

Lesson #16: Think like a missionary!

Missionaries know that if they are to effectively share the gospel with people from another country, they will have to think cross-culturally. They spend time learning the language and the culture of the people they want to reach. They study the people they want to reach, trying to figure out how best to translate Biblical truths into understandable concepts. They look at themselves as communicators, the message they want to communicate, and the people they want to receive it and understand it. They know that all three parts of this chain need to be in place for them to make a connection.

This same cross-cultural way of thinking is very helpful when we want to communicate Biblical truths to children, too. Thinking about what we are like as teachers; understanding the message we want to communicate; taking time to understand what the children we teach are like and how they think, can help us to not just speak these truths to them, but help them understand them. Being aware of the developmental norms for a group of children can help us to give them activities that they enjoy and are suitable for their age.

You can find many great resources for what behavior and abilities to expect in preschoolers and elementary school children. Appendix G and H, in the back of this book, include two articles we created that give a development snapshot of two through five year olds, as well as behavior to expect of these preschool age children as well as elementary school age children. This kind of information is important for curriculum developers as well as teachers to be familiar with and use as they work with the children.

Lesson #16: Questions for You in Your Ministry Setting:

1. What are the characteristics and developmental abilities of the children you are trying to reach?
2. What are some ways that the children you teach are different from you in their ability to think and understand?
3. What are some ways that the children you teach are different from you in activities that help them learn?
4. How do these differences in characteristics/developmental abilities affect how you present truth in an understandable way to the children?
5. What has helped you in getting a grasp of the differences and even barriers to communicating with the children in your class?