

Lesson #19: Pray Bible-based, life-expanding ACTS prayers.

Using the ACTS structure for prayers has been one of the most surprisingly, remarkably effective tools we have encountered in teaching children to look at the Bible and learn more about who God is, who they are, themselves as sinners; Christ's work for sinners; and, how God wants us to live. And not only to help the children do this in class, but actually take this skill home and keep on using it.

ACTS is an acronym that stands for the four, basic ways we talk to God:

- Adoration (praising God for who He is)
- Confession (telling God about our sins and asking His forgiveness)
- Thanksgiving (thanking God for His many good gifts--especially those He's giving us through Christ)
- Supplication (asking God for what we need to live the way He wants us to live and to see His kingdom come)

We include an ACTS prayer with every Bible truth in all the curriculum we use, starting even with our two-year-olds. As the children get older, we continue to include the ACTS prayer, but we ask them to help think of an A, C, T, S from the Bible truth. This helps develop an ability to ask good questions about any Bible truth or Bible text. And, not just in any way...but in four, very important ways: Who is God? Who am I? Why do I need a Savior? What has God done, especially through Jesus that I am thankful for? And, how does God want me to live?

The ACTS format makes for an easy, ready-on-the-spot, spiritually-rich, thought-provoking devotion for families, too. Really, you can read any passage and ask these four questions and glean a lot of truth and good application from it.

Of course, the problem with introducing a structure to prayer is if the structure becomes a "must" instead of an "aid." To help avoid this mindset, we also make sure to pray with the children in ways that are not structured like this, to help them understand that prayer is talking to God and He does not require a certain format to listen and answer!

Lesson #19: Questions for You in Your Ministry Setting:

1. When do you pray with the children in your ministry setting?
2. Have you ever used the ACTS prayer format with them?
3. How could you introduce children and families to this prayer tool?
4. What cautions would you give to them about over-use of this tool?