

Developing A Vision For Your Classroom

Introduction

We know Jesus; we know the Gospel message; but, do we know what we should do with the children? If our driving purpose is to “teach the lesson,” or to “fill the hour,” we might be missing the passion that could come from having a clear vision for our ministry to the kids!

1. **Your Favorite Child** – “Picture” a favorite child in your ministry (one you personally encounter). Hold onto that image.
2. **What Is “Vision?”** “Vision” is a clear purpose that:
 - a. Drives or propels you to action
 - b. Protects you from becoming “sidetracked”
 - c. Provides a base for evaluating your efforts
3. **Sources of Vision:**
 - a. **Fear** – Displeasing someone (your ministry leaders, parents, or the Lord).
 - b. **The Curriculum** – Accomplishing all that is expected in the lesson.
 - c. **Passion** – God using your relationship with Him, your past experiences and your understanding of today’s children.
4. **Significance?** – Which source of “vision” makes you a more significant person in a child’s life (that day and longer)?
5. **Do Without?** – Which source of “vision” could you minister without?
 - a. **Fear** – If you didn’t care what your ministry leaders, your coordinator, or the Lord thought, you might do something that could eventually lead to the end of your ministry! If you don’t care what people think... “**So, What?**”
 - b. **The Curriculum** – If you didn’t use the curriculum, God would still use you, but you wouldn’t “fit” into the overall plan for the children, you would become a “maverick.” If you don’t care what the curriculum says... “**So, What?**”
 - c. **Passion** – If you didn’t consider your own relationship with God, what He has taught you through your past experiences, or your understanding of today’s children, you might simply “go through the motions,” complete the lesson, get your paycheck, and go home. You may have no lasting impact on the kids’ lives! If you don’t care what God wants you to do in that precious time with the kids... “**So, What?**”
6. **So, What?** – If you just go through the motions of teaching kids, and have no real passion for what you’re doing, **So, What?**
7. **The Great Commission** – A “vision” for your classroom includes an understanding of the “Great Commission”
 - a. The word “commission” includes two words: “co” and “mission”
 - b. “Co” means connected with or sharing in an experience
 - c. “Mission” is a purpose or task.
 - d. We are sharing in God’s “mission” of bringing children to Him, and discipling them (“Co-missionaries”)
 - e. God says, “Come, sow with me!”
 - f. You might ask, “**Sow, What?**” What do we “sow”?
“**Sow, What?**” “**Sow the Gospel!**”



8. **4 Kinds of Kids / “Soils”** – There are 4 kinds of kids in your classroom – Parable of the Sower

- a. **The “Seed”** is the Word of God, the Gospel message
- b. **Path / Roadside Soil** – The child who doesn’t understand. **“Sow, What?”**
 - i. Know the child’s age-based level of understanding:
0-2 yrs. – “Sensory” stage (learns through the senses).
2-7 yrs. – “Pre-operational” stage (learns through “concrete” experiences; cannot understand “abstract” concepts)
7-11 yrs. – “Operational” stage (able to understand “abstract” concepts, the flow of time, logic, reason, etc.)
 - ii. Don’t use “religious jargon.” Use their words, and explain what you mean.
 - iii. Know the child’s spiritual level of understanding. Don’t assume he/she has had church experience or training.
 - iv. Put the Gospel story into his/her world (personalize with analogies).
- c. **Rocky Soil** – The child who understands; but, whose life is “just too hard.” **“Sow, What?”**
 - i. Surround the child with examples of successful Christianity.
 - ii. Go beyond the curriculum! Talk with him/her about life!
 - iii. Know the child’s learning process. Advance them through the levels
Level 1 – **“Knowing”** (knowing the Bible truth)
Level 2 – **“Understanding”** (understanding what the Bible truth means)
Level 3 – **“Recognizing”** (recognizing the Bible truth’s value in his/her life)
Level 4 – **“Practicing”** (practicing the Bible truth in his/her daily life)
- d. **Thorny Soil** – The child who understands; but, is too interested in “other things.” **“Sow, What?”**
 - i. Know the struggles he/she faces.
 - ii. Make the class time count with creative and relative teaching techniques.
- e. **Good Soil** – The child who understands, and commits his/her life to Jesus. **“Sow, What?”**
 - i. Encourage his/her spiritual growth and choices.
 - ii. Publically compliment him/her.
 - iii. Get him/her involved in service to others.
 - iv. Increase challenges and leadership opportunities



9. **“Soil Sampling”** – Ways to get to “sample the soil” of the children in your class

- a. Watch them play and interact.
- b. Listen to them talk to each other.
- c. Watch the TV shows they watch.
- d. Watch the movies they watch.
- e. Read articles about children.
- f. Interview school teachers.
- g. Interview parents.
- h. Interview children.
- i. Remember your own childhood.



10. Enhance Your VISION For Your Classroom:



- a. **V**ictory in Christ / spirit filled
 - i. Jesus had the victory, and He knew it. (Mt. 4:10)
 - ii. Focus your eyes on Jesus (Col. 3:1)
 - iii. **Remember**, *"It is no longer I who [teach], but Christ who [teaches] in me..."* (Gal. 2:20)
- b. **I**n "Co-mission" with Jesus
 - i. Jesus knew what He was about. (John 12:46)
 - ii. Pray for a greater understanding/awareness of your "co-mission" with Jesus.
 - iii. Pray for your children to know Jesus, and to honor Him with their lives.
 - iv. Tell Jesus you are His, and you need His creativity!
 - v. **Remember**, You are carrying out the "Great Commission"
"Go and make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you to the very end of the age." (Mt. 28:19, 20)
- c. **S**criptures
 - i. Jesus knew and used the scriptures. (Mt. 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38)
 - ii. Read and absorb the scriptures (not just for the lesson!).
 - iii. **Remember**, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing the Word of God."* (Rom. 10:17)
 - iv. **Remember**, *"All scripture is inspired by God..."* (2 Tim. 3:16)
- d. **I**nsights about life
 - i. Jesus always connected spiritual concepts to daily living. (Mt. 6:1-7)
 - ii. Use your own life experiences (cautiously) to teach the kids.
 - iii. **Remember**, *"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction."* (2 Tim. 4:2)
- e. **O**rganize your lesson for impact
 - i. Jesus did things in order, and knew what He was doing beforehand. (John 2:1-12)
 - ii. Review the lesson early in the week (Monday!).
 - iii. Pray for creative wisdom, discernment, and insight as you prepare for your lesson
 - iv. Plan to focus your classroom activities on evangelism (leading children to a personal relationship with Jesus).
 - v. Plan to focus your classroom activities on discipleship (applying the lesson to the child's family, friends, and enemies).
 - vi. Plan to let the children interact with the lesson (ask questions, make comments, share fears, etc.).
 - vii. Plan to make the lesson fun!
 - viii. **Remember**, *"This we do to present every [child] mature in Christ."* (Col. 1:28)
- f. **N**otice the kids
 - i. Jesus knew His disciples and those around Him. (John 6:60-65)
 - ii. Pay attention to each child/soil – give them eye contact, listen to them, respect them.
 - iii. Pray for the needs/interests of your children (not just your "favorite" ones) by name.
 - iv. Pray for your children's parents.
 - v. **Remember**, *"Bear one another's burdens..."* (Gal. 6:2)
 - vi. **Remember**, *"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."* (Rom. 12:15)

11. Jesus Values Your Children:

- a. They are to be respected.
"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in Heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in Heaven." (Mt. 18:10)
- b. They are examples of innocence, "teachability," humility, and trust.
"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." (Mt. 18:3, 4)
- c. They are representatives of Jesus.
"Whoever receives one little child like this in My name, receives Me." (Mt. 18: 5)
- d. They must be encouraged to know Jesus as Savior.
"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. And he took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them." (Mark 10:14-16)
- e. They must be protected from the evils of this world.
"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin (stumble), it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Mt. 18:6)



12. "Who, What, Where?"

- a. **Who** is God in your life? (Mission)
- b. **Who** are you (interests, calling, passions)?
- c. **Who** are the children (needs, interests, fears, challenges)?
- d. **What** does God want you to do / why did He place you in this position?
- e. **Where** are you taking the children (to Jesus, and to deeper walks with Him)?

