



At What Age Do Children Understand the Bible?

by Carolyn Burwell
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When I was first assigned this topic, my response was, "I wish I knew!" I think most people would agree the answer is varied. Many factors are involved in the learning process. I do believe, however, that the answer is "sooner than most people think."

Medical science has shown that learning happens at a young age. P.E.T. (Positive Emission Tomography) scans have proven that an infant's brain is very active, and interaction with someone can stimulate brain growth.

Precept upon Precept

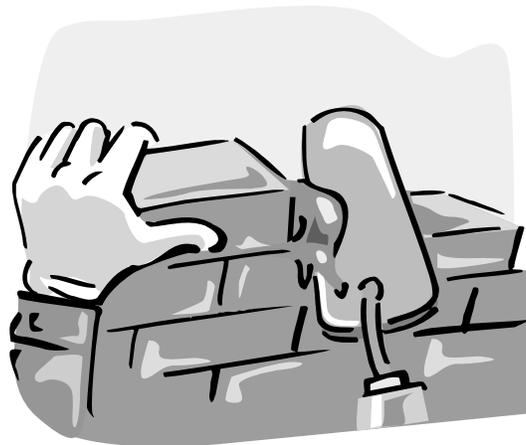
Isaiah 28:10 tells us to teach precept upon precept, line upon line. That verse, combined with Deuteronomy 6:5-7, is a strong admonition to teach children.

While young children cannot comprehend abstract concepts, they can learn about the Bible from the people around them. Teachers should prepare and teach as if they understand. Structuring the time to include repetition and participation will enhance the learning process. As children learn about the Bible, they will believe it is true.

Eventually they will understand how to apply it to their lives.

The Faith of a Child

I am always amazed how young children believe that God's Word is true. Prayer time is a strong indication of that fact. Children simply believe God can do exactly what you said He could. They don't understand *how* it will happen, but they do believe it *will*.



Bricklayers

I tell early childhood workers that they are the bricklayers in the church. Every time a biblical truth is presented, another brick is laid. The mortar holding the bricks together is the teaching

(not always with words) of the teacher. It isn't long before the children have a solid, biblical foundation.

Earlier this year my adult son had kidney stones. He was in considerable pain, and went to his room to rest. A few minutes later we found his three-year-old daughter beside his bed. Her head was on the bed and her hand on his leg. We quietly listened as she prayed, "Jesus, please make Daddy stop hurting."

I've often wondered how many bricks it took for her to learn that God answers prayer.

Three stonemasons, when asked what they were doing, replied as follows:

"Laying a stone," said the first.

"Making a wall," said the second.

"Building a cathedral," said the third.

Three Sunday School teachers were asked what they were doing:

"Baby-sitting these kids," said the first.

"Caring for the children," said the second.

"Sharing God's love," replied the third.

It seems to me that a bricklayer who shares God's love has a high calling indeed.

Questions for Further Study—

1. At what age can a child understand the Bible?
2. What factors will enhance the learning process for small children?
3. In what way are children's workers "bricklayers"?
4. According to the story of the three stonemasons, what attitude should children's workers have toward their work?

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