

FAMILY TOOLBOX



SERIES

BIBLE MEMORY



Children's Ministry

Golden Hills Community Church

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A Note to Families

The Children's Ministry of Golden Hills Community Church exists to *“Glorify God by helping families develop age-appropriate disciples who impact their world for Christ”*.

In order to accomplish this task, we at GHCC have attempted to describe the discipleship of a believer, which includes these three elements:

- **Worship**
- **Grow**
- **Serve**

We believe that children, as followers of Christ, can also participate in the discipleship process. We have further identified twelve specific spiritual growth issues within these three elements of discipleship.

It is our desire in Children's Ministry, to create a balanced program, which addresses all of these spiritual growth issues, helping to produce a healthy, age-appropriate disciple.

However, statistics tell us that the national average for children attending Sunday school is 26 hours each year (that's only half of the time). And our church is no exception to this. Our average Sunday attendance is roughly half of our total registration. What does this mean? Well, we could have the best programming, the best teachers and staff (which, by the way, I think we do) and we would still have a very hard time in accomplishing the goal God has set before us. But there is a way.

The way in which we can realize the goal of making age-appropriate disciples is stated in our purpose: "...by helping *families* develop age-appropriate disciples..." In fact, the best approach to aiding your child's faith development is *not* in the formal setting of the church, but in the informal, everyday life of your home. God's Word clearly reminds us of this in Deuteronomy 6:4-7:

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. The commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress (teach) them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the road, when you lie down at night and when you get up."

We encourage you to take advantage of every opportunity to "impress upon your children" spiritual truth. Use dinner conversation, driving in the car, bedtime routines and getting ready each morning as times to reflect and teach about God and his faithfulness.

To help you in these discussions, we have developed a series of tools for you to use. These tools are series of booklets (**THE FAMILY TOOLBOX SERIES**), each addressing the spiritual growth issues. In them you will find information, discussion questions and activity suggestions to help you guide your children on their spiritual journeys.

Introduction to Bible Memory

I am sure you might agree with me when I say that the biggest favor we can do for our children (or anyone else), is to love them the way Jesus loves them and help them decide to follow Jesus forever. And just like Jesus came to explain God to us (John 1:18), we want to explain God to our kids. We can do this by teaching our kids God's Word and helping our kids to internalize (memorize) the Word in their hearts.

We seek to accomplish this through the programming of children's ministry here at GHCC (Awana-a great program for memorizing, Sunday school, etc.). However, the most effective way your child will internalize God's Word is make it a part of their everyday life. To that end, we've created this booklet (part of the Family Toolbox Series) to help you.

The Importance of Bible Memory

Christians must have a foundational knowledge of Scripture so they can grow and become spiritually mature. A lack of Bible knowledge puts the believer at serious spiritual risk.

Here are the ways Scripture says Bible memory can be useful:

- * It is sin-preventative...(Psalm 119:11).
 - * It is a matter of obedience...(Colossians 3:16).
 - * It is an incentive to purity...(Psalm 119:9).
 - * It brings stability and prosperity...(Psalm 1:1-2).
 - * It is a faith builder...(Romans 10:17).
 - * It results in peace of mind...(Isaiah 26:3).
 - * It provides the believer a confidence in their witness...(1 Peter 3:15).
 - * It is a defensive and offensive weapon against Satan...(Ephesians 6:10).
 - * It encourages a spiritual mindset...(Philippians 4:8).
 - * It is a basis for effective prayer...(John 15:17).
 - * It is the necessary equipping for ministry...(2 Timothy 3:15-17).
 - * It is a mark of maturity...(Hebrews 5:12-14).
- It allows us to determine right from wrong.

The steps and guidelines mentioned below will help you guide your children in hiding God's Word in their hearts.

Teaching the Meaning of a Bible Verse

The first step committing a verse to memory is discovering the meaning of the verse. Many Bible verse include words that may not be commonly used today (depending on Bible version-see “Choosing a Children’s Bible” from the Family Toolbox Series) and thus, the meaning of the verse is sometimes obscure. Here is the process to teach the meaning of a verse. Remember, the easier the verse is to understand, the less time involved in teaching its meaning.

STEP 1: Define each word in the verse. Explain the meaning of words or have your child interpret the words. Example: In Psalm 119:11, clearly state what “word”, “hid”, “heart”, “sin” and “thee” mean. You may know what each of these words mean, but your child may not.

STEP 2: Divide the verse into meaningful phrases to capture the flow of the verse. Again, using the example of Psalm 119:11, “Thy Word”, “in my heart”, “That I might not sin”, “against thee”. Sometimes questions help divide a verse: What did you hide? Where did you hide it? Why did you hide it?

STEP 3: Have your child share in his or her own words what they believe God is saying or teaching through the verse. If your child omits meanings to key phrases, you can direct them through questions such as: “How do Bible verse keep us from sin?” Preschoolers need life examples, related stories and conversation.

STEP 4: Ask your child to list life applications they find in the verse. “From Psalm 119:11 I learn I am to memorize God’s Word.” Kids can then list ways they can memorize God’s Word (make flash cards, read, make recordings, etc.). The longer the list of applications is, the deeper the

understanding of the verse will be.

STEP 5: Now have your child memorize the verse through games, drill or other means (have fun!).

STEP 6: Challenge your children to be “doers of the Word” and to use the Bible truth from the verse daily.

Some Guidelines to Remember

In following the steps mentioned above, it is important to consider the following 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 verses they can be expected to learn and relate to their daily life.
- * Children also differ in abilities. Some can memorize and grasp meaning 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’s learning is greatly enhanced when they are involved in the learning. This is why music, games and activities involving the verse work so well.

When you help your children memorize their verses, keep in mind that you are helping them learn to treasure God’s Word and make it part of their lives for a lifetime and eternity.

Helping Children Memorize Bible Verses

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 119:11 says, "I have treasured Your word in my heart so that I may not sin against You."

* 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."

* Psalm 119:130 says, "The revelation of Your words brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced."

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.

What Verses Should My Child Memorize?

If your child is enrolled in Sunday school or in our Awana program, he or she will have a memory verse or section of verses to recite each week. Review these with your children using the above guidelines. Make sure they understand the meaning of the verses and how they apply to their lives. Above all, make Bible memory fun! If Bible memory becomes tedious or boring, it lacks impact on our kids' lives.

God bless you as you impress upon your children the Word of God (see Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

The Spiritual Growth Issues:

Worship

- Salvation
- Worship

Grow

- Bible knowledge/Application
- Bible Memory
- Stewardship
- Healthy Relationships
- Using Gifts, Talents and Skills
- Church Commitment

Serve

- Outreach
- Missions Involvement
- Christian Service