



Spiritual Martial Arts

by Sharon Ellard

Children everywhere face bullies, parents' divorce, stress at school, media exposure to sexual sins, physical abuse, and a host of other adult challenges that have entered the world of children today.

What's the best way to condition children to remain strong in their faith during life's transitions and crises? Children who memorize Bible verses are better equipped for life. Learning Bible verses can be compared to spiritual martial arts. When life or Satan challenge children's confidence in God, a well-placed Bible verse can send Satan running.

For a Bible verse to become a LIFE Verse, a child must love it, learn it, and live it.

Love It!

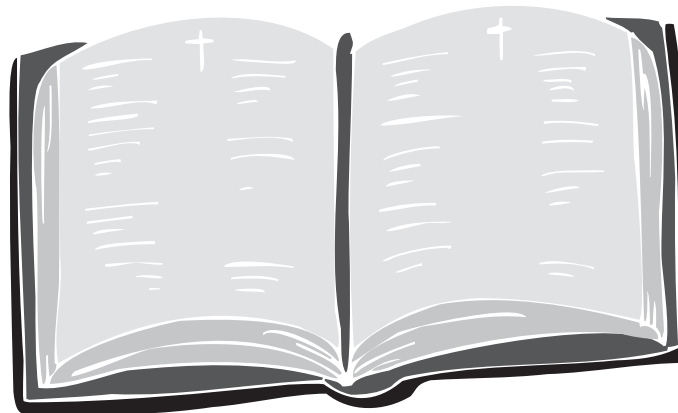
The first step in helping children learn LIFE Verses is to help children to understand the benefit of the verses. Verses like Proverbs 3:5,6 remind children to trust in the Lord in all circumstances because God will guide their lives. If a child sees a friend worshipping Mohammed or

an idol, verses like John 14:6 can remind him that Jesus says He is the only way to God.

When children are frightened or don't know what to do, the Holy Spirit can bring a Bible verse, learned in Sunday School, to their minds.

Learn It!

When I was a kid, I memo-



rized verses by repeating them again and again and again. Today, you can download learning tips, called "Learn It! Love It! Live It!" from the national Sunday School Department website at www.sundayschool.ag.org. A different memory method is suggested for each of the ten LIFE verses. Some are visual, some musical, some whimsical. The variety will allow children with

different learning styles to each have a way to learn Bible verses.

Live It!

Knowing is not enough! Jesus said, "These words I speak to you are ... foundational words, words to build a LIFE on" (Matthew 7:24, *The Message*, up-percased mine). Children need our help to learn to LIVE by

Bible verses they learn. The "Learn It! Love It! Live It!" feature on the Sunday School website suggests a way to apply each LIFE verse to a child's everyday routines. As a Sunday School teacher, you can help even more.

- Share how you have applied a Bible verse in your own life.
- Plan time to brainstorm together how children in your class could apply a verse to their lives.
- Take time for children to report how they are using the LIFE verses in their everyday routines.

In uncertain times, learning God's Word prepares children to face LIFE with confidence in the God of the Word.

Questions for Further Study—

1. At this point in your ministry to children, what level of emphasis have you placed on Bible memorization?
2. What are some new ways you can incorporate Bible memorization into your weekly ministry time?
3. List three ways you can help your children to apply Scripture to their lives.