

## Sunday School for Moms

### Practical Evangelism to Your Children Ages 0-5 Years

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*"For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* **Ephesians 2:10**

"One day when I was feeling particularly like homemaking and child-rearing were exercises in futility, I called my mother-in-law to get a little pep talk....So I was expecting a nice little word that would cheer me up...But here's what I got instead. She reminded me that I had three in my congregation, three in my little Bible school at home. Now that was a new image for me. I wasn't just running in circles. I was teaching by word and by example, every day, all day. That was both convicting and exciting for me to think about. The unspoken message (which out of tenderness, she never would have said) was that I was having a little pity party, and I needed to get back to work with more of a vision of my calling, a renewed sense of the great potency of my calling. And a cheerful attitude. A little more gratitude...." *Nancy Wilson*

#### 1st Step

To see this as our primary mission, to set our minds to, set our focus on.

My mission is not to look perfect or please anyone except God with my parenting. My mission is to care for these little souls He put in my care. To be a good steward of His children~to teach them truth about God and to tell them of this amazing redemptive story~to introduce them to the one true God we are in awe of/to daily point them to Jesus. My mission is primarily between my back door and my front door for this period of time.

(One book that encouraged me to embrace this mission when our first baby was little was *The Mission of Motherhood* by Sally Clarkson.)

Gloria Furman (author of *Treasuring Christ When Your Hands are Full; Gospel Meditations for Busy Moms*) said: "Our work as moms is to glorify God, who sent his Son to do HIS mighty work on the cross in our place to pay the just penalty for our sins. Humbly receiving God's grace and inviting our children to share our joyful gratitude for what Jesus has done on the cross is our happy mission in this fallen world."

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**Deuteronomy 6:5-7**, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”*

What a joy! What a privilege! We get to have that relationship with this child to help them in their walk with God.

### 2nd Step

Surrender all to Him. **Hebrews 12:3**, *“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...”*

What do you need to lay down or put aside for now? Leave at God’s feet?

Feelings of inadequacy, excuses, busy-ness, distractions (social media)

Save your yes for the best and say “no” to the rest. Laying aside/pressing on.

“Precious, no doubt, are these little ones in your eyes; but if you love them, think often of their souls, no interest should weigh with you so much as their eternal interests. No part of them should be so dear to you as the part which will never die.” *J.C. Ryle*

Daily~Ask Him to fill you up each morning with His strength, His grace, His Spirit for this day and surrender yourself daily to be used for Him. Get ready to be poured out, to be a vessel. Say a prayer before your head gets off the pillow. Taking up our cross and following Him. (**Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23**)

It’s KNOWING GOD that anchors us in the chaos of motherhood.

**1 Peter 1:13**, *“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.”*

(One tool that has been helpful for me is to read a short devotional like the “She Reads Truth” app before I get out of bed. Even if Trey or Emme wake me up I open their Children’s Bible and tell them we are going to read our Bibles together before we leave Mommy’s room to start our day.) My other favorite “Mom Devotionals” are by Pam Forster, published by Doorposts, called *Bible Study for Busy Mamas ~Thirty Days in Colossians/Psalm 37/Proverbs 31/I Corinthians 13/Isaiah 53/Psalm 103.*

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“When Jesus gave the Lord’s Prayer, He gave us this lesson....He taught us to say, “Give us this day our daily bread.” We cannot get grace today for tomorrow’s duties; and if we try to bear tomorrow’s cares and burdens today, we shall break down in the attempt.

We have nothing to do with life in the aggregate--that great bulk of duties, anxieties, struggles and needs, which belong to the future. Our sole business is with the one little day now passing--and the one day’s burdens will never crush us; we can easily carry them until the sun goes down.” *J. R. Miller*

### 3rd Step

Watch and listen and be ready! God gives up opportunities every day with our 0-5 year olds to share the gospel with them!

- **Give consequences consistently.** (One book that helped encourage me in this was *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* by Ted Tripp.)
  - Story about our 6 year old struggling with continual sin of sassiness/rudeness and her breaking down and crying out, “I try Mommy, but I just can’t be good.” Yes! That’s right. We’re all sinners and not able to be good on our own. Not you or me or anyone. That’s why we needed Jesus to come and to die to take the punishment for our sin on Himself. He was the only sinless, perfect one!
- **Give consequences swiftly.** To use a quiet and sweet voice in our instructing. Without anger. If they disobey, that is the time to bring the consequence, not 3 times later when we have now raised our voice.
- **Give consequences privately.** Respect. Protect their reputation. Always speak well of your child in public.

\*Go “away”/have a Mommy time out for a moment to pray and collect yourself before instructing/disciplining if needed. Example of Susannah Wesley.

\*If there is a continual sin issue a resource like *Proverbs for Parenting* or *For Instruction in Righteousness* can be helpful that categorizes scripture for entire chapters on specific issues.

In this 0-5 age range:

1. Make much of/share your awe of our Creator. On walks--pointing out how amazing a creator we have, God, who make that beautiful leaf or pinecone or bird.

--Story about Trey in the car the other day (asking if God made houses, playgrounds, etc.)

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2. Speak of God's attributes in a way they can understand. Omniscience, omnipotence, all seeing

### WEEDS and SEEDS

Reality: Before 10:23am on any given day I will have helped a few children say I'm sorry to each other (We forgive b/c He forgave us first!) and offering each other this opportunity is a little glimpse of Christlikeness. A Christian home is not a perfect home, but it is a home marked by forgiveness.

By that time I've also instructed, encouraged, and come alongside to help with "weeding" or been convicted and sent up a prayer for some "weeds" I may have seen in my own responses/attitudes....

"Our hearts are like the earth on which we tread; let it alone, and it is sure to bear weeds." *J. C. Ryle*

### Planting Seeds

"There is nothing in the daily routine of the family life that is unimportant. Indeed, it is oftentimes the thing we think of as without influence that will be found to have made the deepest impression on the tender lives of the household.

A distinguished Danish artist had chiseled in the city of Rome some of his rarest works in marble. When he had finished then they were sent home, The workmen, as they unpacked them, carelessly scattered on the ground the straw which had been wrapped around the statues. In the straw were multitudes of little seeds, and the next summer, countless flowers from the gardens of Rome were blooming about the artist's northern home. He had not intended to drop these tiny seeds of loveliness; he was intent only on his great work, thinking only of the magnificent results in marble he was bringing home which would be admired for ages. But while carrying out his grand purpose, he was also unconsciously scattering about his home other tender and beautiful influences.

In like manner, the busiest of men (or moms!) intent on the grandest purposes, are ever scattering about them countless seeds which will spring up either in tender loveliness to bless their homes or in a harvest of evil to leave blight and sorrow. It may be in the end, the unconscious, unintended influences will far surpass in their permanent results on life and character those for which they planned with such pains and wrought with such glowing hope."

*J.R. Miller, 1882*

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### On multiples

Having two or more kids at one time in the 0-5 range - what I've learned these last couple of years:

- Diffusing and calmly sorting out what is the most important issue at that moment.
- Olders helping with younger ones. We trained them up and now they can help.
- Littles learn to wait patiently.
- Putting focus on littles earlier in the day while the olders begin their routine.
- For Mom to be "predictably cheerful"/set the tone in home

### 4th Step

Saturate them in God's Word and true stories and music that helps us memorize God's Word.

From your mouth--"stories" (like rainbows--Noah)

From books--Children's Bibles (show a few examples), board books like *J is for Jesus* and *An Easter Gift for Me*, *Playtime Devotions*, and *Little Hands to Heaven*

### Daily Devotion

From aforementioned resource books

Videos--*Praise Baby*, *Boz the Bear*, *The First Noel*

Music--*Seeds of Praise*, *Steve Green*, VBS Music, (play on piano) *Jesus Loves Me*, singing to them at nap and bedtime

Awanas, Westminster Shorter Catechism memorization

Christian Pre-school or using Bible-based curriculum in your home

Pray for outside Godly mentors to be in your kids' lives.

(We've seen this prayer answered through Sunday School teachers, Awana leaders, co-op or elective class teachers, choir and piano teachers, camp counselors, school teachers, and youth leaders.)

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### 5th Step

Pray for your child.

As you feed them, rock them, lay them down. As you lay your head on your pillow at the end of the day. Pray for their salvation and all areas of their lives.

--Story about Violet and the book of prayer for my daughter similar to *A Little Girl After God's Own Heart* by Elizabeth George (God answered my prayer for her salvation.)

Closing thoughts: Look around your dinner table...these are your blessings! Through each one you will have an affect on future generations!

You will not be held accountable for how someone else raised their children, but you will give account for how you raised yours.

We must give an account. **Hebrews 4:13**, "*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*"

Nothing can take the place of simply living as a Christian in the view of your children...I can catechize my children all day and every day, but if I have no joy and no delight in the Lord, and if I am not living out my faith, my children will see it and know it.

Discussions Questions. Share stories/practical ideas in groups of 2. (Pair and share)

- What memory sticks out in your mind about your mother's influence in your life when you were 0-5 years old? Spiritual influence?
- When thinking about giving yourself completely to this task of evangelical parenting/motherhood, what do you need to lay aside so you can run the race fully for Christ? Or what do you need to give up for now?
- What books/DVDs/music are you and your child(ren's) favorites that help you think about God's Word/worship Him throughout your day?