

Xenos Summer Institute 2017

Teaching Kids to Love God's Word

Jeff Risley, Director Oasis Children's Ministry, Xenos Christian Fellowship

Goals

- **Help you connect with your child-like wonder about God's revealed Word**

- **Help you to make effective presentations about the Bible to kids**
 - **What makes certain ideas stick with kids?**
 - **How do we take into account gender differences when teaching children?**

Why Kids?

- **Develop Firm Foundations**
 - **Overall, about three out of ten young people who grow up with a Christian background stay faithful to church and to faith throughout their transitions from the teen years through their twenties.**

- **Might not get another chance**
 - **Young people are dropping out earlier, staying away longer, and if they come back are less likely to see the church as a long-term part of their life.**
 - <https://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/534-five-myths-about-young-adult-church-dropouts>

Why Focus on the Word of God?

- **The Word is Paramount**
 - **"This means Millennials who retain a longer-lasting faith than their peers are more likely to find a sense of authority in the Word of God—**

both in the pages of the Bible as well as in their experience of intimacy with the God they follow,” Kinnaman says.

- <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/635-5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-tochurch#.VBrofpRdWSo>

- **Lines up with our Identity**

- “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds
~ **Hebrews 10:16**

- **Exciting!**

1. **Challenges us (Col 2:2-3, Eph 3:16-19)**
2. **Useful toward goal accomplishment (2 Tim 3:16-17, Phil 3:12-14)**
3. **Rewarding and pleasurable (Psalm 94:19, Psalm 4:8)**
4. **Do it with others (Acts 2:42)**

Culture’s view vs. Our View?

How to teach kids about God’s Word?

- **Manage__expectations_____!**

(Part 1)---Developing “Sticky” Ideas

1. Simple

- **1 main point**
- ***Cut and cut and cut, stay on target***
- ***Danger of knowledge***

- **The Word?**
 - **Pick 1 aspect per lesson, explain it succinctly**
 - **Don't bore kids with too much detail**
 - **Leave them wanting more**

2. Unexpected

- **Break the pattern**
- **Sunday “school”= immediate lost interest**
- **Games, fun questions, facts to get attention (sharks and dogs)**
- **Challenging questions (with answers other than God, Jesus or love)**

- **The Word?**
 - **Use pictures**
 - **Ask their opinions?**
 - **Get on their level (figuratively and literally)**

3. Concrete

- **Fight against the abstract (jobschmob.com)**
- **Foundation for higher level understanding**
- **Focused vs. too narrow**
- **Ex. 5 silly things people in the world have done**
- **vs. 5 silly things people in your church have done**
- **vs. 5 silly things people in your church have done in the last 2 days**

- **The Word?**
 - **Explain tough words**
 - **Don't use church-ese**

4. Credible

- **Person?**
 - **Are you credible? Can kids see excitement about God's Word in you?**
- **Data?**
 - **Answers to their big questions?**

- **The Word?**
 - **Let the Bible impact you regularly**
 - **Be aware of the lines of attack on the Bible and how to defend it**

5. Emotional

- **Appeal to their identity**
 - **Made in God's image**
 - **Innate care for other people**
- **Empathy develops from the particulars, not the overall patterns**
 - **Giving to an individual vs. organization**
- **The Word?**
 - **Tie the Word of God to vibrant relationship with Him**
 - **Show opportunity for discovery and joy**

6. Stories

- **Ties other aspects together**
 - **Usable framework**
 - **Active vs. passive audience, more involved**
- **Songs**
- **The Word?**
 - **Talk about what you're reading**
 - **Talk about how God's word has changed your life**

(Part 2)---Accounting for Gender Differences

1. Vision

- ***Boys have more developed vision for location, direction and speed***
- ***Girls have more developed vision for color and texture***
- ***Eye Anatomy***
 - **The male retina is substantially thicker than the female retina. That's because the male retina has mostly the larger, thicker M cells while the female retina has predominantly the smaller, thinner P ganglion cells**
 - ✦ **Pg. 21. Why Gender Matter, Dr. Leonard Sax**
 - **Boys see still and moving objects better than girls. They also have a better sense of perspective. This is due to the M ganglion cells in their retinas. In contrast, girls' retinas have P ganglion cells that are better suited to detecting fine detail.**
 - ✦ **Pg. 50. Wired To Move, Ruth Hanford Morhard**
- **Boys draw verbs, girls draw nouns**

- **The Word?**
 - **Know your classroom**
 - **Mix up you your teaching styles**
 - **Use fine detail as well as action when developing visual aids**

2. Hearing

- ***Boys do not hear as well, but have a higher threshold for noise***
- ***Girls hear nearly twice as well as boys, and are especially sensitive to soft sounds and tone of voice***

- **The Word?**
 - **Know your classroom**
 - **Move around, a lot!**
 - **Vary the tone, pitch and volume of your voice**
 - **Emphasize aspects of your presentation using visual aids**

Conclusions

- **Connect with your own excitement about God's Word.**
 - **You can't give what you don't have. Kids can tell when you are being fake and you'll lose their attention and interest**

- **Stay focused**
 - **The amount of data you have doesn't need to be shared all at once**
 - **Find the most important point and stick to that**
 - **Lessons/active teaching time < 10 minutes**

- **Use stories and pictures to help kids connect with the concrete aspects of God's Word**
 - **Help them connect with what they can experience so they'll extrapolate their connection to what they can't directly experience**

- **Boredom is your worst enemy!**
 - **Always aim for short, fun and memorable**

For more XSI Resources, please visit the following web pages

