

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.

Rise Up and Build! – Nehemiah 2:17-18

Materials:

- Two pieces of wood (pieces of 2" x 4" will work).
- Two identical nails.
- Claw hammer.
- Lightweight tack hammer.

Label the claw hammer "WISDOM OF GOD"; label the tack hammer "FOOLISHNESS".



Lesson:

Announce to the children that you are hiring workers to build the walls of Jerusalem. You need to know how well they can drive a nail, so you are going to have a nail-pounding contest. Select one of the girls and give her the claw hammer. Select one of the bigger boys and give him the lightweight tack hammer. When you say, "GO," the one who can drive the nail faster wins the job. Warning: keep everybody's fingers out of the way!

Let the contest begin! When the girl wins (!), ask both of them to read the labels that are on their hammers. Question for everyone: What is the lesson?

There are several good Bible lessons about wise building. Read the following passages together and answer the questions.

- 1 – Job 28:28. Question: What is wisdom?
- 2 – 2 Chronicles 14:2-7. Question: Why did King Asa's building work prosper?
- 3 – Nehemiah 2:17-18. Question: Where did Nehemiah and his workers get help to build the walls of Jerusalem?
- 4 – Matthew 7:24-27. Question: What is the foundation on which the wise man builds his house? Why does the house of the foolish man fall?
- 5 – Luke 14:28-30. What is important for successful discipleship?

Question at the end: What have we learned from this? Have the children verbalize their understanding of the lesson.

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