

MAP

Material, Audience, and Personality. I learned from Randy Christensen that these three things need to work together in stage performance and I now submit to you that MAP also applies to your presentation of teaching material in a large group or small group setting. If you and I teach the same material to the same group of people, it is still gonna look different, because we are different people. It is natural to start off in ministry by copying someone else, but as you grow, you will find your own distinct voice. Your personality is one of the three things that makes your ministry unique. Similarly your audience, and I may say your church culture, will affect what your service looks like as well. The last of the three, your material, is where a lot of people start and, more often than not, in children's ministry they start with curriculum. The problem arises when the curriculum (your material) does not fit your audience or your personality. All three of these things have to work together! It is for that reason that the following thoughts have been made available to you here. Feel free to use any of the following, but don't use them just as they are. Make them your own! If the game listed in the curriculum doesn't work for your group, here are some of my favorites that you can use as a substitute. Does the curriculum have you hold your Bible and recite the story week after week? Use some of the provided lesson ideas to change it up but still carry your message across. And this is just the beginning! Compile some of your own lists and use them as a creative memory jogger in the future. Eventually you will be ready to challenge yourself and as God gives you a word from scripture for your audience you will be ready to write your own lesson from scratch.

Tools in Your Toolbelt

Author, clown, ministry specialist, and my adopted grandma, Janet Tucker, always told me that the more tools I have in my tool belt the more problems I can fix. When working with children, or adults for that matter, it is beneficial to be able to illustrate a point in more than one way. As the saying goes “

variety is the spice of life.” Ultimately we want to make it memorable. As Randy Christensen says, “it is easier to teach kids when they want to pay attention.” For these reasons I love to incorporate characters, games, puppets, balloons, creative scripture memory techniques, or songs into each week’s lesson. And guess what, it works for adults too! Not everybody is an auditory learner. Having visuals helps. Therefore, I encourage everybody to learn new methods to communicate with. Jim Wideman says it this way, “the only bad method is the one you use all the time.”

Helpful thoughts

First off, I have been able to learn a lot over the years from Big Dan Rector at North Central University where I received my degree in Children’s Ministry, from my kids pastor, mentor and dad, Randy Christensen, and from time spent actively involved in ministry as a children’s evangelist and ordained pastor. The following are thoughts and lists I now pass onto you. Skip around and use what fits you. These are designed to be plug and play options.

Second, never stop learning, exploring, and growing. Conferences, camps, and ministry opportunities continue to stretch me and many great friendships start there.

Finally, I’d like you to hear the words that Alex Lappos spoke to me years ago. “Ministry is made in the secret place.” The following ideas are methods to teach a message. But the game or a trick are not the message. They are tools. Ultimately a successful ministry relies on God doing what he wants to do. So plan and prepare. Pick up tools you can use, but don’t forget to pray about your presentation and spend time growing in the presence of God. Besides, you cannot take anyone further than you have gone yourself.

So the Curriculum Doctor approach is to round YOU out so you have lots of options and to get your creative juices flowing. Here are my favorite ideas to get you started.

8 Scripture Memory Techniques

- Scripture Mad Libs: Use the verse with fill in the blanks to first have the kids give nouns, verbs, etc. Read the goofy version of the verse you made as a group. Reveal the correct verse for everyone to read together.

Mad Lib: Leviticus 21:7b-8 ..._____ (Animal) are holy. They are set apart for _____ (a hobby/activity). I am their God. Consider them as holy, because they _____(verb) up food to me. Consider them as _____ (profession), because I am _____ (famous person). I am the LORD. I make you _____(food).

Correct Verse: Leviticus 21:7b-8 ...priests are holy. They are set apart for me. I am their God. Consider them as holy, because they offer up food to me. Consider them as holy, because I am holy. I am the LORD. I make you holy.

- Scripture Lottery: Have 1 correct verse and several other goofy wrong variations in envelopes. Hand them out. Let the kids open them up and see who has the right one. read them all out loud, repeating the correct verse three times as a group at the end.
- Scripture Aerobics: Play a background track. The kids repeat the verse to the music while following simple directions from the leader (i.e. sitting, standing, spinning around).
- Scripture Songs: Scripture verses to music.

- Puppet Song (Play Jumpstart3 song)
- Musical Balloons- What you need to do is play your music and have each child grab a balloon when the music starts have kids bounce their balloons in the air and move to the music. When the music stops they have to freeze and whoever is holding a balloon “wins.” This is especially great for children who are a bit shy or reserved, the balloon gives them something to do and before they know it they are moving to the music.
- Scripture Picture: (Rebus puzzle) Draw a picture for each word. If you can remember the pictures, you can remember the scripture verse.
- Scripture Scramble: Have all the words written out on different pieces of paper. Scramble the words and have kids put them back in order.
- Scripture Shout: The verse will be on the screen. The text will be two different colors alternating every word or two. Divide the kids into two sections. One half will read the blue the other half will read the red. Have them stand when they say their part. Do this more than once, allowing each side to read each color a couple of times.
- Fear Factor Food Challenge: Kids say the scripture verse with a mouth full of food.

6 Bible Story Options

- Child Actors – add costumes or make them from balloons or paper bags.
- Juggle props from the story or make Juggling club characters by adding googly eyes.
- Doodles: have kids draw the characters faces.
- Magic Tricks
- Bible story videos
- Puppet skits

6 Kids Games

- Pizza Box Frisbee Throw: One kid holds the pizza box, the others form a line and throw a frisbee trying to land it in the box. Play teams and see who can get the most!
- Jump the River: Put two jump ropes on the ground. Kids jump from one side to the other. Make the gap bigger after each successful jump. Add a spray bottle for extra fun!
- Popcorn Chicken: Kids throw a rubber chicken and try to land it in a popcorn bucket.
- Basketball review game: Divide kids into two teams and allow them to take turns answering review questions from the service. Teams get a point for answering the question right and a chance to shoot a basket for a second point.
- Hula hoop speed challenge: have kids line up with the first child holding the hula hoop. When the game begins, they began to twirl the hula hoop around their middle. An adult counts how many times around the hula hoop goes. When the leader yells “switch” each child must drop the hula hoop and the next child in line picks up from where they left off. The team with the most revolutions wins.
- Giant cup stacking: kids deck, giant cups into a pyramid and then take it down again. Fastest wins. Play as individuals or as a team, relay race style.

Rules (Fun Teaching Methods)

Fun Teaching Methods

- Make a video
- Puppet character
- Balloons (Animal Balloons or round balloons)
- Magic Trick producing 3 silks or a ribbon streamer with the rules written on it
- Drama Character / Mascot interrupts
- Juggling – 3 scarves, balls, clubs, cigar boxes for 3 rules

Resources

- Are you looking for more in-depth material or ready to go scripts, routines, magic tricks, or other creative ideas? Check out:
- Randy Christensen at Quality Programs for FREE ministry resources downloads and an amazing store featuring creative ministry materials including comic scripts, offering lessons, etc.
- One Way Squared is a great place to start if you are looking for puppets or music, but they also have a variety of other material for drama, basic magic tricks, curriculum, etc.
- For magic tricks start by exploring Laflin magic.
- Also be sure to look for local conventions and conferences in your area. There are a lot of great training opportunities out there. Often these conventions will have a dealers room where you can buy product specifically related to Creative ministry.
- Finally, there are different organizations, devoted to creative ministry. Currently, I am a member of the Fellowship of Christian Magicians. I am also a member of the World Clown Association, which does have a ministry department.