

How To Do Children's Sermons

By Jewell Nelson

- 1) Prepare your sermon for the children, not the adults. Keep concepts and vocabulary simple. Do not use this vehicle for saying something to the adults under the disguise of speaking to the children.
- 2) Use a Bible story, Bible verse, or present-day story about a child with whom they can identify.
 - a) Do not use object lesson in which an object has a symbolic meaning.
 - b) Do not use fables, legends, or other fanciful material they may confuse with Biblical content.
- 3) Do not make it a performance of the children for the adults. Do not ask "cute" questions to elicit "cute" answers, but it should not be just a monologue either. Ask meaningful questions which require thought.
- 4) Sit on eye level with the children. If you stand, their necks will become tired from looking up – then you have lost eye contact.
- 5) Look at the children when you talk to them. Ignore the adults during this time.
- 6) Use a children's teaching picture, a question, or an object to capture the children's attention at the beginning. However, if you use an object, do not use it to stand for a spiritual quality (symbolism). The object may be a Bible times article (a scroll), a nature object (seeds at springtime), a poster (happy face, sad face), a Bible story picture, etc.
- 7) Keep it short – about five to seven minutes. That means you will plan carefully what you will say. Do not over-explain.
- 8) Do not moralize or talk down to the children. This is different from speaking on their level of understanding.
- 9) Many worship leaders call the children to the front of the church. The children should face away from the congregation. They may sit on the front pews or on the floor. In large churches, the worship leader may have a microphone, but it is best if the children's answers are not amplified for the adult audience.
- 10) Use children's songs or music when it reinforces the sermon concept.
- 11) Use a variety of storytelling methods:
 - a) Pantomime – a child enlisted ahead of time to act out a story.
 - b) Monologue – tell the story in first person (with or without a costume).
 - c) Use direct quotations when the characters speak.
 - d) Picture posing – let children volunteer to assume the pose of the people in the picture. They cannot hold the pose very long.
 - e) Do not use puppets to tell a story. It distracts from content although children are entertained. This is worship, not entertainment.
 - f) Interview a Bible character.
- 12) Use facial and vocal expression when telling the story. It may seem exaggerated to you, but not to the children.