



**TRAINING SESSION**

# Handling the Bible Well in Children's and Youth Ministry

Session 1





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### Part 1

## The Theological Foundation for Bible Teaching

Teaching the Bible to children and young people is a weighty and joyful responsibility. It requires a firm theological foundation, careful interpretation, and a commitment to faithfully communicate God's truth.

This session equips us with the tools to handle the Bible well—ensuring our teaching is:

- **Faithful**
- **Christ-centred**
- **Spirit-dependent**
- **Grounded in the authority and sufficiency of Scripture**

By grasping the overarching narrative of Scripture, the importance of context, and the principles of exegesis, we will grow in confidence as we lead children and young people to know and love God's Word.

### 1. Understanding the Why: The Theological Foundation

#### 1.1 THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – “All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.”
- The Bible does not derive its authority from the church, from tradition, or from our experience—it is **God-breathed**, coming from the mouth of God Himself. To teach the Bible is to speak God's words after Him. That means we are not free to tamper with its message, dilute its meaning, or ignore the parts we find uncomfortable.
- In children's and youth ministry, this is especially important. We're not entertainers or motivational speakers—we are heralds of divine truth. Even when teaching toddlers or teenagers, we are standing on holy ground, entrusted with a Word that cuts to the heart (Hebrews 4:12) and calls for repentance, faith, and obedience.
- Teaching with this conviction means we let the Bible set the agenda—not culture, not curriculum, and certainly not our own ideas.

## 1.2 THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

- **Luke 24:27** – “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.”
- Jesus teaches us how to read the Bible: it all points to Him. The Old Testament anticipates His coming, and the New Testament proclaims it. Christ is not just a part of the Bible’s message—He is the centre and goal of it all.
- For children and young people, the temptation is to reduce the Bible to moral lessons (“Be brave like David” or “Be kind like Ruth”). But the Bible is not ultimately about heroes to imitate—it is about **a Saviour to trust**.
- Our aim is not to raise well-behaved children, but Christ-followers who see the glory of Jesus and are transformed by His grace. Every Bible story, rightly handled, leads to Him—not by forced allegory, but by understanding the place of each text in God’s unfolding plan of redemption.

## 1.3 THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **John 14:26** – “The Holy Spirit will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.”
- The same Spirit who inspired the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:21) is the one who illumines them to our hearts and minds. Without the Spirit, we may teach truth accurately but it will not land with power, conviction, or transformation.
- This is both humbling and encouraging. It reminds us that **we cannot change hearts**—only the Spirit of God can. But it also means we are not left to our own resources. We pray as we prepare, asking for insight. We pray as we teach, asking for soft hearts. We pray after we teach, asking God to grow lasting fruit.
- Children’s and youth ministry must never become a merely educational enterprise. It is a spiritual work, demanding our dependence on the Spirit at every stage.

## 1.4 THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

- **2 Peter 1:3** – “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us.”
- In a world brimming with advice, programmes, and philosophies about children’s development and identity, the Bible is not outdated or incomplete. It is **sufficient**—providing all that is needed to know God, to live for Christ, and to walk in righteousness.
- For those ministering to children and young people, this is a glorious reassurance. We don’t need to chase the latest trends or anxiously fill gaps with secular theories. Scripture is a well that never runs dry.
- This sufficiency also reminds us that the Bible is **relevant**. Children wrestling with fear, identity, peer pressure, or temptation do not need superficial slogans—they need the deep, nourishing truth of God’s Word. It speaks to every age, in every age.

## → GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do we need to hold firmly to the authority of Scripture when teaching children and young people?
- How can we ensure that we are always pointing to Christ in our Bible teaching?
- What role does prayer play in our preparation and teaching?

## Part 2

# Context – Understanding the Big Picture

To interpret Scripture faithfully, we must understand its **context**, avoid isolated misinterpretations, and grasp how each passage fits within God’s unfolding story. The Bible is not a random collection of wise sayings—it is a unified revelation of God’s redemptive purposes.

## 2.1 THE OVERARCHING NARRATIVE: CREATION, FALL, REDEMPTION, NEW CREATION

Every passage fits into God’s big story. Ask:

- **Creation** – How does this text reflect God’s original design?
- **Fall** – How does it reveal the brokenness of humanity?
- **Redemption** – How does this passage connect to God’s saving work in Christ?
- **New Creation** – How does it anticipate God’s renewal of all things?

## 2.2 CONTEXT REALLY MATTERS!

**The difference between a dictionary and a story:**

- In a **story**, context is everything—a sentence only makes sense in the wider narrative.
- In a **dictionary**, each entry stands alone.

**The Bible is a story, not a dictionary!**

**Illustration:**

“A text out of context is as dangerous as a lion out of a cage!”

- Every passage is part of a larger narrative or argument.
- The Bible is not a series of isolated wisdom nuggets—it’s a unified story that points to Christ.

## → GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you ever heard a verse misused because it was taken out of context? What happened?
- How can misunderstanding the context distort the message of a passage?

## 2.3 UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT IN BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

### Levels of Context

1. **The Verse** – Read in the sentence and paragraph.
2. **The Paragraph** – Read in the chapter.
3. **The Chapter** – Read in the book.
4. **The Book** – Read in light of the Bible’s whole story.

### Example: Mark 11:12-14

- Imagine you are preparing to teach this passage.
  - What first steps would you take to understand it in context?
  - How does this compare to your usual Bible reading or preparation?

### PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

- Always ask: **Where does my passage fit into the larger book?**
- Look at the **book’s purpose and themes** before zeroing in on details.
- Ask: **How does the wider context help me understand the author’s intent?**