></p>	<p>Can name the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments in a limited time frame.</p>	<p>Can name the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments in a limited time frame.</p>
			<p>Can locate books of the Bible by using the contents page or with teacher guidance.</p>	<p>Can locate books of the Bible by using the contents page or with teacher guidance.</p> <p><b>Can begin to use other resources to enrich her Bible skills and knowledge (Bible dictionary, commentary, concordance, atlas, and computer sources).</b></p>	<p>Can use other resources to enrich her Bible skills and knowledge (Bible dictionary, commentary, concordance, atlas, and computer sources).</p>

# Activities To Develop Bible Knowledge

## I'm Going on a Trip

Ask the children to form a circle (either by standing or with their chairs). The first child begins by holding a ball or another object and says, "I'm going on a trip and I'm going to take Genesis." The child then passes the ball to the next child. The second child continues, "I'm going on a trip and I'm going to take Genesis and Exodus." Continue the game through all the books of the Bible or the desired Testament.

## Books of the Bible Spin Game

Write the name of each of the books of the Bible on an individual index card. Using a permanent marker, divide the under side of a large plastic lid into four sections. Print one of the following statements in each section: *Pronounce it, Find it, Say the book before, Say the book after.* Carefully punch a small hole in the center of the lid and attach a paper clip using a fastener, ensuring the paper clip is loose enough to spin. Mix up the cards and place them face down. Take turns spinning the paper clip and selecting a card. The child must do the action indicated by the spinner. If he is successful, he can keep the card. If the child is unable to complete the action, he may replace his card on the bottom of the stack. Continue playing until all the cards are drawn.

## Bible Book Pin Up

Print the names of Old and New Testament books on individual clothespins, making two complete sets. Hang a clothesline from chairs at two designated locations. Divide each clothesline into two sections (Old and New Testament). Place one set of the clothespins at each location. Explain that the object of the game is to group the books into the Old and New Testament divisions. At the signal, the first child will run to the clothesline, select a clothespin, decide if it is located in the Old or New Testament and place it on the clothesline on the proper side. The first team to correctly separate all of their clothespins wins. As an additional challenge, instruct the children to place the clothespins in their correct order.

## Bible ABC's

Write one of the following letters each on a separate tennis ball:

A, C, E, J, K, L, M, P, R, S, T. Put the balls in a basket.

Ask a child to choose a ball from the basket and read the letter printed on it. Ask her to name a book of the Bible that begins with that letter and then locate the book in her Bible. Allow children who are unfamiliar with the Bible to use the Table of Contents to find a book.

## Look It Up!

Write the following statements on individual cards.

Add additional statements as needed:

- How many chapters are in Luke?
- Which book is located in the middle of the Bible?
- Find the first book in the Bible and read the first verse.
- Find and read the last verse of the last book in the Bible.
- How many chapters are in the book of 2 Samuel?
- Locate John 13:35.
- Find a book of Law.
- Look up Psalm 23.
- Locate each of the four Gospels.

## Build It and They Will Learn

Print each of the following Scripture references on a separate index cards:

Exodus 14:6	1 Samuel 17:5
Exodus 31:18	2 Kings 4:10
Numbers 11:7-8	2 Kings 4:38
Deuteronomy 17:18	Esther 1:11
Judges 16:25-26	Jeremiah 24:2

Provide modeling clay and a Bible for each child. Guide the children to select a card, look up the Scripture references, and use the clay to make a model of the object(s) mentioned in the Bible verse.

# Choosing a Children's Bible

A Bible is one of the most valuable gifts you can give your child. The value of the Bible you choose is not dependent upon whether or not it is expensive. The Bible's value lies in the fact that it is God's Word.

Choose a Bible that will last for several years. As your child grows she may need a Bible more suitable for her age. Your child may benefit from having two different Bibles before entering the teen years—one as a preschooler and one to use while in the first through sixth grades.

## Guidelines for selecting a child's Bible.

- **Size**—The Bible should be large enough for the child to hold easily, but not too large or heavy to carry. Consider a tote for younger children to help to carry their Bible.
- **Complete**—Preschoolers and school-age children alike need to know that both Testaments are included in the Bible and are equally important. Choose a complete Bible rather than "Bible Books" that are storybooks.
- **User friendly**—The Bible should be easy to use. Consider purchasing a Bible that contains a Table of Contents to assist school-age children in locating hard-to-find books and verses in the Bible.
- **Realistic illustrations**—Because the Bible and the people and stories found in the Bible are true, pictures in the Bible should be as realistic as possible.
- **Translation**—Choose an accurate translation of the biblical text rather than a paraphrase. The best Bible translations for children combine reliability with readability such as the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*®.
- **Study helps**—School-age children may wish to know more about the customs or lifestyles of the people in the Bible. Many Bibles include great maps and other study helps.
- **Durability**—Make sure the cover is of good quality. Consider purchasing a Bible carrying case that will protect and add length to the life of a child's Bible.
- **Your child's input**—Allow your school-age child to help select the color or cover design of his Bible. Monogramming the outer cover or inscribing the inside cover will give him a feeling of ownership.

# Using Scripture Memory With Children

The Bible tells us that memorization is one of the keys to putting God's Word in our hearts where God can use it to change us and grow us in His will.

Look at the following verses and listen to God's Word:

- Psalm 119:104 says, "I gain understanding from Your precepts; therefore I hate every false way."
- Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path."

We want children to be able to memorize a Bible verse, put it into practice in their daily lives, and recall it many times throughout their lives. Children will "treasure" a verse in their hearts and minds when they learn the meanings of the words in a verse; can see a practical, real application of it to their lives; and are exposed to the verse and its truth over and over.

Memorizing Bible verses is so much more than "saying the words by heart."

Consider these suggested guidelines:

- Learning that will remain with a child involves more than a one-time use and interpretation of a verse.
- Children absorb new material gradually. Generally speaking, the younger the child, the fewer the verses he can be expected to learn and relate to his daily life.
- Children differ in their abilities. Some children can memorize words and grasp meanings more quickly.
- Children learn by repetition. The more often a Bible verse is used and recalled the better a child will remember and apply it.
- Children are more interested in learning when methods are varied and engaging.
- Children's learning is enhanced when they are involved in activities such as singing a verse, acting out the meaning of the verse, matching verses with present-day pictures, and activities suitable to the age group.

# Helping Children Develop Bible Skills Beyond Sunday Morning

## The Church Connection

Sunday School alone is not enough to help children really understand how to use the Bible and to help them develop advanced Bible skills. Here are some ideas for helping children beyond Sunday School:

1. Provide Bibles in your worship center for children to use as they participate during worship.
2. Develop a Bible skills program at your church for grades 1-6.
3. Schedule a parent meeting to discuss the importance of parents helping their children develop Bible skills. Use this resource as the basis of that meeting.
4. Train children's leaders on the importance of including time during any Bible-teaching session to help children develop Bible skills.
5. Challenge children each month to learn all the books in a particular division of the Bible.
6. Plan a Bible Game Fun Night for families. Use some of the activities found in this resource to help you plan.
7. Calendar a Bible Drill retreat with older children. Spend time helping children learn, locate, and memorize books of the Bible, key passages, and the plan of salvation. Spend time guiding children to make their own Bible games.
8. Provide daily devotional magazines for children to encourage their personal Bible study.
9. Enlist the support of your pastor to encourage parents and children to participate in worship services by using their Bibles and memorizing Scripture.
10. Model Bible skills when and where possible.

## The Parent Connection

Helping your children develop Bible skills is part of your task as the primary spiritual leader in your children's lives. You might ask, "How can I do this?" Here are some quick tips to use at home with your children.

1. Model the importance of Bible study by setting aside a regular time for family devotions.
2. Make sure each child in your family has his own Bible to use during personal and family devotions.
3. Take your Bible to church and encourage your children to take their Bibles to church.
4. Guide your children to participate in the worship service by helping them find the Scripture passage used during the sermon.
5. Encourage children to find the Scripture reference they studied in Sunday School. At home with preschoolers mention the name of the book; and with school-age children mention the division of the Bible, name of the book, chapter, and reference.
6. Challenge your school-age children (and yourself) to name the books before and after the book you have located.
7. Play a game with children. Choose one of the games suggested in this resource to help both you and your children learn the books of the Bible.
8. Involve children in your church's Bible Drill program or similar activities that help children develop advanced Bible skills.
9. Help older children plan a specific time for their own personal quiet time.
10. Teach children to use the Bible as a guidebook for their lives and talk with them about how you use your Bible as a guidebook for your life.

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