

Games That Teach



Using Activities to Reinforce the Lesson Objectives

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Games That Teach

The Bible lesson is the central focal point of the morning's activity. To make sure the kids remember what we teach, all classroom activities – worship, the memory verse, craft, or game – should reinforce the main Bible lesson concept.

Games are a great way to review knowledge and learn social skills, such as sportsmanship and team play. Games also teach vocabulary, as well as clarify values, attitudes, and character. There are three basic types of games: Lesson Review games, Verse Memorization games, and games that teach Biblical principles.

Lesson Review Games

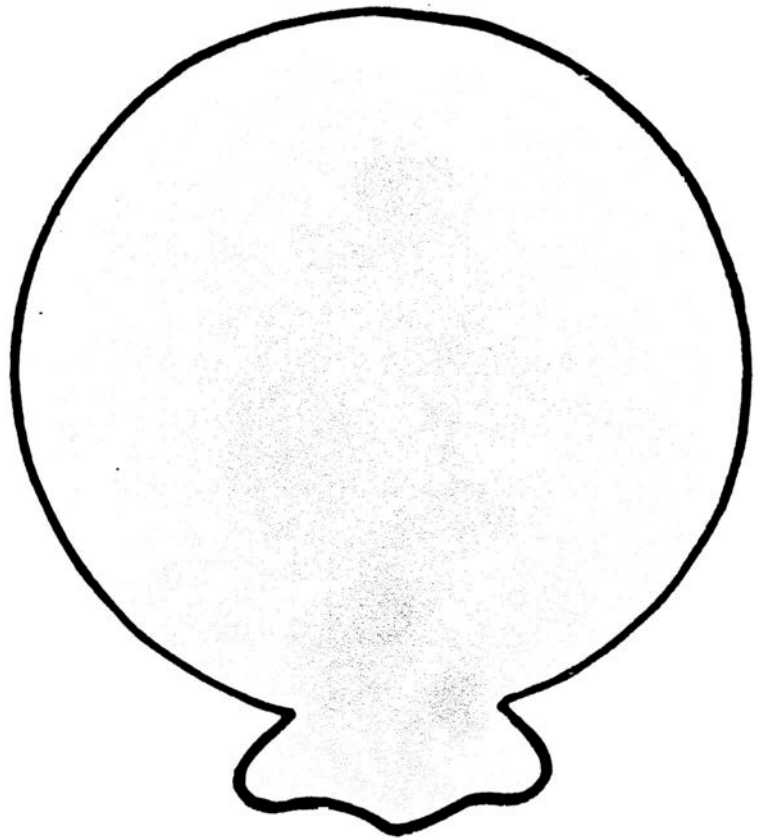
Review games add zest to the class while reinforcing the main thrust of the Bible Lesson. With a set of lesson review questions, you can make a game out of any challenge, such as a bean bag or ball toss.

All of us know that children have different mental and physical skills. It's good to vary games according to these skills to allow each child to feel good about his accomplishments during the game time. For example, a child who is not well coordinated will withdraw or become discouraged if all the games center on physical challenges or abilities. The opposite is also true. A child who does not do as well with recitation and memory challenges will be uneasy if the games always focus on answering questions. By varying the type of participation required in a game, each child will be able to play games that fit his abilities and encourage him to feel good about himself and his experience at church. For example, let's say the challenge is to use a foam bow and arrow to hit a balloon. One week you may have the children answer a question correctly to receive a point and the opportunity to try to hit the balloon with the bow and arrow for a bonus point. The next week you may have each child who hits the balloon get a point and then the opportunity to answer a question for the bonus point.

Here are some ideas on how to keep the learning spirit alive in your students using Review Games:

Ask-It-Basket —

Write the review questions on separate pieces of paper. Wad them up into balls and put them in a decorated basket. Ask each child to choose a question to answer.



Balloon Game —

Make 12 balloons from different colors of felt. Place point values on the back of each piece (100, 300, 400, etc.) Divide the class into two teams. For a correctly answered review question, the team may choose a balloon. The number on the back is credited to that team. The team with the most points wins.

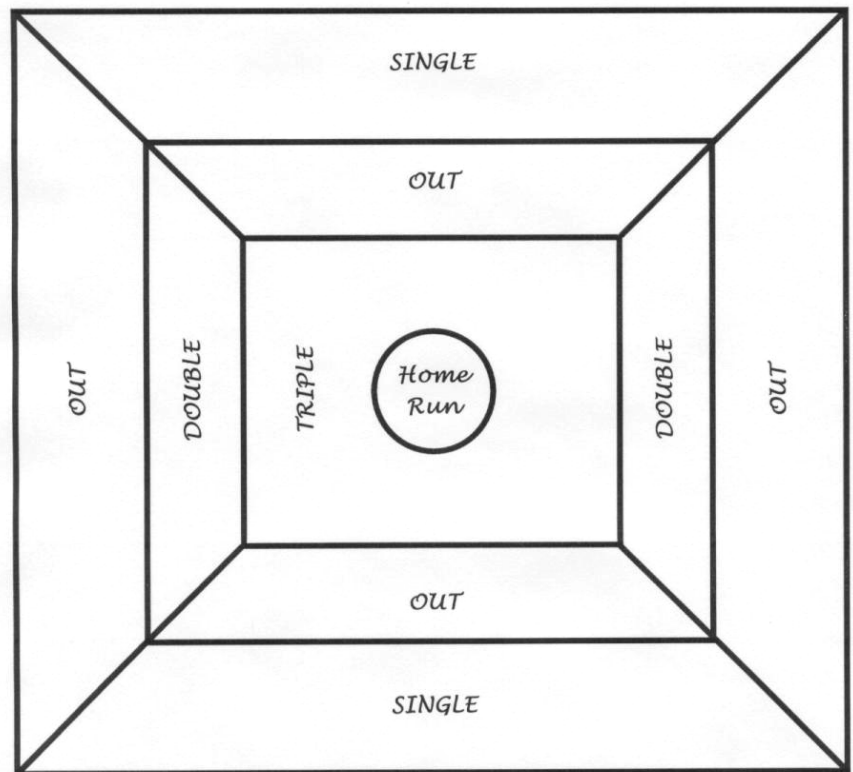
Bible Baseball #1 —

PREPARATION:

1. Draw and label a target on a large sheet of paper (see sketch). Make sure it is large enough for students to hit easily.
2. Mark a baseball diamond in the room: Home Plate, First Base, Second Base, and Third Base.

PROCEDURE:

1. Divide class into two teams.
2. First child “up” answers a Review Question and then throws a coin or a bean bag onto the target.
3. If the child gets an “out” he goes to the end of the line, otherwise the child moves around to the appropriate place: first base for a single, second base for a double, third base for a triple, all the way around and back to home plate for a home run.
4. If a student missed the target completely, he or she may have another chance to throw.
5. After a team has three outs, the other team is “up to bat.”



Bible Baseball #2 —

Students answer review questions, roll a die, and make their way around the bases to earn points for their team.

Using masking tape, setup three bases and home plate in a diamond shape; mark the pitcher’s mound in the middle.

Have one team line up at home plate while the other team waits in their chairs or stand on the sideline.

The student at bat will roll the die to determine the “hit” based on the following (write on board for everyone to see):

- 1 = single
- 2 = double
- 3 = triple
- 4 = home run
- 5 = walk
- 6 = foul ball

A “walk” means he can go to first base without answering a question. A “foul ball” means he can roll again. Three foul balls in a row is a strike!

Once the hit is determined (#1-4), teacher ask a review question from the pitcher’s mound. If the student answers correctly, he can advance around the bases according to his roll. If he answers incorrectly, it is a strike for his team, and he goes to the back of the line. After three strikes, a team is out. Unless they strike out, allow all team members to come to bat once and then switch teams at bat.

Remember that the hits will move any team members already on base. Each time a student scores a run for the team they get a point.

Keep track of strikes and runs for each team. Play for a set number of innings or as time permits.

Battle of Knowledge —

Materials: Masking tape, bean bag,

Procedure:

1. Cut out 8 red circles and eight black circles.
2. Write 16 Review questions.
3. Create a sixteen-sectioned grid on the floor with the masking tape, four sections wide and four sections deep.

●	●	○	○
●	○	○	○
●	●	○	○
●	●	●	○

4. Divide the class into two teams – the Reds and the Blacks
5. To win the game, your team must get four circles in a row. Taking turns each team throws the bean bag into an unoccupied square. If the team answers a Review Question correctly, they get to put one of their circles in that square. If the team answers incorrectly, the other team gets a chance to answer the same question. If the other team answers correctly, they get to put one of their circles in the square. Once a circle is in a square it cannot be removed.
6. Teams can work together to answer the question, but each team member must take a turn throwing the bean bag.

If neither team gets four in a row the game is a draw.

Basket Ball —

For every right answer, the child gets three shots at basketball. Each basket is worth 200 points.

Big Question Mark —

Make a huge question mark with little slits. In the slits place small coin-shaped pieces that have point values on them. For every correct answer, the team gets to choose a piece for points. Zonk! Means none.

Bowling —

Spray-paint 10 2-liter-sized, plastic soda bottles. Set them up like bowling pins. Have each child take a turn, using a rubber ball. For a correct answer to a review question, a child gets an opportunity to bowl. The child or team gets a point for every pin knocked down.

Concentration —

Make two sets of cards with words or pictures that reinforce your lesson objectives. For a correctly answered question, the child may turn two cards over to see if they match.

Variation: match attributes of God, Armor of God pieces, Beatitudes, etc. Team with the most matches wins.

Heaven Concentration: Prepare 16 identical white clouds for the flannel board or tacky board. On the back, write one of the following messages; use each message twice:

- God is powerful
- No more death
- No crying there
- A city of pure gold
- No night there
- No pain there
- A river clear as crystal
- 12 Gates, each one pearl

Draw Dice —

Teams will answer review questions and roll a die to complete a simple drawing to win.



For a correctly answered question, teammate rolls one die, to determine what part of the body they can draw on the white board. First team that finishes their mouse wins.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they roll a six. Then they can draw other body parts according to these numbers (write on board for everyone to see):

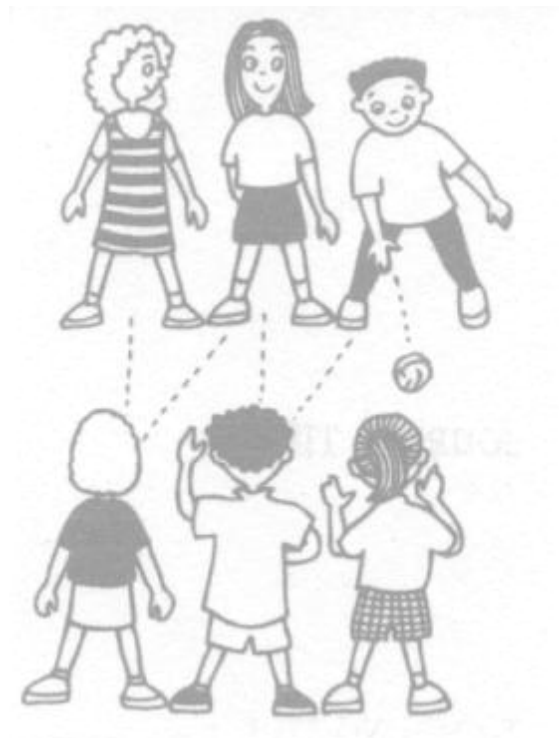
- 6 = body
- 5 = nose
- 4 = whiskers
- 3 = eyes
- 2 = ears
- 1 = tail

Dodge the Question —

Divide the children into two groups. Have one group form a large circle and instruct the other group to stand inside the circle. Give the outside circle a nerf ball. Then tell the children inside the circle to dodge the ball. If a child is hit, he must answer one of the review questions and then join the other circle. Play continues in this manner. Groups exchange places when the last child has been hit; winners are those last to be hit.

Fishers of Men Game —

1. Cut out pictures of men, women and children from magazines.
2. Glue a small paper clip to the back of each.
3. Write a number on the back to correspond with the number of the question.
4. Tie a magnet to a piece of string; tie the string to a twig or small branch.
5. Put the questions in a bucket or similar size object (not metal).
6. Each child comes up one at a time and "fishes". If more than one "fish" is caught, they decide which one they want and throw the others back in the bucket.
7. Ask questions that correspond with the number on the back of the "fish".
8. Give prizes or team points for right answers.



Foil Ball —

Materials: Bibles, music, aluminum foil, one marble.

Preparation: Make several small balls from pieces of foil. Hide a marble in the center of one foil ball.

Procedures:

Lead students in a tossing game. Divide class into two groups. Groups line up facing each other, leaving about 3 feet between the two lines.

Using the foil ball with the marble in it, students toss the ball down the lines in a zigzag pattern. When the balls get to the end of the line, the last student in each line runs to the front of his or her line and then tosses the ball to the student across from him or her. Practice a few rounds so that students get used to tossing and catching the ball in the correct pattern.

Play music while students play the game again. Add the additional balls you prepared so that students are tossing three or four balls down the line at the same time. After a few moments, stop the music. Students unwrap the foil balls they are holding. Student holding the ball containing the marble answers one of the discussion questions below. Rewrap foil balls and play additional rounds as time allows.

Good Fruit Bad Fruit —

Cut 12 apples from red felt. On the back of each of six apples, print good attributes: Self-control, faith, generosity, humility, thankfulness, patience. On the back of the other six, draw a big worm. On the worm print one of these bad attitudes: anger, fear, selfishness, pride, complaining, impatience.

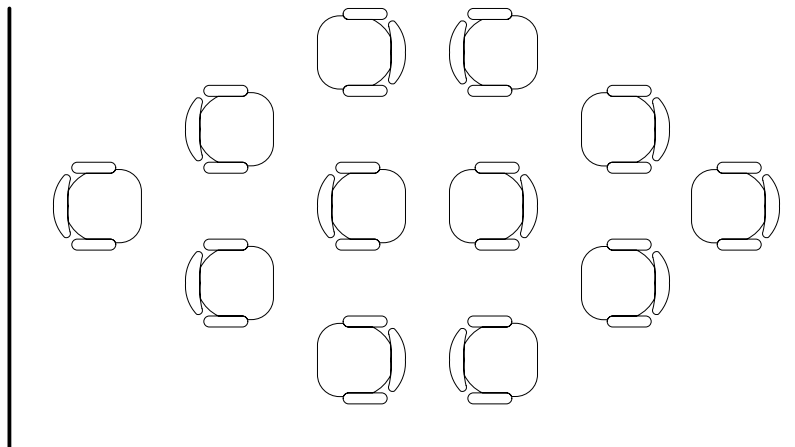


Divide your group into two teams. Put apples on flannel board. When team one answers a review question, let them choose an apple. See if it is a good or bad fruit. Then give team two a turn. See which team can collect the most good apples.

Human Foosball —

Materials: Chairs, masking tape, ball.

Preparation: Arrange chairs as shown in sketch, making sure there is one chair for each student. Use making tape to mark goal lines at both ends of the playing area.



Procedure:

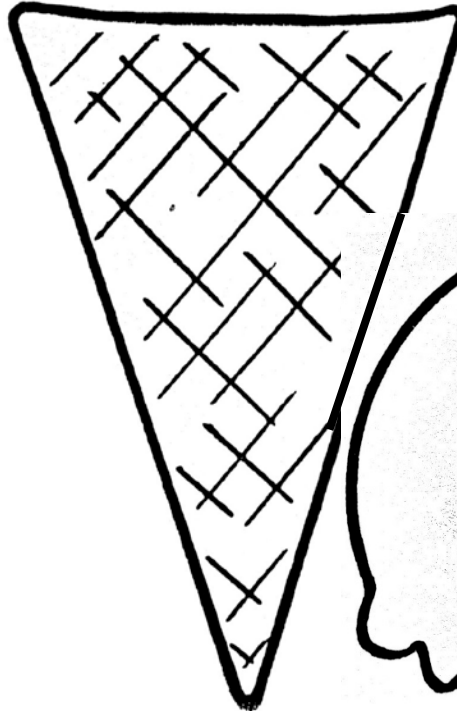
Students sit in chairs, facing the direction shown in sketch. Students facing the same direction are on the same team. Drop a ball in the middle of the chairs. While remaining in chairs and without using their

hands, students “pass” the ball (using feet only) in the same direction they are facing. To score a goal, the ball must be passed by at least two people on that team before crossing the goal line. First team to score a goal answers a review question.

Ice Cream Cones —

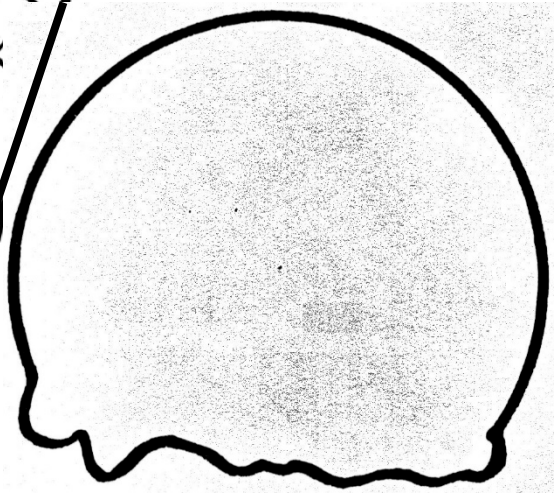
Cut out cone shapes from felt of different flavors (colors) of ice

Divide the children into two teams. review question, the team may add one flavor on their cone. The team with the most “scoops” on their cone wins.



Make 10 “scoops” (circles) cream to fit the cones.

For a correctly answered



Longest String —

Cut yarn into 12 different lengths and put each piece through a cup of an egg carton with only a short end showing on the bottom. For a correctly answered review question, the child gets to pull a string of yarn. The child with the longest string is the winner. For variety, cut another yarn the exact length of one of the pieces in the egg carton, and put it in your pocket. The winner would be the one who pulls out the string of yarn the same length as yours.

Key Word Match

Preparation:

1. Make two sets of key words from the lesson on large squares of colored construction paper.
2. Tape the squares face down on the white board.

Play:

Form the children into two teams. The first player from the first team turns over two cards. If the cards match, the child (with the help of his team) must tell why that key word is significant in the context of the lesson. If the answer is correct, they get to keep the matched set. If the answer is incorrect, then the other team has an opportunity to explain why that word is important to the story. If they get a right answer, they get the matched set. Whichever team has the most matched sets at the end is the winning team. Let the winning team squirt the other team with silly string or bombard them with marshmallows.

Memory Toss —

Before class, roll six sheets of colored paper into cone shapes. Tape each cone securely and trim it around the top edge. Write a number from 1 to 3 on the front of each cone. Write 1 on three cones, 2

on two cones, and 3 on one cone. Tack the cones to a wall or bulletin board in a pyramid pattern with the open end of the cones facing upward. Explain the game to the children as follows: Each player can earn three chances to toss Ping-Pong balls into the cones by correctly answering a review question. The number on the front of the cones is the number of points the child's team gets if the ball lands in that cone.

Move Around the Path Game —

On a manila folder, or piece of construction paper, draw a path with sections on it. For a correctly answered question, the child gets to move a marker one step on the path. The first person to the end of the path wins. You may want to decorate the game with colorful stickers.

Variation: Make a human-sized game board by using a piece of construction paper for each path square. Lay them out on the floor and let the children move on the steps of the path.

Musical Numbers —

Preparation:

- Number construction paper squares, one for each question, and tape them randomly to the walls.
- Number slips of paper, one for each review question, and put them into a lunch sack.

Procedure:

- Have the children walk around the room as you play music.
- When the music stops, have the children quickly place their hand on one of the numbers on the wall. Only one student per number.
- Pick a number slip from the sack.
- Whoever has his hand on the number drawn from the sack must answer that review question. For example, if you pick a slip that has the number 2 on it, the student with his hand on the 2 must answer the second review question.
- Remove that number from the sack and repeat procedure.

Pick A Shape —

For a correct answer, the child gets to choose a colorful shape (circle, square, triangle, etc.) that has a secret amount of points behind it. The team with the most points wins.

Ping Pong Ball Toss —

Write point numbers in the cups of two egg cartons. Place the two cartons long sides together. Divide the children into two teams. Give a child from each team 3 tosses of the ball for every right answer. The team with the highest points gets two pieces of candy while the other team gets one piece.

Pop-The-Question —

Write the review questions on separate slips of paper and insert them into balloons. Blow them up. Let the children pop a balloon, one at a time, and answer the question. Small children may wish to have

someone else pop their balloon for them.

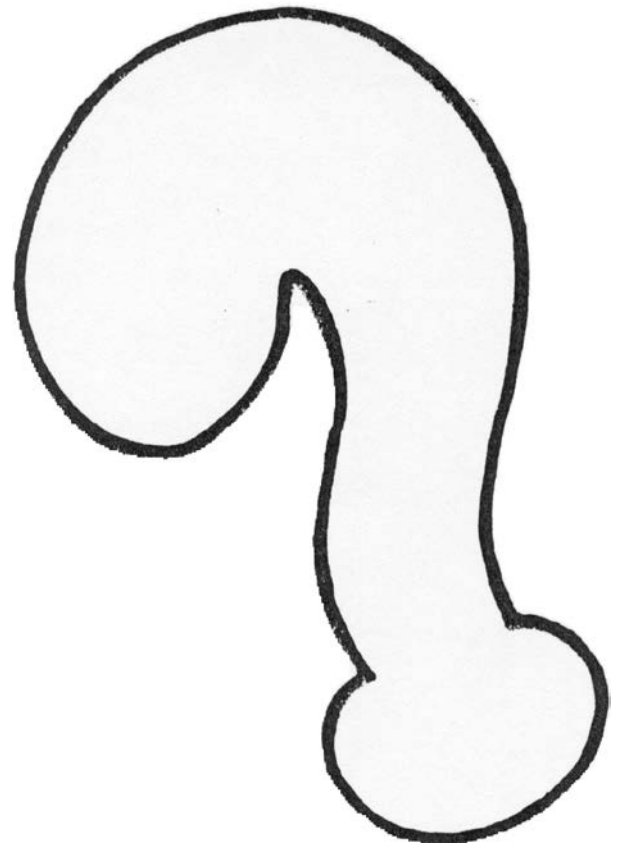
Variations:

- Insert numbers that correspond to a list of questions instead of the questions.
- Put the game point values on slips of paper in the balloon. So, for every right answer they can pop a balloon and see what points their team gets.
- Each child gets a chance to throw a ball into a basketball hoop. For making a basket, the child gets to choose a balloon, pop it and try to answer the question. His team gets 50 points for every right answer.

Question Marks —

Make a large question mark pattern. Use the pattern to cut out a question mark shape for each question. For a correctly answered review question, the child may choose a question mark. On the back of the question mark, have written “Zonk,” “Sorry,” “Winner,” or “Bull’s Eye.” Award a small prize or candy for “Winner” and a larger one for “Bull’s Eye.”

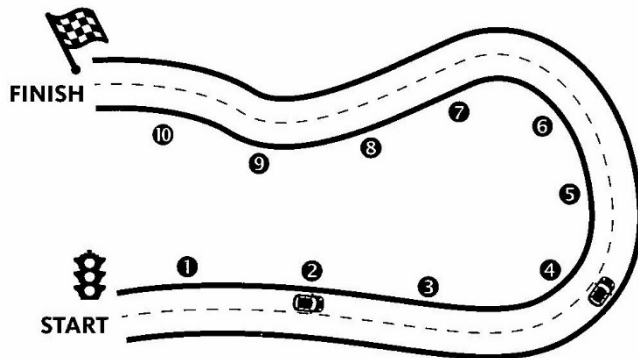
Variation: Put point values on the backs of the question marks.



Racetrack —

Teams will race to Finish by correctly answering review questions.

Draw a simple racetrack on the whiteboard. Label “Start” and “Finish” (with a checkered flag). Add numbers along the track (1 – 10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement marks for the racers as they progress along the track.



If using a whiteboard, attach cutout “cars” to magnets to move along as the players correctly answer review questions.

For a correctly answered review question, the team moves their marker to the next number. If they answer incorrectly, give the other team a chance to answer that question. If neither team knows, give the answer and ask that question again later. The first team to reach the Finish line wins!

Toss for it —

Students toss a beanbag to earn points for correctly answered review questions.

Place several rows of numbered playing cards face down with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern. (Make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too!) Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

For a correctly answered review question, a player tosses the beanbag onto a card, reveal the points he received for his team.

Numbered cards = 50 point

Face cards = 100 points

Aces = 200 points

Jokers = 0 points (or, 150, if you prefer!)

If the child answers incorrectly, give the other team a chance to answer that question. If neither team knows, give the answer and ask that question again later. Have student pick up the card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game.

Shuffle Board Target Toss —

For a correct answer, the child gets to toss a bean bag at a shuffle board pattern on the floor to win points for his team. The team with the most points wins.

Snow Ball Fight —

Print each question on a separate piece of paper. Wad the papers up and let the children have a "snow ball" fight with them. When you say, "Stop!" they have to take turns answering the question in their "snow ball."

Spin the Number —

Make a list of review questions into a game. Number the children, and then use a spinner to see who will be the questioner. Spin again to see who will be the responder. Individually cut out the questions (without the answers!) onto strips of paper and place them in a bowl.

Target Review —

Make a 20-inch felt target with two or three rings and a bull's-eye. Then cut out different-colored felt for each ring, giving the rings a point value (5, 10, 15, and 25 for the bull's eye). Make an ample supply of felt arrows in two different colors. Then make up a list of review questions, giving them point values to correspond with your target.

Divide the class into two teams. Appoint a team to go first. Give the first player from that team the opportunity to choose a question by point value. If he answers correctly let him put his arrow on the proper ring or bull's-eye. (If the child chooses a 10-point question and answers correctly, he places his arrow on the 10 ring of the target.) If he answers incorrectly, he receives no points. At the end of the game add up the points. The team with the most points wins.

Three Sacks —

Have three sacks, mark one **NAMES**, one **QUESTIONS**, and one **TREATS**, or use **Who**, **?**, and **!**



In the NAME sack, put the names of each child on separate slips of paper.

In the QUESTIONS sack print each question on a separate paper. (If you are pressed for time, put the numbers from 1 to 10, then read the questions.)

In the TREATS sack place treats to reward correct responses or points to score for the team.

To play, draw name from the first sack. That person draws a question from the second sack. If he answers correctly, he removes a treat from the third sack. If the answer is wrong, the question is returned to the sack and another name is drawn.

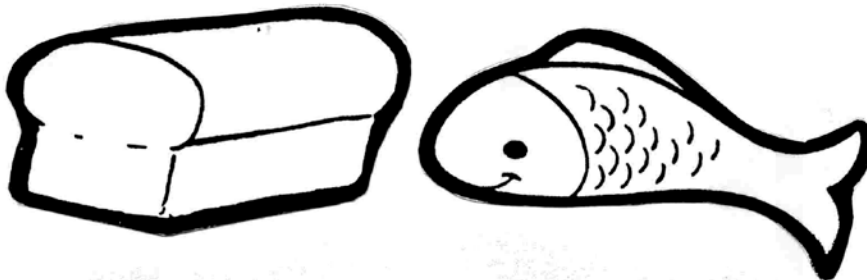
Tick-Tack-Toe —

Divide the class into two teams, the "X" team and the "O" team. Direct a review question to one child from the "X" team. If he answers correctly, he gets to put an "X" on the grid. If he answers incorrectly, give a member of the "O" team a chance to answer the same question. Alternate the questions between the two teams. The team that gets three symbols in a straight line or five symbols on the grid wins the game.

Variation: You can make a Human Tick-Tack-Toe Game using masking tape on the floor to make a large grid. If the child answers correctly he gets to choose a square to stand in.

Fish and Bread Tic-Tack-Toe

1. Cut out strips of paper for the lines of tic-tac-toe (or use yarn).
2. Give one team "fish" pieces; the other team "bread" pieces.
3. When a team correctly answers a question, they can place their marker in a square.



4. The team that gets three in a row across, diagonally or vertically is the winner.

True/False Game —

Before class, write several short sentences about the lesson on slips of paper. Write both true and false statements. Fold the strips of paper and put them in a box. Divide the class into two or more teams. Have the children take turns going to the box and drawing a slip of paper. Read aloud the statement; then let the child say whether the statement is true or false. If the answer is correct, give the child's team 100 points. The team with the most points after the last slip of paper is drawn is the winner.

“Who?” “What?” or “Where?” —

Before class, write several Who, What, and Where questions pertaining to the lesson. Cut a triangle, a square, and a circle in the bottom of a cardboard box. Make the openings big enough for a beanbag. Decorate the box and label the shapes "Who," "What," and "Where."

When a child throws a beanbag through a shape he may select a card of the corresponding shape with a question to answer for points for his team.

Who or What Am I —

Before class, write short riddles on individual slips of paper based on this week's lesson. Provide one riddle per child. Put the slips of paper in a container. Let each child draw a riddle. Read it aloud and let the child try to answer it. If he cannot, let the other children respond. For example:

1. My blood was put on the door posts of all Israelite houses. What am I? (A lamb)
2. I caused much sadness for the Egyptians when I came to their houses one night. What am I? (Death)
3. I asked Pharaoh many times to let the Israelites go. Who am I? (Moses)
4. I was Moses' brother. Who am I? (Aaron)

Award 100 points if the child correctly guesses on the first clue, 50 points for the second, 25 for the third.

Alternatives to this game would be as follows:

- Pin the names of the characters we have been studying about on the backs of the children. Each child has to guess who they are by asking yes or no questions of the other children.
- Let the class give the child clues to what character they are.
- Let the child have the class guess who he is; let the child ask the class questions to see who can guess which character he is.

ZONK! —

Make 60 1" square felt pieces. On the backs stick labels with point values. Make 10 each of the following: 50, 150, 250, 750, 1000, and ZONK!

To play, place all pieces, point-side down, on flannel board. As the student answers a review question correctly, he chooses as many pieces as he wants, continuing to add up the points. If he pulls off a "ZONK!" he forfeits all his points for that turn (not the whole game). The team with the most points wins the game. This game often leads to a discussion on greed.

Caution: This game is very competitive. Help your students to become encouragers, not “discouragers.”

Lesson Review Games without Questions

Bingo —

Make Bingo cards using words from your lesson. Enter words at random into the spaces to create unique Bingo cards for each player. Copy each card onto a different colored card stock and laminate them for future use. Call out the words, one-by-one. If a child has that word, he places a marker over it. The first child to get a row of markers in any direction is the winner.

		FREE		

Great for lesson terminology review such as the Fruit of the Spirit, Armor of God, Attributes of God, Beatitudes, etc.

Categories Game —

Preparation: Make game cards for more than one category. The categories can be *Who, What, and Where; People, Places, Things*, or they can be various books of the Bible. Within each category make two cards for each of the following point values: 50, 200, 500, and 1,000.

The game has two variations: *Method #1:* have “questions” on the cards. *Method #2:* have “answers” on the cards. (Like, “Name that Word” or the “Possum Lodge Word Game”.)

To play: Divide the class into 2 team and have kids work in pairs within the team. Two children come up, choose a category and then decide what point value they want to go for within that category.

Method #1: The first child asks the second child the question on the card. If the second child doesn't know the answer he can ask for clues. For every clue given, 10 points gets taken off the total. For example, if the second child doesn't know the answer to “How large was Gideon's army?” the first child can give a clue like, “It was less than 1,000.”

Method #2: The first child has 30 seconds to get the second child to say the word that's on the card. For example, if the card picked says, “Esther” on it, the first child begins to give clues such as, “This woman became the Queen of Persia,” “She was raised by Mordecai,” and so on. The first child can give as many clues as he wants to but he cannot say any of the words on the card.

Easter Egg Scramble —

Cut twelve egg-shaped pieces out of construction paper. On each egg make a little drawing that pertains to the events in the Passion Story. Number the inside of each egg cup.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. A palm branch to depict Palm Sunday | 7. Jesus on the cross—the Crucifixion |
| 2. Jesus kneeling by a tree—the Garden of Gethsemane | 8. Two men wrapping Jesus for burial—Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus placing Jesus in the tomb |
| 3. A cup and loaf—Last Supper | 9. A sealed tomb |
| 4. A foot and basin of water—Jesus washing disciples' feet | 10. The empty tomb—the Resurrection |
| 5. Jesus in front of an angry crowd—Trial before Pilate | 11. A boy kneeling before Jesus—Thomas believes |
| 6. A man yelling at a woman—Peter's denial | 12. A curtain torn from top to bottom |

Make two sets and have teams “scramble” the eggs and race to see which team can place the pieces into the egg carton in the correct order first.

Figures and Shapes —

After your lesson, put the main figures on the flannel board. Cover them with large shapes (Yellow Square, Blue Diamond, etc.) One at a time have each child choose a shape and see if he or she can identify and tell a little about the story figure underneath. Play until all shapes are removed.

Mystery Word —

Before class have a “Mystery” word written on a paper and hidden somewhere in the classroom. Before you begin your lesson, tell the children to listen for a “Mystery” word during your teaching, and then

afterwards ask the children to guess what the “Mystery” word is. The class will not only listen to every word of your lesson, but a discussion of the words they guess is also a good review. Pull the “Mystery” word out of hiding to show them what it is. Award a small prize or candy to the first person to guess the hidden word.

Pictionary or Charades —

Make game cards using lesson themes from the past few weeks. Alternate between teams. Give one minute to guess the topic. If Team A guesses correctly they get 1,000 points. If team A doesn't guess it, but Team B does, then Team B gets 500 points.

Picture Match —

Using several Bible pictures of people and events (possibly from your curriculum), have the children match a Bible person with an event in that person's life. For example, Noah/ark, Jonah/fish, etc.

What's Missing? —

Seat the children in a circle. Put pictures of objects in the center of the circle. Tell the children to look carefully at all of the objects and try to remember what is there. Then have them close their eyes while you take away one of the objects. Have them open their eyes and see if they know what is missing. Use Bible-related items or themes from your lesson.

“What's It” Box —

Decorate a small box. (A large Oatmeal container works well.) Inside place small objects, small pictures or felt figures which relate to the Bible lesson. Allow the children to pull the object out arrange the objects in the correct sequence of events and re-tell the story. This works well for the events surrounding the last week of Jesus' life. Into some plastic Easter eggs, put objects pertaining to the events such as 30 dimes (for pieces of silver), a sponge, bread, rope, picture of a purple robe, dice, cross, angel, thorn, nail, piece of white linen, small plastic palm tree, etc. Number the outside of each egg and let the children put the objects into the correct sequence.

Variation: you can number the cups in an egg carton and have the children place the items in the correct egg cup.

Verse Memorization Games

Games and songs are a great way to help people memorize Scripture. For example, you can play one of the following games:

Block Head —

Divide the children into teams. Have a set of small blocks for each team. As each team member correctly says the next word of a memory verse, he places another block on the stack. The tower becomes more precarious as the game continues, and the winning team is the one who can say the whole verse without toppling their tower.

Button, Button —

Seat the children in a circle with their hands cupped together in their laps. Go around the circle, pretending to drop the button into each child's hands. Then actually drop the button into the hands of one player. Whoever receives the button must say the memory verse. That player may then proceed to drop the button into another child's hands. If time permits, try to make sure every child gets the button at least once.

Choir Director —

As if directing a choir, use hand signals to command the class to say the verse fast, slow, boys only, girls only, loud, soft, just move mouth, while wiggling, etc. Children learn by rhythm, rhyme and repetition.

Variation: Make different "choir" groups such as the Loud group, the Soft group, or the Whisper group.

Clapping —

A clap rhythm is a great way to reinforce memorization. Make clap rhythms such as 2 syllables = 2 claps.

Variation: replace a word with a clap, until you clap the whole verse. Then you can reverse it: add a word in place of a clap until you say the whole verse.

Clock Memory Review —

Make a clock. Instead of marking the hour numbers on the clock, use a verse reference or a symbol of a verse children have learned. Move the large hand of the clock to the first reference. The first child who can correctly quote the verse has the privilege of moving the hand to another reference for the next child.

Variation: Use both clock hands, one for the reference, and the other for an outstanding word in the verse. Point the small hand to the word and the large hand to the corresponding reference.

Crazy Stand-ups —

Have all the children stand up and repeat the verse who have eaten breakfast, have blond hair, have a pet, who are a certain age, etc.

Echo —

You say a word, they repeat it back.

Flash Card Game —

Make two sets of memory verse cards, printing one word of the memory verse on each card. Divide the class into two groups. Scramble each set of cards and give each group a set. The first group to lay their memory verse cards down in the correct order wins. (Make four sets of cards for a larger class.)

Variation: The older children can arrange the younger ones in the right order as they hold the cards.

Hide a Verse —

Using poster paper, print the verse and cut it into a jigsaw puzzle. Hide the pieces around the room before the players arrive. See how quickly they can find the pieces and form a complete puzzle.

Hop Scotch —

Cut out paper stones, one for each word in the verse. Put them on the floor and have a child step on each stone as he/she says the next word in the verse.

Hot and Cold Game —

Bring an object to class to use as a “treasure.” Display the object; then send one child out of the classroom for a moment. While he is gone, hide the treasure somewhere in the room. Let the child return. The other players must guide the child’s search for the treasure by calling “cold” when he is far away, “cool” when nearer, then “warm,” and finally “hot!” When the child locates the object, he earns the chance to say this week’s memory verse. Stress that the player who is “It” must trust the other players to give him good directions. If he obeys the instructions, he will find the treasure. This is how it is when we trust Jesus and obey His commands.

Hot Potato —

Repeat the verse together several times. Ask for volunteers to say the verse by themselves. Then have the children sit in a circle. As they pass a small object (ball, potato, orange, or stuffed animal) around the circle the children should say each successive word in the verse as quickly as possible. When you call “stop,” whoever is holding the object must say the memory verse.

Variation: Pass a prize around the circle as the children repeat the verse. Whoever is holding the prize when the verse is completed drops out. The last child to be eliminated receives the prize.

I’m Thinking of a Verse —

Say, “I’m thinking of a verse that is found in John” or “I’m thinking of a verse that has ‘perish’ in it.” Keep giving clues until someone gives the correct answer.

Variation: The child who gives the correct answer may then give a clue for another verse.

Memory Toss —

After reciting the verse several times, toss a small object (ball, potato, orange, or stuffed animal) to a child to say the verse alone. Let the child then toss the object to another child who in turn must say the verse.

Mystery Verse —

Write a mystery verse on the board before class using only the first letter of each word. For example, write “B O T L J C A Y S B S A 16:31” on the board.

Musical Memory Verse —

A melody line is a great way to reinforce memorization. Using a familiar tune or jingle, sing the verse with the children several times until the verse is thoroughly learned.

Pass It On —

Have the children sit in a circle. Whisper the verse in the ear of the first child; then let that child whisper it into the ear of the next child and so on from one person to the next.

Ping-Pong —

Line the children up in two rows facing each other. Toss a beanbag back and forth saying the next word of the memory verse.

Popcorn —

Have the children sit in a circle. Then, one word at a time, have the children pop up to say the next word in the memory verse, then sit down. See how fast the popcorn can pop!

Relay Race —

Write the words of the memory verse (including the reference) in scrambled order on the chalkboard. Then draw a vertical line down the middle of the chalkboard. Divide the group into two teams (boys against girls). At a signal, let one child from each team come forward and print the first word of the memory verse on the chalkboard. As soon as they are finished, they should hurry back to their teams. The next person will then go up and print the second word. The first team to finish the memory verse is the winner.

Variation: Print each word or word phrase from the Memory Verse on separate large-sized sticky notes. Make a set for each team or child in the class. Have a race to see which team can unscramble the verse the fastest. Give a chocolate kiss to the winners. (Repeat this several times.)

Remove a Word —

Print the memory verse with each word on a separate piece of construction paper. After you read the verse, have the children close their eyes while you remove one of the words. Have the children open their eyes. The child who can tell you the exact word that you removed is the one to come up next time and remove the next word.

Praise Puzzles —

Give each child an envelope with the verse cut up in puzzle form. The first one to put the verse together in the correct order is the winner.

Verse Match Up Card Game —

- Draw playing-card-sized squares on a large piece of paper.
- Print the words (or phrases) of a memory verse onto the “cards”.
- Copy a set for each player and cut out the cards.

- Divide class into groups of four to play a game similar to Go Fish.
- Players in each group shuffle their sets of cards together and then distribute the cards evenly among the players.
- To play, player compares the cards he has to the verse to determine which cards he needs to complete the verse.
- First player names any another player in his group and asks for a needed card.
- If the player asked has the card, he must give it to the player who asked for it.
- If the player does not have the card, the next player takes a turn, asking for a needed card.
- Play continues until all the players in the group have the cards needed to complete the verse.

Word Addition Game —

Sit in a large circle. Say the memory verse together two or three times. Start the game by having a child say the first word in the verse. The next child says the first two words in the verse; the next child says the first three words in the verse, and so on. Keep doing this until someone says the entire verse. Start the game over again, this time have the child who said the whole verse begin the game. Make sure everyone has a chance to participate.

Variation: Another way to do this is to throw a ball randomly; the child catching the ball must add the next word.

Games that Teach Biblical Concepts

Choose God —

Materials: Markers, scrap paper, a large trash can, a clothesline or rope, and a Bible.

Preparation: Place a trash can in the center of the room. Lay a ten-foot clothesline (or rope) circle around the trash can. Set out markers and scrap paper.

Procedure: In Old Testament times a lot of people made fake gods of wood and stone. How do you think it would feel to bow and pray before a statue made of wood or stone? We don't worship fake gods today, but sometimes we pay too much attention to things that aren't really important. Sometimes those things can push God into last place in our lives. What kinds of things keep you from putting God first in your life? (TV, sports, toys, and friends.) Using the markers and scrap paper, write the word or draw a picture of at least three things that tempt you to use too much of your time.

Explain to the children that the pictures will be used for a game and won't be kept. When the children all have finished their pictures, have them wad them up into paper balls. Then, from behind the clothesline circle, have the children take turns shooting "baskets" with their paper wads. Each time someone "Scores," have all the children shout, "Choose God!" Play until all the paper wads are in the trash can.

Afterwards, have children join hands around the circle and end in prayer: "Dear God, we want to choose you today. We're throwing away things that tempt us to forget You. Help us remember that You're our one, true God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Choose Your Way —

On pieces of construction paper, make game squares using the words under each of the following categories, putting each word on a separate paper:

People	Places	Objects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby • Boy • Dad • Girl • Mom • Pastor • Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom • Home • Park • School hallway • Soccer field • Store • Play yard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD • Milkshake • Necklace • Phone • Soccer ball • Sock • TV

1. Lay the game squares on the floor, placing each word in a category its own row: a row of people, a row of places, and a row of objects.
2. Volunteer walks or hops across the papers, stepping on one paper from each category. Then using the words he stepped on, the student suggests a situation in which the person might need God's love and protection. For example, if the child stepped on "Boy," "Park," and "Ball" he might say, "A boy at the park kicks a soccer ball and it hits an old man."
3. Have the class discuss what that person could do, how they might feel in that situation, and how they would want God to help them.

Faith Hop —

Materials:

- Construction Paper Squares with words such as "Brave" "Strong" "Honor" "Confident"
- One dice

Procedures:

- Lay the squares out Hop-Scotch style in a trail on the floor through the class room.
- Have each student roll the dice and hop that number of squares on the trail.
- Have the student read what is written on the square he or she lands on.
- Have the student use that word or phrase in a sentence. Lead the children to make statements of faith as they form their sentences. The goal is to have the children give examples of times they need to be courageous and have confidence in God's love.

God's Unchanging Love —

Before class, print the following words or phrases on separate index cards:

FEELING	sad	excited	worried	angry	thankful
EVENT	moved	dad lost job	dog died	new baby	new school

PERSON	sister	grandpa	friend	mom	me
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Place the first five cards in a bag labeled “Feeling,” the second five in a bag labeled “Event” and the last five in a bag labeled “Person.”

Before you begin ask the children, “What kinds of changes do kids your age experience?” (New school. Friend moves away.)

Place bags in front of class. Invite a volunteer to pick one card from each bag. Volunteer tells a situation a kid might face involving the feeling, event and person on the cards. Ask:

- When have you or anyone you know ever had a similar change occur? What happened?
- What might help a kid in that situation?
- What other changes might kids experience?

God is faithful to us. Sometimes we might start to worry about something new happening in our lives – like moving to a new neighborhood, getting a new teacher or a favorite pet dying. But no matter what happens – good or bad – we know that God cares for us and keeps the promises He makes to us. He promises never to leave us but always to care for us.

It’s Not Always Easy to Find Your Way to Heaven —

Line up four adult-sized folding chairs side-by-side with the seats all facing the same direction. This will create a tunnel, which represents the eye of the needle, between the legs of the chairs.

Have children line up and take turns crawling through the eye of the needle. They’ll probably end up on their bellies, wiggling through the chairs. Make sure the second child doesn’t start through the tunnel until the first child is all the way through. If you have more than eight children, set up two tunnels for them to crawl through. If the children in your class are little ones, tie small pillows or folded towels to their backs with socks or nylon hose. This will make it more challenging to crawl through, and they’ll look more like camels.

For extra fun, turn this game into a relay race. Make two tunnels, and have children form two teams. The winning team is the first one whose members have all crawled through the eye of the needle. If you have too small a class for two teams, time the children individually. The child with the best time wins.

Make the Situation Right—

Use this variation of a “Bowling” Game: Give each student an index card and a pencil. Have each one write a brief description of a situation in which kids their age need to make wrong actions right. (For Example, “I lied to Dad about where I was going after school.”) Tape an index card onto each of six empty plastic soda bottles, water bottles or toy plastic bowling pins. Using a rubber ball, have the students line up behind a line. Each player gets two tries to knock a pin over. Lead student to discuss a way to make the situation right. Replace each card after it has been discussed. Continue the game until each student has a turn.

Mercy Shot —

Materials: six to eight slips of paper, marker, paper bag, container (wastebasket or cardboard box) beanbag or Nerf ball.

Preparation: On three or four slips of paper, print the word “mercy.” Place the slips of paper you wrote on, along with remaining blank slips of paper, in the paper bag.

Procedure: Students line up about 5 feet from container. Place paper bag and beanbag at the front of the line. First student in line faces away from the container and throws the beanbag backwards over his head, attempting to get the beanbag into the container. Student gives beanbag to next student in line and then goes to the end of the line. Each student in line takes a turn. When the first student is back at the front of the line, invite student to pick a paper from the bag. If the paper is blank, student attempts a backwards throw again. If the paper says “mercy” on it, student may stand about 1 foot from container

or face the container when tossing the beanbag or student may choose to give the mercy paper to another student.

Response: Ask the children how the game changed when you could pick a slip of paper? (It was a lot easier if you could take a mercy shot. You could take the mercy shot even if you didn't do anything to deserve that shot.)

Opposition to the Faith game —

Materials: You'll need several colors of sidewalk chalk, marbles, two basketballs, and Bibles.

Preparation: In you church parking lot, use the sidewalk chalk to draw two large targets with at least four rings. Make the targets 10 to 20 feet in diameter and label each bull's eye "Jerusalem." Then label each circle outside of Jerusalem with a point value, increasing as they go farther out (10 points between Jerusalem and the first ring, 20 points between the first and second rings, and so on).

Procedure: Form two teams and have them each stand near a target. Give each team a basketball and 20 marbles to place on its bull's eye. Team members will take turns throwing the basketball on Jerusalem, scattering the marbles throughout the target. After each turn, add points up based on where in the target the marbles have rolled. Then the marbles are gathered and returned to the center of the target for the next person to scatter.

Tell the kids that the object is to have as many marbles as possible land outside of Jerusalem. Add up the points for each person on a team. Marbles landing outside the target count for 50 points each. After tallying the scores, declare the winning team.

Next have kids each choose a partner from the opposing team to form pairs. Have one partner in each pair read aloud Acts 8:1-4 and the other summarize it in one sentence. Then ask:

1. How was the persecution of the early church like this game?
2. In what way did the persecution help to spread the news of Jesus to remote areas of the earth?
3. How do you think the early Christians felt about their persecution? Explain.
4. What can we learn about how God works from this example of the early church?

Promise Seekers —

Play a game similar to Marco Polo, as follows:

- Choose and blindfold a child to be “It.”
- At your signal, have other children walk around the room.
- “It” calls out “God is faithful to...” and the children respond by saying their names. “It” follows the voices to try to tag someone.
- When “It” tags someone, the child tagged must do one of the following:
 - Answer one of the discussion questions
 - Read the Memory Verse aloud
 - Describe a situation in which we need to trust in God’s faithfulness
- The child who was tagged then becomes “It” and continues the game.

Trust Walk —

Set up a short obstacle course for children to go through, such as a chair to climb over, a table to climb under, a length of string to walk along, chairs, inner tubes, scraps of lumber, a clothesline, and anything else you have on hand. Say: “The obstacles in our obstacle course remind us of the troubles or difficulties we sometimes have at school or at home. When you run into trouble, remember that God will listen when you pray to him and He will always love you and care for you. You can have faith in Him.” Have kids form pairs. Have one partner wear a blindfold as the other partner guides him or her through the obstacle course. Then have partners trade roles. Compare relying on partners to relying on God. Explain that because God is all-powerful, when we trust in Him we can always be strong and courageous.

Sword Drills —

Practice finding verses in the Old and New Testaments. Print references on flashcards. Hold up one flashcard at a time, and see who can find the book first. Start with children sitting down; first child who stands up is the winner. But be sure to congratulate each child as he finds it, and then have someone read the verse.

Tips and Tricks for Playing Games

Here are some things to remember when using games in the Sunday school classroom:

- If possible, use a game as one of several Learning Center choices. Children like to make choices about the activities they do.
- Make the games more exciting and interesting by using big points. Rather than one point per right answer, make it 1,000 points!
- Do not emphasize wrong answers. If a child gives an incorrect answer, never say, "That's wrong!" Say, "That's a good answer, but not quite what I'm thinking." Be sure to correct their misinformation. If you want an exact answer, warn them ahead of time that they have to answer this question exactly right.
- Award tokens the children can "spend" in a "store" instead of awarding prizes or candy. They can collect them, then once a month, open the "store" after Sunday school.
- Award "Smart Pills" (M & M's) instead of prizes.
- Make sure each child has a good time and builds confidence. Don't put a child "on the spot". There are a number of ways to make the games fun but less competitive on an individual basis:
 - Use teams. A team doesn't like to lose, but it is not an individual rejection. Let the whole team decide on an answer and then let one person answer for the team and complete the turn.
 - Play against time. The whole group can play to see how fast they can compete, and then see if they can improve their time in subsequent games.
- Keep the game time reasonable. Playing a game too long or too often will cause children to lose interest in the game.
- There can also be a time limit on a game, and the group can see how far they get before the time is up. If there is not enough time, a game can be stopped before it is complete. Just give some advanced warning of the time limit, and say that the person or team that's ahead is the winner.
- Be sure the game is neither too simple (they will be bored) nor too difficult (they will be frustrated).
- Keep instructions as simple and clear as possible. If instructions are confusing or take a great deal of time to learn, the children will lose interest.
- Instructions should be complete. Play the game yourself before introducing it to the class so that you can explain it clearly and completely.
- Be sure there is a way for all children who want to play the game to have an opportunity to play.
- Provide ways for non-readers or slow readers to be successful when playing a game.
- Children who do not wish to play the game should be allowed to "help" in some other way. Some children have experienced failure when playing games and need to see that no one "fails" when games are played in Sunday school.
- Emphasize the fun of playing the game rather than the competitive aspects of the game. Competition can be a motivating factor in the enjoyment of a game, but it can also lead to rejection and/or discouragement among one or more children in the class.
- We want every child to be a "winner." Use lots of praise and encouragement; lead them to the correct answer.
- Discuss the importance of encouraging one another when playing the game. The game needs to be fun for all. No booing your friends!
- Many games are time-consuming to make, but can add zest to your lesson. Therefore, make it to last for future use. If it is possible, preserve the game by laminating it.