



A Guide to Hybrid Sunday School

Tips and Ideas for Engaging
Early Childhood Children
and Their Families

(Preschool and Early Elementary)



INTRODUCTION

Children’s ministry has never changed at a faster pace than it is changing right now. But what hasn’t changed—and will never change—is our goal to bring God’s Word to children and families.

This guide is designed to help you use the curriculum you know and trust as your children’s ministry adjusts to another new normal. We’ve provided tips and ideas to help you adapt the lessons for teaching virtually and engaging families—whether you’re meeting online, meeting in person, sending lessons home, or taking a hybrid approach.

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TEACHING—A HYBRID APPROACH

When we use the term “hybrid teaching,” we’re referring to combining virtual tools—tools that enable you to communicate and interact online with students and families—with physical options.

Check out this article on [teaching virtually](#). You’ll find technical suggestions as well as tips to keep your kids engaged online!*

Even when your ministry is ready to return to your church building, some of your families won’t feel comfortable coming back right away. Consider offering—or continuing to offer—an at-home Sunday school option. Providing lessons and resources for children at home is a great way to invest in and connect with the families you serve!

We’re also creating bonus curriculum content (coming soon) that is free to you as a current customer. It will be full of resources to help you engage the children and families you serve.

Prepare to Teach

EXPLORE LIFELINKS

LifeLINKS’s teaching resources are available in print and are also included in the digital bundles. We encourage you to explore *all* the files—especially if you don’t typically order all of these resources—and see what works best for your ministry.

LifeLINKS Early Childhood Resources at a Glance

Preschool Resources at a Glance

- *Preschool Teacher’s Guide*
- *Preschool Creative Teaching Aids* (posters, stand-up figures, story figures, and PraisePac audio files and downloadables)
- *Preschool Make-It/Take-It* craft book
- *My Sunday Pictures* take-home cards

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- [Preschool/Early Elementary Lesson Videos](#) (3-4-minute video segments that highlight the monthly teaching theme)
- [Preschool Video Connection Guide](#) (Equips teachers to connect the Lesson Video and monthly theme to each lesson)
- [Preschool Family Devotions Guide](#) (Encourages families to grow and learn together as they watch the Lesson Video)

*The Ministry Spark website has many articles and tips that you might find helpful as you reopen your church and navigate the new and exciting world of online resources that you can use to reach your students. This site is not created by 21st Century Christian and, as such, we do not endorse all of the content you may find there.

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Early Elementary Resources at a Glance

- *Early Elementary Teacher Guide*
- *Early Elementary Creative Teaching Aids* (posters, stand-up figures, story figures, game boards, and PraisePac audio files and downloadables)
- *Bible Beginnings* student book
- *Early Elementary Make-It/Take-It* craft book
- *Storytime* Take-Home Papers
- LifeLINKS PraisePac songs and downloads
- [Preschool/Early Elementary Lesson Videos](#) (3-4-minute video segments that highlight the monthly teaching theme)
- [Early Elementary Video Connection Guide](#) (Equips teachers to connect the Lesson Video and monthly theme to each lesson)
- [Early Elementary Family Devotions Guide](#) (Encourages families to grow and learn together as they watch the Lesson Video)

FOR EACH QUARTER

- Decide which portions of a lesson will work best for teaching in your current reality. We've provided suggestions below. Remember that activities that call for pairs or groups of kids will be more difficult to use online.
- Set a time limit for each lesson. Include time to socialize before and after the lesson.
- Organize the digital files you will be using.
- Decide how you will get activity packs to families (physical pickup/drop-off, download links, or both).
- Let families know how to access the lessons and the activity packs.
- Make a Woolly Lamb or Shaggy Donkey puppet to use for the quarter. Use either the teaching aid resource for the quarter or make a cloth puppet using the bonus pattern included in your *Creative Teaching Aids* packet. If you don't sew, ask a member of your congregation to make one for your class.
- For Preschool, ask families to make their own versions of the puppet to have at home. Ask families to share their puppets the first time you meet.
- Create a board for using story figures. Be sure you have a way to display story figures. If you don't have a story board, see the ideas provided in our bonus curriculum content (coming soon)!
- For Early Elementary, use the PraisePac PDF files to create a Bible time line in PowerPoint. The time line will help your class begin to understand how God's Word is divided into testaments and books.
- Download the [Lesson Videos and guides](#) for Preschool/Early Elementary.

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FOR EACH LESSON

- Prepare your heart with prayer before you read Understanding the Bible and the teacher devotional from the teacher guide.
- Familiarize yourself with the Lesson Focus, Bible Basis (Scripture passage), and memory verse.
- Prepare and organize your materials and digital files so you can access them easily while you teach.
- Consider creating a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation for the lesson. You might get ideas from the sample PowerPoint presentation and guidelines in our bonus curriculum content (coming soon)!
- Practice any songs, crafts, and activities ahead of time so you are comfortable presenting them on-screen.
- If you are unfamiliar with the tune suggested for a Worship Time or Bible Memory Verse song, search YouTube for a video of that tune.
- Let parents know ahead of time if there are any resources/materials their children may need for the lesson.
- Traditionally Wooly and Shaggy talk only to the teacher instead of having a “voice.” Practice using the puppet on-screen so you can get used to the limitations of the camera.

Teach the Lesson

BEFORE THE LESSON STARTS

- Start your stream 5 to 10 minutes before the scheduled start time so families can sign in and know their connection is working.
- Consider using a countdown video to show how much time is left before the lesson starts. Remember that less might be more during this time!
- Show a list of items that students will need for the lesson. Remember that less might be more during this time!
- Choose a fun icebreaker video to share on-screen and capture kids’ attention. We’ve provided dozens of icebreaker videos in our bonus curriculum content (coming soon)!

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- If you are using Early Elementary, try adapting an Early Bird Option from the teacher guide for students to do while they wait for the lesson to start.
- Give Early Elementary students time to share what they discovered about Seeing God through the Week since the last lesson.

Preschool Worship Time

- With Wooly or Shaggy's help, give kids and families a couple of minutes to share how their week was. This helps build connections between families.
- Put the song lyrics and motions on a PowerPoint or Google Slides. Have kids and families stand up and do the songs with you. Follow directions for repeating the song.
- Use the prayer printed at the end of Worship Time to end your worship together.

DURING THE LESSON

STEP 1

Preschool: Getting Ready for the Bible | Early Elementary: Bible Readiness

This short activity time gives children time to share about themselves and their lives while building relationships with you and each other. It's a time to introduce them to the lesson focus.

- For Preschool, begin each lesson with the Attention Grabber. This helps kids know this is the start of the lesson. Encourage kids and families to do the rhyme with you.
- Check to see how adaptable the Opening Activity is to an online session. If the activity can't be adapted, spend a few minutes sharing with kids and families about the previous week. If you haven't already talked about Seeing God through the Week, this would be a great time to do that.
- Begin Sharing Time with your own examples and then ask children and families to share.
- To help facilitate sharing, call on each child to answer the questions.

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STEP 2

Preschool: Bible Story Time | Early Elementary: Bible Story

This part of the lesson shows children what the Bible says to them through a Bible story, a review time, and learning the unit memory verse.

- Show the lesson video before telling the Bible story. Use the lesson tie-in from the Video Connection Guide to tie to the Bible story.
- Show the children where the Bible story is found in a Bible. Invite families to find the story in their own Bibles. You could talk through finding it in your own Bible at the same time families are looking up the reference in their own Bibles.
- If you have the physical teaching aids, use the pictures/figures along with the script to tell the story.
- Show the poster as a slide if you are using PowerPoint or Google Slides. Or hold up the physical poster so the children can see clearly.
- Send copies of the story figures to families beforehand so kids can use the figures at home while you tell the story.
- Adapt the Bible Story Review Activity by having kids use their own figures or the poster.
- Say the Bible Memory verse. Then have families practice saying the words and doing the actions or rhyme with you. Repeat it a few times each week.

Early Elementary Bible Story Review Questions

Call on students by name to answer the questions if you are doing a live lesson. If your lesson is prerecorded, pause for a few seconds after each question to give your students time to reflect on the topic. Then discuss the answer.

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Bible Story Review Activity

- If the activity uses acting, keep kids involved by encouraging them to act out each part on their own.
- For Early Elementary, if a lesson uses a *Bible Beginnings* page, you can show the contents in your slideshow or hold up and show a printed page. Make sure the page is available at home, either through providing a digital file to print or sending a physical copy in an activity pack delivered ahead of time.

Memory Verse Practice

- Show the Bible Memory verse as a slide.
- If the activity includes motions, stand and do the motions suggested in the teacher's guide. Invite students to join you in saying the words and acting out the motions.
- Repeat a few times as kids learn the verse and motion.

Preschool: The Bible and Me | Early Elementary: Bible Activity Choices

This part of the lesson allows children to explore activities that will help them connect God's Word to their lives.

- If you are using the craft books, show a sample of a finished project. Invite families to do their projects at home during the week and send you a picture of their finished craft.
- Post shared craft pictures as part of a group text or social media.
- Adapt an activity option and do it together as a group.
- Send home activity options that don't work virtually, so families can do them together during the week.
- For Early Elementary, if an activity uses *Bible Beginnings* pages, share the pages on your screen or show it in your PowerPoint/Google Slides presentation. Explain how to use the pages and invite families to work through the activity during the week.

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Going Home with the Bible / Bible Response

The last step of the lesson helps children choose a way to live out in everyday life what they've learned from the lesson.

- Introduce the activity and give families an opportunity to share what they are going to do during the week.
- If possible, have families send you a video or photo of them carrying out their plan. Share the videos and photos next week at the beginning of the lesson.
- For Preschool, encourage families to continue the lesson during the week. They can “play” the Bible story, finish and share their crafts, read the story and do the activities on the back side of the *My Sunday Pictures* card.
- For Early Elementary, students who don't have a resource page like *Bible Beginnings* can write or draw on a piece of paper their ideas for their plan.
- Encourage all families to use the [Family Devotion Guide](#).
- Use the suggestions in your teacher's guide to finish your lesson with prayer. Or use one of the prayer suggestions found in our bonus curriculum content (coming soon)!



EQUIPPING FAMILIES

Help Families Prepare for Virtual Ministry

If you're teaching virtually using Zoom, Facebook Live, prerecorded videos, etc., be sure to let parents know what to expect and what you need from them.

- Where and when can they access the lessons?
- Do they need to be with their children during the lesson?
- How can they keep their child engaged spiritually even if they miss a week?

Create Activity Packs

Activity packs are bundles of resources for students and families that encourage them to interact with the lesson. You could send these packs home or provide them to kids attending a family worship service.

Here are some resources you might include in the packs:

- A personal note to the child
- Ministry announcements

Preschool

- *My Sunday Pictures*
- *Preschool Make-It/Take-It* craft book
- Story figures and posters (from *Creative Teaching Aids*)
- PraisePac song MP3s
- Preschool [Family Devotion Guide](#)

Early Elementary

- *Storytime* take-home paper
- *Bible Beginnings* student book
- *Early Elementary Make-It/Take-It* craft book
- Story figures and posters (from *Creative Teaching Aids*)
- PraisePac song MP3s
- Early Elementary [Family Devotion Guide](#)

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Decide when and how you will provide the activity packs to families.

- Once per quarter? Once a month? Every week?
- Will they be physical or a digital download?
- Will families need to pick them up from the church building?
- Can volunteers deliver them in person?
- Are you able to mail them to families?
- Will they be picked up for use during a family worship service?

These answers will be specific to the needs of your ministry and are likely to change as the needs of your ministry change.

Engage Families at Home

- Continue communicating with your families! Text or e-mail parents some quick tips on how to use features pulled from *My Sunday Pictures* and *Storytime* take-home products.
- If you don't include copies of the take-home papers in activity packs, use the contents to create special mailings for kids.
- Give families access to download the PraisePac files so they can sing the songs from class at home.
- Make the most of your digital files. In the Teacher Overview folder, you will find specific resources to share with parents as well as fun postcards to send children.
- Share the [Lesson Videos](#) with families by sending them the [Family Devotion Guide](#) for Preschool or Early Elementary. Links to the videos are included in the Devotion Guides. The devotions build on the Unit Theme and Memory Verse and provide opportunities for families to worship and praise God together.
- Encourage families to find and use a children's Bible that will help their child grow in understanding God's Word. The *God's Story for Me* mini books make great gifts for families too! Here are some children's Bibles we recommend:
 - [Twenty-First Century Christian Bible Storybook](#)
 - *God's Story for Me Bible*
 - *HeartShaper Bible Storybook*
 - *The Preschooler's Bible*
 - *The Action Storybook Bible*
 - *The Picture Bible*



This is a great time to start a daily family devotional. We recommend:

- [*The Jesus Resolution*](#)
- [*Living the Jesus Resolution*](#)