

2026–2027
TOWNSEND **PRESS**

TARGETED TEACHING TIPS

For Sunday School Teachers



**A Townsend Press Sunday School
Commentary Supplement**

**Strategies and Pointers for Facilitating
Weekly Sunday School Lessons**

Based on the International Lessons Series

Townsend Press

Targeted Teaching Tips

for Sunday School Teachers

2026–2027

Based on the International Lessons Series
King James Version / New International Version

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CHRISTIAN CALENDAR 2026–2027

EVENT

Thanksgiving Day

*Advent Season

DATE

November 26, 2026

Sunday, November 29–

Wednesday, December 24, 2026

*(*A period to reflect and prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth)*

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24, 2026

Christmas Day

Friday, December 25, 2026

Watch Night/New Year's Eve

Thursday, December 31, 2026

New Year's Day

Friday, January 1, 2027

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 18, 2027

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 18-25, 2027

*Lenten Season

Wednesday, February 10, 2027–

Saturday, March 27, 2027

*(*A period to reflect on Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection)*

Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 21, 2027

Good Friday

Friday, March 26, 2027

Easter (Resurrection) Sunday

Sunday, March 28, 2027

National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 6, 2027

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 9, 2027

Father's Day

Sunday, June 20, 2027

PREFACE

The *Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers* is a production of the Sunday School Publishing Board, Nashville, Tennessee. It is presented to you in the hope that it will enhance your entire Christian education ministry, in general, and your Sunday school in particular. It is our hope that it will also facilitate greater biblical understanding within your congregation.

The Age-level Characteristics for Teaching are designed to provide you with a refresher course on how people learn (from childhood through youth to adulthood) and to present you with tips on how to reach them through teaching. It is our hope that persons attending Sunday school will come to better appreciate the insights provided and the additional illumination coming from the Word of God.

The format of the *Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers* includes a Calendar of Events that includes the days of significance in the Christian community. Also included are *Fifty-two Teaching Strategies* and *Fifty-two Targeted Teaching Tips*, designed to provide you with the pedagogical resources that will facilitate strong, targeted teaching. The actual *Townsend Press Sunday School Commentary* is no longer included in this production.

While the autonomy of the individual soul before God is affirmed, we believe that biblical truths find their highest expression within the community of believers whose corporate experiences serve as monitors to preserve the integrity of the Christian faith. As such, the Word of God must not only be understood but must also be embodied in the concrete realities of daily life. This allows the Word of God to intersect meaningfully with those realities of life. This, in essence, is the intent of this edition of the *Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers*.

As a publishing ministry, we stand firm in our commitment to Christian growth, so that lives will be transformed through personal and group interaction with the Word of God. The challenge issued by the apostle Paul continues to find relevance for our faith journey and our relationships in the faith community: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, NIV).

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF CONTRIBUTORS

Targeted Teaching Tips

Mrs. Jimmie W. Chaplin

Jimmie W. Chaplin is a writer who has a heart to serve God. As God's servant, she desires to share her love for God and build God's kingdom by encouraging and inspiring others. Jimmie has served as a Sunday school teacher and an assistant Sunday school teacher. She serves on the advisory board of Fill My Cup!—a nonprofit literacy organization. God has blessed Jimmie's life through her marriage to Parrish and through their daughter, Ananda.

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LIFESPAN

Approx. Ages	Infants/Toddlers 0-3	Young Children 4-7	Older Children 8-12
Faith Development	Beginning to trust. Comes to know self separate from parents. Can say, “No!” Senses love of parents and of those in Christian community.	Imitates religious behavior of adults. Begins to ask religious questions. Expresses wonder, joy, thanksgiving, and praise. Begins to use faith language.	Begins to identify with “my” church. Learns stories of the faith. Understands God in concrete terms. Engages in acts of service and discipleship.
Physical Development	Fast physical growth and changes. Grasps. Sits. Crawls. Stands. Walks. Hand-eye coordination improves.	Talks more clearly. Runs. Skips. Jumps. Throws. Catches. Climbs. Childhood diseases.	Physical growth slows. Permanent teeth. Finer coordination, muscular growth—but wide differences. Girls may enter puberty.
Brain Development	Rapid acquisition of brain connections stimulated through experience.	Brain connections continue to be stimulated through experiences. Pruning of synapses begins.	Second wave of production of gray matter, the thinking part of the brain. Critical period for language acquisition ends.
Mental and Intellectual Development	Actions first based on reflexes. Begins to separate self from others. Searches, imitates, learns from concrete activities and objects.	Episodic thinking. Begins to differentiate real from imaginary. Learns best from concrete activities. Recalls, invents, begins to converse.	Concrete thinkers. Stories give meaning and coherence to life. Develops ability to memorize. Learn through projects, games, songs, and stories.
Interpersonal Relationships	Relationships with adults primary. Dependent on parenting persons. Self-centered. Often shy with strangers. Parallel play. Develops relational skills through group experience.	Relationships with adults primary. Parallel play moves to relational play. Develops relational skills through group experience. Increasing empathy. Sees “big” people as good.	Increasing empathy. Cliques of same gender. Begins to develop loyalty. Peers becoming more important but still wants to please significant adults. Belonging to group is important.

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DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LIFESPAN

Approx. Ages	Young Adults 20-34	Midlife Adults 35-64	Older Adults 65 and Up
Faith Development	May leave church and/or return. Many seeking spiritual experience. Some want answers, others want to ask questions and search.	Wants to understand the meaning of life and how faith relates to this. Taking responsibility for spiritual growth.	Wants arena to grow in faith and to accept life story. Need purpose and to feel life is worth living. May want to share life faith story with others.
Physical Development	Measures time since birth. Learning preferences established. Reaches physical peak.	Begins to measure time until death. Lessening of some physical abilities such as sight and hearing.	Beginning of physical decline. May need adaptations in physical environment. Active longer.
Brain Development	Myelination and synaptic pruning continues. Brain does not reach full maturity until at least mid-20s.	New neurons continue to form. Increased use of both hemispheres of brain contributes to postformal thinking.	In healthy brain new neurons continue to form and learning continues. For some there may be a deterioration of memory.
Mental and Intellectual Development	Learns best when not under stress. Time is valuable. Prefers problem-centered learning. Want to apply learning to life. Learning preferences well established.	Self-directed learning. Wants input from knowledgeable people, resources, and groups. Learns by making connections with previous knowledge and experience.	Builds on life experiences. Uses visual images and mental pictures. Self-paced and problem centered learning. Learning environment needs enhancement.
Interpersonal Relationships	Developing long-term personal commitments. Seeking small groups of friends to substitute for extended family which may not be in close proximity.	Some relationships strengthening, others deteriorating over time. Need for feelings of significance in relationship to others. Many caring for parents and children.	Loss of significant relationships due to death. Still establishing new relationships. Need for relationships that recognize life and viability even as people age.

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DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LIFESPAN

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DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LIFESPAN

Approx. Ages	Early Teens 13-14	Middle Teens 15-17	Late Teens 18-19
Values and Ethics	Desire to save the world and great empathy for those who suffer. Can't distinguish group values from personal values.	Affective responses toward ideas and social realities. Concern for democratic process and human rights.	Willing to act based on values. Beginning to differentiate personal values from those of the group.
Sexuality	Experiencing physical changes related to maturation. Questioning whether one is "normal." Same sex friends.	Deepening understanding of a sexual self, opposite sex friends, sexual encounters.	Exploration, recognizing relationship between emotional and physical, tied to relationships, commitment, and intimacy
Family	Love/hate relationship. Still dependent on family. Parents often perceived as dumb.	Some rebellion, disillusionment, and struggle for independence.	Rebellion less intense, wants to be treated like an adult.
Needs of Age	Egocentrism	Feeling of immunity to personal injury or hurt, stretching limits.	Assuming adult privileges, yet still not an adult. Desire to be totally independent.
Gifts to Share	Energy, passion, enthusiasm.	Idealism	Increased knowledge, leadership skills, willingness to take risks.
Vocation	School is work. Trying out new skills.	School is work. May have first for pay job. Developing work skills and habits.	Exploring possible careers and obtaining appropriate training or education.
Expectations of the Church	A safe place, a place to serve and lead.	Relationships with respected adults who are also on a faith journey.	Utilizing their gifts in service and leadership.

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LIFESPAN

Approx. Ages	Young Adults 20-34	Midlife Adults 35-64	Older Adults 65 and Up
Values and Ethics	May begin to critically reflect on previously unexamined values and act on newly committed to values.	Personal ethics and values are important, but may begin to see nuances as opposed to clear right and wrong.	Ethics and values shape understanding of one's life and are reflected in use of time and resources.
Sexuality	Responsible sexual behavior and celibacy. Forming beliefs related to sexuality and relationships. Issues and concerns related to STD's, infertility, contraception, genetics.	Responsible choices and behavior. Communication of sexual past and implications. Shifting view of self and sexuality. Sexuality and long-term relationships. Body and reproductive changes.	Aging and sexual expression. Illness and loss of life partners. Physical changes. Expanding understanding of intimacy. Awareness of sexuality needs in adult living situations.
Family	Leaves family of origin. Establishes core circle of friends and a new family.	Responsibilities for nurturing and guiding others. Care giving. Parenting. Likely to experience the loss of a parent.	Emotional and sometimes financial support for families. Loss of family members. Developing new relationships.
Needs of Age	To be treated and respected as adults and peers. Arenas for fellowship, service, ministry to others.	Opportunities to reflect on the meaning of life. Finding balance in life.	Opportunities for continued growth. Daytime activities and accessible surroundings. Good lighting and acoustics.
Gifts to Share	Expanding knowledge, creativity, intimacy, willingness to take risks.	Dependability, steadiness, concern for the future, financial resources.	Wisdom, time, endurance, objectivity, life experiences, hope, acceptance of death.
Vocation	Seeking fulfilling work. On the job training. Continued schooling.	Questioning, reaping, career changes, mentoring.	Retirement from primary career. May reenter or reinvent work.
Expectations of the Church	Accompaniment as they search for answers.	Help in finding balance and making meaning of life.	Place for friendships. Help in dealing with losses.

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Tips for Teaching Adults

(Ages 18 and Older)

AS THE TEACHER, one of your roles is to create a positive environment that is conducive to learning—where your students feel welcomed, supported, and accepted—so that they enjoy studying the Word of God. The learning environment is the location or space where learning takes place. Your task is to create an environment that fosters spiritual growth and development in the students you teach. You want to create a classroom that reflects the love of Jesus: a comfortable, inviting classroom where fellowship, bonds, and support are formed—a place where students feel loved, and their teachers care.

Additionally, you must cultivate a culture in which students want to come and participate, and the atmosphere/environment you create is very important.

If you are a teacher using traditional methods that involve only lecture, it is time to explore and begin the paradigm shift to using different methods of instruction. When you as the teacher use a variety of teaching strategies, it contributes to your effectiveness as a teacher.

To reach all the students they teach, teachers must stretch themselves and move out of their comfort zones. Don't be afraid to use different teaching methods.

To be effective in teaching adults, teachers must understand how adults learn best. They have different needs (compared to children) because they bring more experience to the classroom than children do. Adults learn best when they do the following:

- Feel in control and have choices in the direction of the learning process.
- Are given a high level of respect for their current viewpoints and status.
- Are involved in a teaching situation that builds on their previous experience.
- Can apply the teaching immediately to real situations in their own lives.
- (Teachers) realize that most people have a surprisingly short attention span. The hour-long lecture is not, in general, a good means of communication.
- Are in a learning environment that is friendly, informal, and often humorous.
- Are given the space to come to their own conclusions (based on the evidence offered to them) in a non-pressured way.
- Are approached by a mixture of teaching methods, including considerable interactivity: role-play or drama, discussion groups, questionnaires, or other feedback.

- Utilize visual aids—for example: video clips, graphics, and PowerPoint.
- Are involved in a lesson that has a specific, practical, assessable goal, rather than being vague, abstract, or aimed at a range of targets.

TEACHING METHODS

- **Brainstorming:** With this technique, students are asked to list as many ideas as they can on a topic or word in a verbal or written format. The goal is to generate as many ideas, possibilities, or solutions as possible on a given topic in a short period. Brainstorming does not judge or evaluate. It can be done with the whole class or in small groups.
- **Buzz groups:** This is another way to engage students in discussion. The teacher arranges for the students in groups of three to six to discuss ideas about a particular topic. Each group will assign one person to serve as the recorder, who will list all the ideas suggested by the group.
- **Case studies:** These are accounts of situations in which a problem is analyzed. This is a good method for relating biblical truth to real-life situations.
- **Class discussion:** This is a standard way to get the whole class involved. Your role as a teacher is to keep the discussion focused on the topic being discussed and to prevent single individuals from dominating the discussion; this gives everyone an opportunity to participate. Save time at the end to summarize the important points discussed.
- **Debates:** This is the exchange of arguments presented orally in a structured format. The students present opposite sides of a controversial issue or topic. One side argues in the affirmative and the other side argues in the negative. They try to persuade others to accept their respective positions. Topics should focus on issues relevant to the lesson.
- **Drama:** Drama can also be used to help a class imagine a situation or topic fully. Drama in the classroom can do the following:
 1. Make stories and ideas come alive.
 2. Pinpoint solutions to problems which people face in real life.
 3. Stimulate thought or significant issues.
 4. Reveal insights into the character and personality of persons portrayed in the play.
 5. Aid the church in evangelism.
- **Food:** Bringing in foods of different kinds to highlight or to show what the biblical passage or story is talking about can be very helpful.

- **Games:** Use these fun activities to demonstrate a particular idea or thought that you are trying to convey.
- **Group discussion:** In group discussions, a planned topic, problem, situation, or idea is presented to the group for discussion. A group typically consists of three or more people. As the teacher, you need to keep the discussion on track.
- **Interviews:** Interviews can be used in several ways. One way is to form in-group interviews. To begin, divide the class into groups of three and provide the groups with the same question or discussion topic. One person in the group interviews a second person in the group while the third person listens. The second person then interviews the third person while the first listens, and finally the third person interviews the first person while the second person listens. At the end, the teacher brings the class together and each person gets to report on what he or she heard.
- **Lecture:** This is probably the teaching method that is used most frequently. It is generally used to do the following:
 1. Give an overview and introduction of the lesson.
 2. Present background information.
 3. Present basic facts and information.
 4. Define key words or terms.

This method works well for large groups and is appropriate to use when you are presenting a lot of factual information. However, this method limits student participation. Posing questions is a wonderful way to engage students in the lesson discussion and check their understanding.

- **Music:** There are many different ways to incorporate music into your lessons. Here are some suggestions:
 1. Play a recording.
 2. Write a hymn.
 3. Tap out a rhythm.
 4. Play musical chairs.
 5. Potentially incorporate music with both children and adults.
- **Oral presentations and reports:** Students are given an assignment to present to the rest of the class. This assignment can be given before class or at the beginning of class.
- **Panel discussion:** This refers to small groups of students who attempt to solve a problem through discussion, with each panelist assigned a specific topic to address.

Participants are positioned to interact and maintain eye contact with one another. It is important that you give some directions and guidelines to the participants.

- **Questionnaires**
- **Role-play:** This is an unrehearsed enactment of an event or situation and is less formal than drama. It is a powerful way for students to connect with what is being taught, helping them experience, see, and capture the situation. It is important to review the roles with the students in advance and give them clear directions. After the role-play, have the students discuss, analyze, and debrief the message and experiences.
- **Round-robin:** Here, the teacher gives the students a question with multiple answers, or a topic problem or concept with multiple parts to discuss. Each student orally provides an answer or contributes to the discussion.
- **Scripture search:** This is a method in which students are instructed to use Bibles in class under the guidance and direction of the teacher to search for and locate Scriptures. The search should be related to the lesson.
- **Seminars**
- **Skits:** A *skit* is a short, usually comical dramatic performance or work. A skit may be written and/or performed by students as a short, humorous interpretation. Students can act out scriptural stories and Bible passages.
- **Storytelling:** This is another effective way to teach God's Word. It is regarded as a very vital teaching tool that has been around for thousands of years. Every Christian educator should develop storytelling skills.
- **Video/films/movies:** You might take a clip from a video or film to use to emphasize a point that you are trying to make or to introduce a topic or scenario for discussion.
- **Visual charts:** This is nonverbal and involves using charts and other forms of visual art to demonstrate your point or to enhance the learning experience.
- **Worksheets:** These are used to help the participant demonstrate what he or she has learned.

We want to impart God's Word to our students in the most effective way possible. One way to do this is to involve students in the lesson. Allow your students opportunities to articulate what they think, know, and feel.



Tips for Teaching Youth

(Ages 12-17)

Becoming familiar with the developmental phases of your age group provides a good foundation for the practical teaching strategies you will employ in the classroom. Take into account the following three items:

Preparation

The preparation for teaching youth in the Sunday school setting is at least two-pronged.

The first is *academic preparation*. This is the reading, writing, planning, and gathering that must happen before you stand in front of a semi-motivated group of pubescent youngsters who would rather be asleep on a weekend morning.

- Your preparation must be bathed in **prayer**. It is not possible to gloss over the lesson on Saturday night and be effective. Prayer helps condition your heart to the lesson's contents and guide your study. Combined, you will have clarity on and depth in the subject matter when you stand before your students.
- Your **tools** for preparation must be varied and used effectively. You have taken a step in the right direction by using this teaching resource/aid.
 - If you have several Bible versions (or a parallel Bible), use them to compare different translations of the lesson Scripture.
 - Read the larger context in which the lesson is set.
 - Utilize Bible dictionaries, atlases, and other references that will bring clarity to the historical context of the Scripture. Taking these measures in your academic preparation will empower you to offer additional insight into the exposition the writer presents.

Alongside academic preparation is *relational preparation*. It has been said that the Christian teacher not only teaches lessons, but also (more importantly) teaches people. In light of this truth, the Sunday school teacher will do well to know the lesson and equally know the students.

- This begins with building a **rapport** with your students' parents. Getting to know a student's family will help you understand the context in which you are ministering from week to week. Students will have greater accountability if they know their parents regularly communicate with their Sunday school teacher.
- Find ways to invest in your students' lives outside of the classroom. If they are involved

in sports, theater, dance, or other extracurricular activities, you may want to attend some of their events, if possible. Your students will become more receptive to your teaching when they sense that you care about them and their lives.

Presentation

Sunday school teachers have presented their lessons in innumerable formats over the years, with varying degrees of effectiveness. For maximum comprehension, we suggest the *verse-to-exposition* approach. The youth Sunday school quarterlies are laid out in this format. The Scriptures are paired along with the writer's commentary, instead of being printed separately.

- This gives **easy access** and **quick reference** to the text as the class discusses the lesson.
- Your students will also be able to **comprehend the material**, as it is presented in small bites as opposed to two huge parts—the lesson Scripture and commentary.

Another consideration in presenting the lesson is *creativity*.

- Utilize the teacher's manual, Uniform Series tips, and other resources to enhance the students' learning experience.
- Object lessons, demonstrations, manipulatives for learners, charts and graphs, projects, and other methods are all fair game for bringing a greater level of creativity to your lessons.

Bringing other teaching methods into play is sure to succeed in your classroom, especially given students' diverse learning styles.

Application

The original intent of Sunday school was evangelistic. It serves a dual purpose in many African-American Baptist churches: Christian education. As a result, you will find that our youth literature is largely exposition with little space allocated to application. The activities and question-and-answer sections seek to address this area to some degree. However, your task is to help your students assimilate the information into their worldviews and to actualize it in their daily lives.

There are a few things that you will need to determine so that you will know how best to get your students to apply the lesson to their lives.

- Determine the **overall thrust** of the lesson. Is it evangelistic, encouraging, an admonition, informational—or does it have some other thrust?
- What is the **condition of the student**? Is the student saved, unsaved, rebellious, complicit, eager, disinterested, motivated, or so forth?
- Consider the **lesson objectives**. This will help guide how the truths found in the lesson are applied.

These are a few theoretical and practical guideposts that should help aid in your success in teaching this age group the timeless truths of the Lord God Almighty.

Tips for Teaching Children (Up to Age 11)

Introduction

Teachers need quality resources to assist them in doing their work. This article provides brief information about one such resource and concludes by addressing tips for teaching children. First, one helpful resource for teachers of children and teachers in general is *Mapping Christian Education*, a collection of essays for all persons involved in religious education. In *Mapping Christian Education*, Jack Seymour draws on religious educators' knowledge, experiences, and wisdom to illustrate the essentials of connecting the faith with everyday life. Some of the topics that this resource covers include "Approaches to Christian Education" (chapter 1), "Educating for Social Transformation" (chapter 2), and "Assessing Approaches to Christian Education" (chapter 6).

In chapter 5, "Religious Instruction: Homemaking," theologian Elizabeth Caldwell provides valuable goals of religious instruction. One goal Caldwell mentions is creating a learning environment and welcoming space for the students. I agree with Caldwell. Unfortunately, too often, the space for learning is neglected in congregations. So, be sure to observe your teaching environment. Is it interesting or inviting to your age group? Is the room temperature comfortable? Do you have enough room for the children? Is the space organized? While Sunday school space and equipment will vary depending on the church's size and Christian education budget, try to use your space entirely. Include colorful posters, pictures, and other displays. Have a particular board or place to display the students' work. Have a variety of art supplies, musical instruments, books, blocks, and puzzles. Depending on your church setting, you may or may not have control over the room temperature. For instance, if your room usually is cold, you can ask parents to bring sweaters for the children. These are just a few things to remember regarding your teaching space. As you observe your room, you will probably discover other ways to enhance your area.

Space does not permit me to provide a full review of *Mapping Christian Education*, but if you have not read it, I encourage you to do so. This book provides vital information for religious education in a congregational setting.

Second, the following section addresses teaching tips. I hope that these tips, as well as the book *Mapping Christian Education*, will assist you in teaching children.

Nine Tips to Guide Your Teaching

1. **Welcome the Children.** Young children often cling to parents and caregivers and show reluctance to enter a class. Greeting each child by name with a smile and a warm salutation may help: "Good morning, Jaylon. I am so glad you are here." Sometimes, it takes directing the child's attention to a particular activity (such as a coloring page, a book, or a puzzle) to encourage the child to enter and stay in class. Children new to a class may require a few Sundays to adjust and feel comfortable. So, regardless of age, warm welcomes from the teacher reinforce a loving environment for all the children. Children need to know they are special to God and you as their teacher.

2. ***Be Prepared.*** Preparation is the key to having a productive class and being an effective teacher. A lack of preparation can lead to wasted time and cause children to be more easily distracted and disinterested—if you have no plan. First, spend time in prayer, asking God to guide your teaching and to give you wisdom. (Refer to Tip #9 for further discussion on having a personal devotional time.) Second, take the time to read through the lesson. Do you have any questions about the Bible story or any activity? What questions might the children have? Jot down these questions and then take the time to respond to them as best you can. Use resources such as a Bible dictionary or commentary. It is impossible to anticipate all the questions children may have, so do not stress yourself trying to do so. Third, as you plan the lesson, think about the children in your class and what activities they enjoy. Include some of their favorites, but always explore new ideas and activities. Decide which activities or crafts the children will participate in and have enough for each child, as well as extra, in case you have a visitor. Also, make the craft at home first to make sure it works. Likewise, if you plan to have older children do an experiment, do it first at home to ensure it produces the expected results. Testing crafts beforehand will allow you to work out any glitches and feel comfortable teaching them to the students. Fourth, some children may arrive early, so have an arrival activity (coloring pages, activity sheets, books, and so forth) to occupy the children's time. Fifth, if you do not know the children in your class that well, get to know them. Do any of your students have food allergies or have other special needs? Knowing this information will allow you to keep each child safe while in your care. Lastly, trust God to work through you. Having a planned lesson can assist in relieving stress for you because you feel prepared. However, even with all your planning, sometimes not everything happens as planned. In such cases, learn from these experiences and turn challenges into opportunities.
3. ***Have Class Rules.*** Do you have class rules? Children feel secure in a setting where rules are in place and enforced. Help children be aware of the class rules. You can let older children help with establishing rules. They will feel a part of and responsible for the class since they helped create the rules. Since it is important to praise good behavior, you should correct inappropriate behavior. Remind the children of what is acceptable. Sometimes, you do not have to point out children who are not following the class rules but, conversely, praise children who are. For example, it is cleanup time, and you have asked the children to start putting away their supplies. Instead of pointing out children who are not putting away supplies, acknowledge the ones who are. Say something like the following, which works best with younger children: "I see Alexandria putting away her supplies. Thank you, Alexandria. Oh, now I see Micah putting away his supplies. Good job, Micah! Hmmm, who else do I see putting away supplies?" Sometimes, these complimentary words will encourage others to put away their supplies and, thus, create a domino effect. Then again, this does not always work. You may have to speak to children not doing what is expected. Older children should be explicitly reminded to do what you need them to do.
4. ***Praise Students.*** While welcoming your students by name as they arrive, it can make them feel loved and special, and so can praise. When a student responds in class, creates artwork, or participates in a class activity, praise the child for their actions. Some children are in home environments where they receive little or no praise and encouragement—so your kind words can go a long way in boosting a child's self-esteem and confidence. You do not have to be excessive by constantly praising one child for everything they do; this will appear insincere. So, offer all children your kind words in moderation at appropriate times. In addition, provide opportunities for all children to lead, be helpers, or

answer questions. In most classes, one or two students will always answer questions—always willing to lead and participate—while others may be reluctant. Give the quieter ones opportunities to be leaders by distributing supplies to their classmates and assisting you with the lesson as needed. Thank each student for their help; this, too, will help develop confidence in children.

5. ***Show Gratitude to Parents and Caregivers.*** Churches with 80 percent of the congregation attending Sunday school are the exception rather than the norm. For most churches, only a faithful few attend Sunday school. So, encourage parents and caregivers who have committed to bringing their children each Sunday. While you do not have to do so each Sunday, let the parents and caregivers know you are grateful that their children are in your class. Also, parents and caregivers should be given a praise report on Sundays, stating that their children answer questions or are special helpers. It does not have to be anything grandiose. The basic emphasis is that you are letting the parents and caregivers know that their children are positively impacting the class and that you are glad that they are bringing the children to class.
6. ***Be the Curriculum.*** Sunday school curricula vary in offerings and price ranges. Some provide minimal resources. Other curricula have all the bells and whistles packaged with DVDs, multiple activity packets, puppets, additional online help, and a long list of resources. Regardless of the curriculum you use, you must have a love for children. While the curriculum is a significant teaching guide and provides assistance, as the teacher, you *are* the curriculum. You are the curriculum because you make the resources come alive. You take the words on the printed page and minister to the children. How do you do that? Here are a few ways.
 - A. ***Using Your Voice:*** You cannot teach children in a monotone voice and expect to retain their interest. (Even adults do not like to hear monotone speakers.) You must use your whole self, especially with young children. When talking to the children or telling a Bible story, make your voice expressive and dramatic. Use your face to express excitement, happiness, sadness, or whatever point you are making in the story. Use your hands to make gestures as necessary. Be animated!
 - B. ***Using Props:*** You can become the curriculum by occasionally dressing in biblical attire as you tell the Bible story. Doing that can add interest, and you can use it as a teachable moment to talk about what people wore in biblical times.
 - C. ***Having Enthusiasm:*** If you are uninterested in what you teach, do not expect the children to be. If teaching is drudgery for you, your children will know it. Children are very keen and discerning individuals and will sense through your actions, words, and especially your nonverbal behavior that you do not want to be with them. Being enthusiastic does not mean all teachers have to possess an outgoing personality. Not at all. Your quiet or laid-back personality can create a calming, loving effect. Whether you are outgoing or have a quiet nature, you should have a genuine interest in the children and be passionate about the lesson that you are teaching. If you enjoy teaching children and have a passion, your enthusiasm will flow naturally.
7. ***Invite a Guest.*** You may have a class in which teachers rotate, so you only have to teach once or twice a month. On the other hand, you may be the designated teacher for the class and teach every Sunday. Either way, you can let others in the church assist you by occasionally inviting a special guest to class. Are there members of your church who are “first responders” (police officers, firefighters)? You can

also invite church workers, your pastor, or members with other occupations. Is there someone in your church who is an excellent storyteller? The storyteller could be an older child reading to the nursery or preschool class. So think about the lesson and see where a special guest might be helpful. Also, consider your guests and pick people who can interact well with children.

8. **Say, “I Don’t Know.”** Children might ask any number of questions about the Bible. Relax. You do not have to know all the answers. Answer their questions to the best of your ability, and it is okay to simply say, “I do not know.” If it is a Bible fact that you believe you can find the answer to, then tell the children you do not know right now but will try to find the answer—and vice versa: when you ask the children questions, they may respond with some deep, spiritual insights that can be expressed only from the heart of a child. Thank God for those moments because they are priceless! I believe that children are the best theologians, anyway. In the book *Kids Say the Greatest Things about God* by Dandi Daley Mackall, one child said about God’s age: “God is as far as the numbers go. He’s too old for age.” So, be prepared to learn from your students. They are full of incredible theological insights. Be teachable.
9. **Develop a Personal Devotion.** While this tip is listed last, it is not the least important. Conversely, it is listed last because it summarizes and encompasses the other tips. A personal devotional will assist you in being effective in all the aforementioned areas. Tips 1–8 are ways that you are giving to the students, parents, and caregivers. You are teaching and ministering to them each Sunday. So, there must be a time for you to replenish yourself spiritually. One way to do so is by having a personal devotional time. These words may be a refresher if you already have a regular prayer time. If you do not have regular personal devotional time, take the time to develop one. There is no set pattern or way to have a personal devotion, but here are a few suggestions. Plan to set aside time to pray and read the Scripture. For some people, that time is in the morning, while others prefer their devotion just before bedtime. You decide and try to do it at the same time each day so that you can develop a devotional habit. The length of time is also up to you, according to your schedule. Some areas you might include in your prayer are your students, the Sunday school lesson, your personal concerns, and so forth. As you offer your concerns to God, be sure to spend time quietly so that God can speak to your heart. Also, include a devotional reading. You might read a Scripture from the Psalms, Gospels, or a devotional. Numerous daily devotionals include a Scripture passage, meditation, and closing prayer.

In conclusion, consistently having a devotional time will provide you with the strength, wisdom, and insight that you need for your Sunday school class and your everyday life. You are special to God because you have chosen to minister to children—a ministry that so many adults do not have the patience to do. You have chosen to commit to arriving an hour or more early on Sunday morning to be there for the children. While you are there for the children, please know that God is there for you to guide you through each lesson. So let God lead and teach you, and allow your children to teach you as well. Then, watch how you will grow in God’s strength, love, and grace. May God “fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Colossians 1:9, NIV).

List of Curriculum Resources

The Sunday School Publishing Board produces the following Curriculum Resources:

Sunday School Literature

ADULT MATERIALS

- Bible Studies for Adults [also available in Large Print Edition]
- Bible Studies for Young Adults (Ages 18-34)
- Adult Teacher's Guide—A Leadership Resource for Adult Bible Study (For Teachers of Adults and Young Adults)
- Baptist Layman

YOUTH MATERIALS

- Bible Studies for High School Students
- Bible Studies for Middle School Students
- Youth Teacher's Guide—For Middle School and High School Students

CHILDREN'S MATERIALS

- Bible Studies, Upper Elementary (Grades 4–6)
- Activity Book, Upper Elementary (Grades 4–6)
- Bible Studies, Middle Elementary (Grades 2–3)
- Activity Book, Middle Elementary (Grades 2–3)
- Bible Studies, Early Elementary (Grades K–1)
- Bible Studies, Preschool (Ages 3-4)
- Picture Lesson Cards (Toddlers to Twos)
- Teacher's Guide for Older Children (Grades 2–6)
- Teacher's Guide for Younger Children (Toddlers to Grade 1)

DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES

S.E.E.D. (**S**piritual **E**lements **E**ssential for **D**iscipleship)—Series of Ten. Each series consists of the following publications:

- Life Sustainers (Ages 55 and Above)
- Life Planters (Ages 36-54)
- Deeper Roots (Ages 18-35)
- Growing in Grace (Ages 12-17)
- Growing in Christ (Ages 11 and Under)
- Two Teacher's Guides:
 - (a) Teacher's Guide for Deeper Roots, Life Planters, and Life Sustainers
 - (b) Teacher's Guide for Growing in Christ and Growing in Grace

Living the Baptist Faith Bible Studies Series

Small-group Member Books:

- Living the Baptist Faith for Adults (Ages 35 and Above)
- Living the Baptist Faith for Young Adults (Ages 18-34)
- Living the Baptist Faith for High School Students (Grades 10–12)
- Living the Baptist Faith for Middle School Students (Grades 7–9)
- Living the Baptist Faith for Older Children (Grades 4–6)
- Living the Baptist Faith for Younger Children (Grades 1–3)

Small-group Leader's Guides:

- Leader's Guide for Young Adults and Adults
- Leader's Guide for Middle School and High School Students
- Leader's Guide for Younger and Older Children

ANNUAL RESOURCES

- Vacation Bible School (VBS)
- *Townsend Press Sunday School Commentary*
- *The Flashlight Concise Commentary*
- *Townsend Press Powerful Preaching Pointers for Pastors and Ministers* (formerly the *Pastor's Edition* of the *Townsend Press Sunday School Commentary*)
- *Townsend Press Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers* (formerly the *Teacher's Edition* of the *Townsend Press Sunday School Commentary*)

GENERAL TEACHING TIPS

Read: Read and reread the Background Scriptures (as well as the verses before and after) from at least two different translations—one formal equivalence (word-for-word) translation and one functional equivalence (phrase-for-phrase) translation. Recommendations for faithful word-for-word translations include the New King James Version (*The MacArthur Study Bible* has 20,000 notes of explanation) and the English Standard Version, the newest and most up-to-date formal-equivalent translation (with excellent notes, charts, and articles). Recommendations for functional equivalence translations include The New International Version, The Message by Eugene Peterson, and The New Living Translation.

A formal equivalence translation emphasizes the grammatical form of the original language—almost verbatim. A functional equivalence translation is more concerned with the meaning of the original language. The King James Version of the Bible is perhaps the most familiar formal-equivalence translation, while the New International Version is the most familiar functional-equivalence translation.

Additional recommendations: Websites with varied Bible translations and other tools include biblegateway.com, biblestudytools.net, crosswalk.com, studylight.org, and bible.com. An excellent resource to purchase for extensive Bible study is Logos Bible Software.

Prioritize study: Set aside time to give the Bible passages serious thought and consideration. Make an appointment with God and keep it. Use the principles of inductive study, observation, interpretation, and application to help you discover the truth of Scripture. Plan to interact with God's Word personally, using only your Bible, a notebook, and a pen or pencil. Examine the passage in sections or verse by verse, looking first for people, places, and events. Look for keywords and phrases, contrasts, comparisons, and expressions of time. List the facts, answering the basic questions of who, what, where, when, how, and why. Look for lessons, identify rules or principles, then draw conclusions about what God's Word means. Summarize your conclusions in concise statements. Resist the temptation to consult commentaries and other information about the Bible until you have made your own observations and interpretations from the text. There will be opportunities to use other resources after you have discovered what God's Word says and means for yourself.

Locate charts, maps, or visuals to enhance the lesson. Suggestion: Visit rose-publishing.com for free e-charts.

Memorize the Key Verse: Model for students the spiritual discipline to form habits that strengthen the mind and enrich the soul. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly so you may love the Lord as He commanded with all your heart, soul, and mind (see Matthew 22:37; Colossians 3:16).

The divine promises God gives to humanity are sure and certain, and absolutely trustworthy, because God is able to perform what He has promised. Some divine promises require humans to participate or to meet certain conditions. Many divine promises relate to God's plan of redemption, but how and when they will be fulfilled may be known only to God.

Fall Quarter Teaching /Learning Strategies

LESSON 1

September 6, 2026

CHILDREN UNIT I: Israel Finds a New Home

CHILDREN GENERAL LESSON: God Calls Joshua to Leadership

CHILDREN TOPIC: Strength in Obedience

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1-11

KEY VERSE: Joshua 1:9

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. Compare Moses's call story to Joshua's, and have the children act out different call stories.
2. Ask, "What makes a leader?" Work with the children to define characteristics of leaders.
3. Create comic books that depict God's conversation with Joshua, Joshua's response to God's words, and the actions that Joshua took that showed his courageous obedience to God's instructions.
4. Explore what it is to be strong and courageous through creating a collage of drawings and writings.
5. Pull in examples from movies or shows that children engage that indicate strong and courageous leaders (e.g., *The Descendants*, *The Lion King*, etc.).
6. Learn the song "My God Is So Big."

YOUTH UNIT 1: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

YOUTH GENERAL LESSON: Renewing Our Commitments

YOUTH TOPIC: Renewing Our Commitments

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1-11

KEY VERSE: Joshua 1:9

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. Write a "Prayer of Confession" that acknowledges our shortcomings and failure to live in accordance with the covenant.
2. Give each youth a Bible and invite them to individually search for all the places in which the word *covenant* appears. Ask, "What do you notice?"

3. Trace the history of the covenant from Genesis to Joshua.
4. In teams, have the youth list as many people they can think of who demonstrate courage and strength. Ask, “What does courage and strength look like in our world? What do you think it looks like to God?”
5. Have the youth to write a journal entry about a time when they showed courage and strength in their own lives. Encourage them to reflect on where they noticed God’s presence.
6. Show the scene from the movie *Rocky* in which Rocky runs up the steps in Philadelphia. Ask, “What do we learn about God when we overcome challenges?”

ADULT UNIT 1: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

ADULT GENERAL LESSON: Renewing Our Commitments

ADULT TOPIC: Renewing Our Commitments

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1-11

KEY VERSE: Joshua 1:9

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. Ask participants to imagine they are one of the Israelites who has journeyed through the desert with Moses. Have them write a journal entry about how they would feel after Moses’ death. Encourage them to consider what kind of comfort they would need. Ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.
2. Show a map of Canaan at the time of the conquest, and discuss why the people might have had fears about entering the land.
3. Discuss how God responds to the people’s loss. Ask, “How does God calling Joshua to leadership help or not help the people deal with the death of Moses and the journey they are facing? How else does God provide for the people in Joshua 1?”
4. Ask each participant to write about or sketch an image of Joshua as a leader, using the description of God’s call to leadership in Joshua 1:1-11. Ask volunteers to share the characteristics they noted in their description or sketch.
5. With the group, list qualities that would be helpful in a leader based on the situation that the Israelites were facing. Rank these qualities in order of importance. Ask, “How are these qualities, or the ranking of these qualities, similar to and/or different from the qualities we look for in a leader today?” (Save the list to use again in lesson 11, November 15, 2026).
6. Compare Joshua’s leadership to that of Moses. Compare Joshua 3:1-17 to Exodus 14:21-25; Joshua 5:10-11 to Exodus 13:3-10; Joshua 5:15 to Exodus 3:5; Joshua 7:7-9 to Numbers 14:13-19; and Joshua 13, 8-32 to Deuteronomy 3:8-17.

LESSON 2

September 13, 2026

CHILDREN UNIT I: Israel Finds a New Home**CHILDREN GENERAL LESSON:** Follow God's Instructions**CHILDREN TOPIC:** Stones and Zones**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:** Joshua 4**PRINT PASSAGE:** Joshua 4:14-18, 21-22**KEY VERSES:** Joshua 4:21b-22**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

1. Discuss thankfulness. Have children act out different examples of giving thanks. Ask, "What does it look like to give thanks to God?"
2. Let the students work together or individually to create a song or poem, highlighting critical details about the Bible verses and why the twelve stones were important. Offer ideas and insight as needed.
3. Discuss following instructions and why it matters.
4. Make a "church family tree," using an illustration or printout of a large tree. Name people who were a part of your church long ago, and those who are now members. Write each name on a branch of the tree. Discuss the importance of looking back to the past to see how far you have come as a church.
5. Make flashcards. On one side of a card, list the qualities of someone in the class or church (someone well-known or obvious to the students); and on the other side of the card, list a famous biblical person who has those same qualities for the children to guess. (Examples: a classmate who is soft-spoken yet shows good leadership could be matched with Moses; a church lady who makes garments for others could be paired with Dorcas; and so forth.)
6. Build a path with twelve construction paper stones. Write or draw a different example of God's faithfulness on each stone.

YOUTH UNIT 1: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People**YOUTH GENERAL LESSON:** Remember God's Actions**YOUTH TOPIC:** Family Legacies**BACKGROUND PASSAGE:** Joshua 4**PRINT PASSAGE:** Joshua 4:14-24**KEY VERSES:** Joshua 4:21b-22

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. Play a memory/matching game. Invite youth to reflect on what it means to “remember” God.
2. Have youth answer and discuss the following questions with a partner or small group: “What are some of the moments in your life that most shaped your faith?” “Why do you think you remember those moments?”
3. Use Google Maps to find monuments in your city or state. Ask, “What is the purpose of these monuments?”
4. Using various supplies, have the youth create a tangible artifact they can carry with them as a reminder of God’s presence in their lives.
5. Brainstorm as many faith practices as you can as a group. Then ask, “Which faith practices do you typically engage in and why?”
6. Engage in contemplative prayer as a faith practice.

ADULT UNIT I: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

ADULT GENERAL LESSON: Remember God’s Actions

ADULT TOPIC: Family Legacies

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: Joshua 4

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 4:14-24

KEY VERSES: Joshua 4:21b-22

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. Ask participants to share examples of rituals they perform to remember special occasions (such as holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.). Discuss what is special about these rituals and how they help one to honor and remember the original occasion.
2. Ask participants to share examples of rituals the Christian faith community perform to remember God’s acts of salvation (include ordinances such as communion and baptism; liturgies such as the Lord’s Prayer; rituals performed to celebrate Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, Advent, Christmas, etc.). Ask, “What is special about these rituals? How do they help us to honor and remember God’s steadfast love for us? What do we learn or remember about God from each of these rituals?”
3. Compare the church and secular rituals, noting the similarities and differences. Then, ask participants to close their eyes and visualize a church ritual that is special to them. Ask what do they feel and think during this ritual, and how do they experience God’s presence through this ritual.
4. Read Exodus 15 and explain that this is a song Moses and the Israelites sang to honor God

for allowing them to safely cross the Red Sea. Give examples of songs from your hymn books that were written to commemorate the writer's having experienced God's grace and salvation (e.g., "Amazing Grace"). Then ask participants to imagine themselves crossing the Jordan River with Joshua and to write a song or a poem honoring God for His saving actions.

5. Discuss why it would be important for the Israelites to tell their children about the Jordan crossing. Ask, "What details of the crossing would be important to pass on? What would telling the story teach the children about God?"
6. Discuss the role of storytelling in establishing and maintaining the culture of a particular community. Ask participants what role storytelling played in their understanding of their family or community's history, what stories they have been told, and what do they know about themselves based on these stories. Ask, "What do we teach our children when we tell them stories about their family, community, or faith community?"



LESSON 3

September 20, 2026

CHILDREN UNIT I: Israel Finds a New Home

CHILDREN GENERAL LESSON: God Leads His People to Victory

CHILDREN TOPIC: The Fighting Is Over

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Joshua 6; 8:26; 10:28-43; 11:1-23; Deuteronomy 7:1-16

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 11:16-23

KEY VERSE: Joshua 11:23

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. Play the game "Simon Says."
2. Prepare a scavenger hunt with some clues easier than others. Ask, "Is it easy to follow instructions?"
3. Develop an unscrambling or fill-in-the-blank activity highlighting the different territories or regions God allowed Joshua to overtake. Tie in the action to God rewarding Joshua's faithfulness to God.
4. Ask, "How is Joshua a leader?" Work together to define leadership characteristics.
5. Have the children create a story (either individually or as a group) that describes the interactions between Joshua/Israel and all the lands that he overtook. Shine light on the

TOWNSEND PRESS

TARGETED TEACHING TIPS

Based on the International Lessons Series

A Teacher Preparation Resource for Sunday Church School Teachers

September 2026–August 2027

This Unique Resource for Church School Preparation includes the following:

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- List of Curriculum Resources
- A Chart Highlighting Development through the Lifespan
- Age-level Characteristics for Teaching
 - Tips for Teaching Adults
 - Tips for Teaching Youth
 - Tips for Teaching Children
- Fifty-three (53) Teaching Strategies
 - Fall Quarter Teaching Strategies
 - Winter Quarter Teaching Strategies
 - Spring Quarter Teaching Strategies
 - Summer Quarter Teaching Strategies
- Fifty-three (53) Targeted Teaching Tips
 - Fall Quarter
 - Winter Quarter
 - Spring Quarter
 - Summer Quarter

Brief Introduction

The *Townsend Press Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers* is a unique resource based on the International Lessons Series developed consistent with the curriculum guidelines of the Committee on the Uniform Series, Education Leadership Ministries Commission, National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Select Christian educators who embrace the precepts, doctrines, and positions of biblical interpretation that we have come to believe are contributors to this publication.

We stand firm in our commitment to Christian growth, to the end that lives will be transformed through personal and group interaction with the Word of God.



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