

THE HERALD

Newsletter of the Orrville Grace Brethren Church

Teach Bible Study to a 2-Year-Old

By Peter Krol

Author of “Knowable Word – Helping Ordinary People Learn to Study the Bible.”

Ordinary people can learn to study the Bible.

These people may not have been to seminary.

They don't have much free time. But they love

Jesus and want to be more like him. They want

to know him. “Knowable Word” offers a

foundation on why and how to study the Bible.

Using a running study of the first chapter of

Genesis, it illustrates how to observe, interpret,

and apply the Scripture—and gives the vision

behind each step. It also shows how to read

each Bible passage in light of salvation history.

But besides being just a how-to on Bible study, it

fuels the desire to learn and grow through

studying the Scriptures.

I've stated that we can teach OIA Bible study [Observation, Interpretation, Application Bible study] to anyone of any age. It's great to start 'em young.

Two-year-old children are terrific, not terrible. They're learning so much so quickly, and they're ready to feast on the bread of life. Jesus wants them with him (Matt. 19:13-15), so let's not get in the way.

How can you take advantage of this time of life? I won't give a comprehensive

manual for parenting, but I hope to help you inspire these little ones to treasure God's Knowable Word and learn to study it.

1. Read Scripture

Believe it or not, Bible study involves the Bible. God's Word reveals his heart (2 Peter 1:21) and pierces ours (Hebrews 4:12). It shapes us for glory (2 Timothy 3:16-17). And it wasn't written just for adults (Ephesians 6:1-3, Colossians 3:20).

But sometimes we give our children a diet of caffeine-free, low-fat story book Bibles, and we neglect the nutritious, life-giving, spiritually fattening, satisfactorily scrumptious, obedience-empowering, grace-delighting Word of God.

Children's Bibles are just great. I like “Read Aloud Bible Stories: Volume 1” by Ella K. Lindvall, for two-year-olds (although sometimes it can use a stronger connection to the gospel). But children's story Bibles are *supplements*. Not the meal.

Read the Bible regularly with your child or Sunday school class.

2. Focus on observation

Young children notice much more than we think they do. Just look at how much they imitate us.

While preaching a sermon last Sunday, I saw my two-year-old daughter copying my hand motions. The accuracy of her gestures threatened my composure and confirmed my suspicions. She catches far more than she lets on, and I'm in a position to hone her fledgling prowess.

Read just a few verses, and expect the children to notice stuff. Ask them about what they heard and have them repeat the key details. Then read a few more verses and repeat the process.

3. Ask basic questions

It seems obvious, but it's easy to neglect, especially if older children are also present. I find myself often assuming the youngest child is "still a baby," and I speak exclusively to the older children. But the youngest needs practice, too. "How many men did Jesus heal?" "Why did he heal them? Because they were _____ [sick]." "How many came back to thank him [hold up one finger]?"

4. Take advantage of the "Why" phase

By the time they reach 3 years of age, many children learn how to ask "why" and never turn back. They ask it all the time. Don't be annoyed by it. In fact, you can *beat them to it*.

"Why did Jesus die? So we could have _____ [life]." "Why do we need Jesus? Because our hearts are _____ [sick]."

5. Ask leading questions

It's okay if your questions have obvious answers. The repetition over time is more

important than unique insight on the child's part. Young children excel at memorization, and asking the same questions over and over builds their foundation.

In our house, the mantra is: "How does God want you to obey?" Answer: right away, all the way, and with a cheerful heart.

That's followed by: "And why did Jesus die?" Answer: so we could have life.

Every Bible study connects in some way to these two questions.

When it comes to training my children, I don't want to be original. I want to be useful.

6. Give them Jesus

They need Jesus more than anything – more than Bible knowledge, more than life lessons, and more than good behavior. Even at age two, children can learn that "Jesus" is usually the right answer to any question.

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The Worst Consequence of Skipping Church

Tim Challies

We are a culture of convenience, of personalization, of individualism. We have a million ways of customizing our lives to perfectly suit our every preference. When things are difficult, we think little of pulling away from responsibilities, of reorienting our lives away from whatever causes inconven-

ience. This can even extend to something as good and as central as our commitment to the local church.

All of us who are involved in local churches have seen people waver and wander in their commitment. Most of us have had to extend the call to someone, to urge them back to participation, back to the worship services. When we do this, we often turn to our go-to text, Hebrews 10:24-25, to warn of the danger of “neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some...” We insist that those who neglect to participate in the local church will encounter spiritual temptation, spiritual decline, and even spiritual death. And while all of this is true, it is not the emphasis of that passage. In fact, when we use the passage in this way, we are not displaying the divine urgency behind the text, but our own deep-rooted individualism.

Here is what Hebrews 10:24-25 says: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” This passage does, indeed, warn of the serious consequences of skipping church, but its focus is not what we might expect through our Western, individualized eyes. This passage does not warn us that when we skip church we put ourselves at risk. Rather, it warns us that when we skip church we put other people at risk. The first sin of skipping church is the sin of failing to love others.

Gathering with God’s people is not first about being blessed but about being a blessing. It’s not first about getting but about giving. As we prepare to worship on Sunday

morning, our first consideration should be “how to stir up one another to love and good works.” We should approach Sunday deliberately, eager to do good to others, to be a blessing to them. In those times we feel our zeal waning, when we feel the temptation to skip out on a Sunday or withdraw altogether, we should consider our God-given responsibility to encourage “one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” This text is not about us, but about them. This text is not for Christian individuals but Christian communities.

And, of course, our commitment to the local church is far more than a commitment to Sunday morning services. It is a commitment to other people through all of life. It is a commitment to worship with them once or twice a week, then to fellowship with them, to serve them, and to pray for them all throughout the week. It is to bind ourselves together in a covenant in which we promise to do good to them, to make them the special object of our attention and encouragement. It is to promise that we will identify and deploy our spiritual gifts for their benefit so we can serve them, strengthen them, and bless them.

Every Christian has a place within a local church. Every Christian is needed within a local church. Every Christian has responsibilities within a local church. Every Christian is to commit to the members of a local church and to love them, to encourage them, and to stir them up in zeal until the day of Christ’s return.

Check out more of Tim’s blog articles at:
<https://www.challies.com/>

FUNNIES

The teacher had asked for a short definition of the word water. Little later Johnny's submission was: "Water is a light-colored wet liquid that turns dark when you wash it."

Panting and perspiring, two men on a tandem bicycle at last got to the top of the hill. "That was a stiff climb," said the first man. "It certainly was," relied the second man. "And if I hadn't kept the brake on, we would have slid down backward."

Henry goes to see his supervisor in the front office. "Boss," he says, "we're doing some heavy housecleaning at home tomorrow, and my wife needs me to help with the attic and the basement, moving and hauling stuff." "We're short-handed, Henry," the boss replies, "I can't give you the day off." "Thanks boss," says Jones. "I knew I could count on you."

A teenage girl stood watching as her dad, grandfather, and great-grandfather loaded tackle boxes, rods and bait to go on a fishing trip. As they got into the car, her grandfather asked with total confidence,

"What kind of fish do you want us to bring home for supper? "Well, if you're filling orders, I'd like bass," the girl replied. Then she grinned. "And Grandpa, don't pay over four dollars and fifty cents a pound."

What a pity human beings can't exchange problems. Everyone knows exactly how to solve the other fellow's.

One Sunday morning Pastor Dale advised his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. In preparation for my message I want you all to read Mark 17."

The following Sunday the pastor asked for a show of hands from those who had read Mark 17. Every hand went up. Pastor Dale smiled and announced, "Well, Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."

"I hope you didn't take it personally, Reverend," an embarrassed woman said after the church service, "when my husband walked out during your sermon."

"I did find it rather disconcerting," the preacher replied.

"It's not a reflection on you, sir," insisted the lady. "Ralph has been walking in his sleep ever since he was a child."