

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.

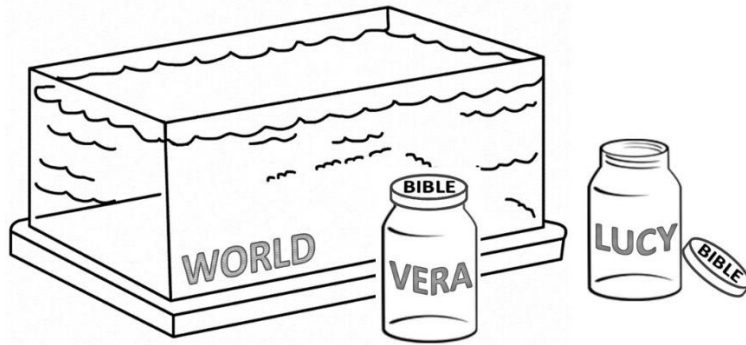
As a rule, object lessons should be short. In a Sunday school setting they are often used as start-up or wrap-up activities. In either case, ten to fifteen minutes is a good time frame to shoot for. The impact of a lesson can be lost if it drags on too long.

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.

The Word And The World – 1 John 2:15-17

Materials:

- Two identical bottles with screw-on lids. Name the bottles "VERA" and "LUCY" for VERA GOODFIT and LUCY FLIPTOP. Label both lids "BIBLE".
- A large clear bowl or small aquarium with water in it (a three-gallon aquarium works well). Label the bowl / aquarium "WORLD".
- Red food coloring.



Lesson:

The two bottles represent two people who outwardly look alike. One receives the Word of God (put the BIBLE lid firmly on Vera's bottle); the other does not (let the lid fall off Lucy's bottle and roll away).

The container of water represents the WORLD. Put a few drops of red food coloring into the water to make it red, representing sin in the world. Have a student read 1 John 2:15-17 to identify what the world is like. Discussion: Make sure everyone understands what the passage is telling us.

Place the uncovered bottle in the WORLD and watch it gradually take on sin and sink. The world seeps in. Give it a little tribulation (poke at it) and it sinks even faster! Question: What's the lesson?

Have the students read 1 Timothy 6:9 and Job 22:15-17 together. These verses indicate what happens (or has happened) to the wicked. Question: What does each passage teach us?

Now place the covered bottle in the WORLD, and the BIBLE keeps it from sin. Even a lot of tribulation is unable to sink it! Question: What's the lesson?

Have students read Romans 1:16 and James 1:21-22. Question: What does each passage teach us?