

Object Lessons

Object lessons are a lot like parables. Common everyday things are used to teach a lesson that has deeper spiritual meaning. Object lessons are fun to do, they are engaging, and they are easy to remember.

There are some things to keep in mind when you do an object lesson in Sunday school:

- Keep it simple.
- Have a clear biblical message.
- Involve the children in doing and interpreting the lesson.
- Always have a few Bible passages to look up and talk about. The passages should be carefully selected to drive the lesson home.

There are several ways to involve the children in doing object lessons. Here are some suggestions:

- Have the children prepare and present the lessons.
- Recruit volunteers to help you present the lesson. In fact, many object lessons can be designed around the children so that their active participation is necessary to make the lesson work. This can be a lot of fun for everyone if it is kept simple.
- Draw everyone into the discussion when the follow-up question is asked: "What do you think the lesson means?"
- Have everyone open their Bibles and find the relevant passages. Older children can help younger ones with this if necessary. Let volunteers read the passages aloud.

As a rule, object lessons should be short. In a Sunday school setting they are often used as start-up or wrap-up activities. In either case, ten to fifteen minutes is a good time frame to shoot for. The impact of a lesson can be lost if it drags on too long.

And one more thing. Always practice an object lesson before you do it with the children. Make sure it works the way you want it to.

Good Heart And Evil Heart – Psalm 119:11

Materials:

- Two hearts approximately the same size, one cut out of a blue cellulose sponge and the other from a piece of red foil.
- Large glass bowl about half full of water. Label the bowl "GOD'S WORD".
- Table knife.



Lesson:

The pure water represents GOD'S WORD. Identify the sponge heart as the GOOD HEART and the foil heart as the EVIL HEART.

Questions: (1) What is the good heart like? Hold it up and have the children describe its characteristics. Why do you think it is blue? (2) What is the evil heart like? Have them describe its characteristics. Why do you think it is red?

Let's see how both hearts behave.

Response to the Word of God:

Place the sponge heart in the water. How does the good heart respond to the pure water of God's word? Then place the foil heart in the water. How does it respond?

Read Psalm 40:8; Psalm 119:11, and Proverbs 28:14 together. Question: What lessons about the heart does each passage teach us?

Forgiveness:

Use the table knife to scratch the foil heart. Questions: Can you see the injury? Will it ever go away?

Now crush the foil heart in your hand. Questions: Will it make itself smooth and nice again? What does this teach us about the evil heart? Does it "remember" its injuries? Is it forgiving? Explain.

Use the table knife again and try to scratch the sponge heart. Questions: Can you see the injury? How does the good heart behave when it is hurt?

Squeeze the sponge heart tightly in your hand (make sure it is still wet). Questions: Does it bounce back from this injury? What does the good heart do while it was being injured (squeezed)? Why did the good heart have water to give when it was being injured? What can the sponge heart teach us about forgiveness?

Read Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:32-35; Luke 23:33-34, and Ephesians 4:32. Question: What can we learn about forgiveness from these passages?