

Eight Ways Preschoolers Learn

by [Thomas Sanders](#) via lifeway.com

Preschoolers are at the beginning of the process of understanding who they are and who God wants them to be. Providing a variety of methods and techniques to choose from during a session allows them to discover their individual approaches to learning. Here are eight areas of learning to keep in mind as you teach preschoolers biblical truths.

1. Senses

Preschoolers learn to discover the things God has made through touching, smelling, tasting, hearing, and seeing. A valuable learning experience allows preschoolers to use their hands, eyes, ears, and mouths as a part of the learning process.

2. Curiosity

Exploring the world is a life-long process. Curiosity in the adult world is evidenced by space programs, science, technology, archaeology, and through many careers and fields of study. A preschooler's curiosity drives him to explore, discover, and ask "why?" Teachers and parents can facilitate exploration by providing an interesting and stimulating environment. Adults can shape the child's worldview by connecting explorations and discoveries to God, the Creator and Sustainer of life.

3. Hands-on experience

The term "hands-on" describes anything that involves a child in doing something. This definition leads to the misconception that keeping a child busy and involved is the end, or goal, of teaching. Rather, "hands-on" means teaching the child in an activity that leads her to a greater understanding of a Bible truth. In hands-on teaching, preschoolers are guided through an activity toward a Bible truth that can be understood and applied in that moment and in the child's life.

4. Satisfaction

When a child is involved in satisfying experiences, the child gains a sense of accomplishment. As a result, the child can realize that he is unique and created in the image of God. Satisfaction affirms the individual's importance to God and his dependence on God for all good gifts. A satisfying environment gives the child choices that allow him to learn in the ways God has gifted him.

5. Relationships

Relationships form eternal connections between the child and biblical truth. To understand the message of the Bible, adults use various translations, commentaries, and Bible dictionaries. For preschoolers, who do not have the benefit of adult language, the relationship with a teacher becomes a living commentary on the Scripture. Parents and teachers represent God, His Word and His power, as they relate to preschoolers. Adults "impress" God's love and truth in preschoolers' lives through caring relationships (Deuteronomy 6:7).

6. Imitation

How does a child learn to respect and love others? She begins to learn by the way she is loved and respected. Preschoolers follow the lead of adults in their lives. Actions as well as words of adults teach the child.

7. Play

Playing and learning are inseparable for preschoolers. Play offers the greatest opportunity for Bible teaching. Through play, a child can learn and apply important truths, relate in positive ways to others, accept responsibility, and solve problems. But play is just activity unless the teacher guides the activity and discussion toward foundational biblical truths.

8. Repetition

"Not this Bible story again." This statement is uttered by some adults who teach preschoolers. These adults don't understand that preschoolers need the repetition of Bible truths and Bible stories. Repetition allows the child to build on previous foundational truths and understand more fully the truth he has already heard.