

Teaching Tips



Tips for Teaching a Variety of Subjects for Preschoolers to Teens

CONTESTS FOR LEARNING

How To Make Contests a Learning Experience

One of the best ways for children to learn is to actively participate in something they care about. Contests offer just such an opportunity.

Whether it is an art, writing, geography, or science competition, it is a practical learning experience which results in improved skills.

Entering contests can help children uncover lifelong interests, gain a sense of responsibility, and learn to think and ask questions, boosting confidence—all great learning motivators.

Children develop everyday skills such as how to work with others, fill out applications, follow guidelines, keep records, meet deadlines, and organize their work.

Contesting can be a positive experience even without winning. You can request a participation certificate from the contest sponsor or create one yourself. Not winning also allows children to learn about being a good sport and handling disappointment.

You may want to choose contests with a certain learning goal in mind. For example, you may want to use an essay contest to strengthen writing and reading skills.

Any way you decide to use a contest, remember to also make it a fun, exciting, and exploratory experience.

Integrating Contests into a Curriculum

Here are some ways to effectively use contests:

1. Try the contest yourself. For a contest to work successfully, you need to know exactly what is needed—skills, materials, entry fees, etc. Try the contest yourself for a full understanding of what is involved.

2. Read books and magazines or listen to music. Help your children gain a greater insight into their contest theme or subject. For example, if your children are entering a poetry contest, have them read different poets' works.

3. Talk and listen. Ask your children what topics they would like to pursue. Discuss winning and losing. Explain that doing your best is most important. The process, rather than the reward, must be paramount.

4. Take field trips. Use any opportunities available locally which relate to your contest. For example, if your children are participating in an environmental protection program, arrange a trip to a nature preserve.

5. Learn the history or background. This will not only give children a valuable history lesson, but will also

help them understand the bigger picture behind a contest theme or subject.

6. Broaden specific contest activity. If your children are entering a writing contest, have them create artwork or crafts that relate to their subject; if they enter an art competition, have them write an accompanying essay.

7. Maintain a resource-filled environment. Have access to dictionaries, atlases, almanacs, and encyclopedias.

8. Keep information packs. These are a great resource for children during contest time. Each pack (a big envelope can be used) is labeled with a subject. The packs contain clippings, pictures, articles, statistics, notes, etc., on that subject.

9. Have your children maintain portfolios. Include drafts and final copies of writing, or sketches and photos of artwork. These are great for showing improvement in students' abilities.

10. Furnish a biblical perspective. Most contests will be secular in nature. You can furnish a spiritual dimension by using a Bible concordance to study what the Bible says about your subject.

(See a list of contests for the coming year at right and on page 19.)

CONTESTS

Book It!

A reading incentive program that motivates children in kindergarten through 6th grade to read by rewarding them for their reading accomplishments. Its purpose is to develop in children a lifelong love of reading.

Book It! Box 2999, Wichita KS 67201, (800) 426-6548, (316) 687-8401, www.bookitprogram.com.

Computer Learning Month

Computer Learning Month is celebrated each October with numerous contests to encourage students, educators and others to explore new uses of technology and share their knowledge with others.

Computer Learning Foundation, Box 60007, Palo Alto CA 94306, (408) 720-8898, www.computerlearning.org.

Invent America!

Invent America! is a non-profit K-8 education program that helps children develop creative thinking and problem solving skills through inventing.

Invent America, Box 26065, Alexandria VA 22313, (703) 684-1836, (410) 489-2802, www.inventamerica.org

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Bible & Arithmetic Puzzle

(Jan./Feb. 2000, p. 23)

Answer is equal to number of days the flood waters were upon the earth (Gen. 7:24).



by Barry Stebbing

Many students who are comfortable with pencil and

paper seem intimidated when it comes to color. However, painting, like drawing, is a learned discipline.

The more a student understands color theory and painting, the more he will enjoy it. Therefore, with beginning painters, do not be as concerned about creating masterpieces as with teaching the fundamentals.

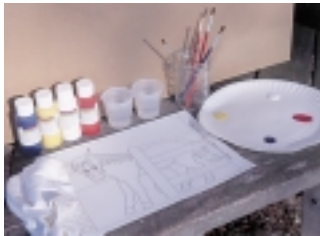
Materials

Start with only the three primary colors (yellow, red, blue) and white. We recommend a *pure pigment* acrylic paint. Paints that are not a pure pigment make muddled colors when mixed.

You should have little problem with “mess” if you teach students how to paint with control, hold a brush, and mix colors on a palette. Give them guidelines for preparing to paint, caring for materials, and cleaning up.

Even though acrylic paint is permanent, it will come out of clothing if you tend to it before it dries.

An ideal paper is 8.5" x 11" poster board or heavy card stock (110 lb. or 140 lb.), which can be purchased at office supply stores.



Other materials for beginning painting are:

Styrofoam picnic plates (for palettes).

Three acrylic or watercolor brushes (small #1, medium #3, large #5).

Two water jars (one for cleaning brushes and one for mixing water with paints).

An old cloth or paper towel (for cleaning brushes).

A container for holding brushes.

The Color Wheel & Color Theory



side of them. Yellow and orange make the tertiary color yellow/orange. Other tertiary colors are red/orange, red/violet, blue/violet, blue/green, and yellow/green.

Complementary colors are colors directly across from each other on the color wheel. For example, red is the complement of green, blue is the complement of orange, and violet is the complement of yellow.

Complementary colors are mainly used for three purposes: backgrounds, dulling, and shading.

Suppose you have painted a red apple and do not know what color to paint the background. You could always use green, which is the complement of red.

You can also use complementary colors for dulling. Suppose you have painted a bright orange balloon and you want to dull the color down. You could add just a speck of its complement (blue) to dull the color.

Finally, if you wanted to shade a yellow banana, you could use a touch of the complement (violet) in the shaded area.

A color wheel is a circle divided into pie shapes used to teach students more about color theory. For example, in between the primary colors (yellow, red, and blue) are the secondary colors (orange, violet, and green).

Secondary colors are made by mixing the primary colors on either side of them: yellow and red make orange, red and blue make violet, and blue and yellow make green.

You could put more pie shapes on your color wheel in between the primary and secondary colors to make tertiary colors.

Tertiary colors are made by mixing the primary and secondary colors on either

Beginning to Paint

First, draw your picture with a light colored pencil on heavy stock paper. Make sure that there are not a lot of details in the picture, since smaller areas are more difficult to paint.

Pour out your paints, about the size of a nickel each, on the outer edges of your palette. This will give you an ample area for mixing colors.

With a brush, pull your colors out from the side of the puddles to mix with other col-



ors; this will keep your main puddles of color pure.

When mixing paints, pull out the lightest color first, then add just a touch of the darker color.

For example, if you are making green, pull out the lighter color (yellow), and add a little of the darker color (blue). If that is not the green you desire, add a little more blue.

Make sure to mix a lot of paint, painting with plenty of paint on your brush; otherwise, you will *scrub paint*,

creating a scratchy, uncontrolled effect.

When mixing your paints together, keep the newly mixed puddles small and thick instead of large and flat. This will save space on your palette and give you more paint on your brush.

Many students have the tendency to choke up on their brushes. We recommend that you hold the brush a few inches from the hairs.

Do not leave your brush on the palette. This will prevent paint from adhering to the handle and spreading to your

hands and clothing. Keeping your handles clean will cut down on 85 percent of the mess.

Paint with clean brushes. Clean your brush in the dirty water container and wipe it dry. The clean water container is for adding water to a color to have it spread out further and thinner. However, in the beginning, refrain from adding water to the colors.

Have students take their time, learning to paint with *control*. Good artwork takes time, effort, and practice.

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Making a Color Chart



A key to learning the academics of painting is making use of a color chart.

Take a sheet of heavy stock paper and place rows of small squares on it. Then, see how many colors you can create by mixing colors together. Underneath each new color print the colors used, starting with the color used most and ending with the color used least.

If you wanted to make a dull green, you may want to use a lot of yellow (Y), some blue (B), and a speck of red (R). This would be printed as Y + B + R.

Some interesting colors to make are pink (W + R); light blue (W + B); violet (W + R + B); brown (Y + R + B); yellow/green (Y + G); and black (B + R + Y).

See how many colors you can make. Then, when you are painting, refer to your color chart to select colors to use in your picture.

Copying the Impressionists

A great exercise for students is to copy colorful reproductions of paintings by the Impressionists.

Copying this style is beneficial because students will not have to concern themselves much with detail, realism, or drawing skills and can be more concerned with making bold brushstrokes and mixing colors.

Two good Impressionists to copy are Claude Monet and Vincent Van Gogh.



First, lightly copy the picture on heavy stock paper with a light colored pencil.

It may be good to do a preliminary colored pencil study of the picture first on another sheet of paper, which will help with laying in the composition and planning colors.

Finally, see if the student can mix the colors correctly from the painting which they are copying.

Life Studies

Studies from life are objects that are in front of you. Studying objects from life



will teach students more about light, structure, form, and color.

Keep your subject matter simple in the beginning. For example, you may want to paint one piece of fruit, a flower, or one leaf.

Framing will enhance your paintings. A good idea is to purchase inexpensive frames at yard sales or thrift shops, and then do your paintings to fit the frames.

In conclusion, make sure students understand that, like drawing, painting is a learned discipline.

Along with practicing the fundamentals of painting, students should also develop their drawing skills and learn more about color theory. Then, in years to come, everything will merge together and they will be able to create their masterpieces.

Teaching Art Series

This is part 3 in a series by Barry Stebbing, author of the How Great Thou Art instruction materials.

1. Art History (Jan./Feb. '00)
2. Beginning Drawing (Summer '00)
3. Beginning Painting (Jan./Feb. '01)

Upcoming:

4. Penmanship/Journaling (March/April '01)
5. Nature Studies (May/June '01)
6. Finding an Art Teacher (July/Aug. '01)

How Great Thou Art, 1-800-982-3729, Box 48, McFarlan NC 28102, www.howgreatthouart.com (see p. 34).

CONTESTS FOR LEARNING

National Make It Yourself with Wool

Contest encourages personal creativity in sewing, knitting, and crocheting with wool fabrics and yarns. Ages 12-adult.

National Make It Yourself with Wool, Box 175, Lavina MT 59046, (406) 636-2731, www.sheepusa.org.

Math Olympiads

Five monthly contests which provide an incentive for students to intensify their math study. Grades 4-8.

Math Olympiads, 2154 Bellmore Ave., Bellmore NY 11710, (516) 781-2400, www.moems.org.

National Geography Bee

Includes school, state, and national level competitions. Grades 4-8.

National Geography Bee, 1145 17th St. NW, Washington DC 20036, www.nationalgeographic.com/geographybee/basics.html.

National History Day

Helps students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills as well as useful historical knowledge during the series of district, state, and national competitions.

Students may enter individually or in a group of two to five. Group participants do not

have to be in the same grade. Grades 6-12.

National History Day, 0119 Cecil Hall, University of Maryland, College Park MD 20742, (301) 314-9739, www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay/.

Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee

Helps students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts, and develop correct English usage. Through grade 8 or age 16.

Home-School Winners!

This year the National Spelling Bee was won by a home-school boy who also placed

second in the National Geography Bee. Second and third places in the Spelling Bee were also won by home schoolers!

Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee, Box 371541, Pittsburgh PA 15251, www.spellingbee.com.

National Junior Horticultural Assoc.

Promotes educational programs for youth through a variety of projects and activities that foster a better understanding of horticulture.

National Junior Horticultural Association, 15 R.R. Ave., Homer City PA 15748, www.ces.ncsu.edu/hil/4h-index.html.

Set the Example

From your child's earliest days, you can surround him with a spiritual environment that will motivate and teach him to follow God.

Your own attitudes, actions, and speech are your child's first introduction to godliness.

Be enthusiastic about learning spiritual truths, because your child will read you before he is ever able to read the written Word (II Cor. 3:2)! -*Doreen Claggett*

As your child's understanding grows, it is God's Word permeating your daily life and conversation that gives the foundation for his spiritual development.

Talk about Bible Truths



Scripture admonishes us to talk about God's Word in the midst of all our family life activities (Deut. 6:6-7).

Talk about the things

God made when outside.

Talk about children being a gift from God when feeding the baby.

Talk about God loving them when hugging them.

Talk about God's command to love one another as they interact with siblings.

Tell them God's standards for behavior as issues come up.

Talk about God's watchcare when tucking them into bed.

Two important foundations need to be laid in early childhood: the child's concept of God and his faith.

Joy Marie Dunlap

Read the Bible Aloud

Faithfully read God's Word to even your youngest. The Holy Spirit often enlightens the minds of His lambs with the ability to understand simple truths of Scripture!

Doreen Claggett

Read narratives to your children straight out of the Word of God. The Bible is full of wonderful stories.

Keep the readings short, and when you are finished, ask your child to tell you what happened. This allows you to check his comprehension and clear up misunderstandings.

Margaret Bicker

Memorize Selected Bible Passages

As soon as children can speak, they can recite Scripture. They can do this painlessly by simply hearing a passage read or recited to them daily.

Proverbs are perfect for 2-year-olds. Older preschoolers (3-5 years) can learn a whole chapter of Scripture after hearing the passage daily for three weeks.

Ellen Baize

Memorizing large sections of Scripture together as a family gives us the opportunity to see applications of the Scripture in real life, because we have a common frame of reference.

We did Psalm 1 and Eph. 6:11-18 (the armor of God).

We introduce a new verse at breakfast and repeat it at each meal, adding another verse or phrase each day.

Anne

We have our toddlers memorize Scripture verses about God's care for us and the need to obey our parents and love one another.

To make Scripture memorization easier for small children, break the verse into shorter rhythmic phrases and teach each phrase separately before putting the whole verse together.

Teach a very small child just one phrase per day if that is all he can handle.

Do hold your child to saying the verse exactly to encourage long-term Scripture memory.

We enjoy reciting the verses we learn together with our young children, not only during family devotions, but also when we are out in the car or at the park.

Joy Marie Dunlap

Among the first Bible verses our young children learn are what we term the "Do-Bees."

These verses were selected as the essentials we wanted to instill in our children to encourage love for God and others and promote family harmony—things we want to do and to be.

We shorten verses for the

little ones and sometimes expand them to include a whole passage for the older children.

Our 2-year-old was able to learn "Love the Lord" and "Love thy neighbor" (from Matt. 22:37, 39) and then surprised us by lisping the rest of the verses after hearing his older brothers recite them enough times.

Other verses include:

"Pray one for another" (James 5:16b).

"Be ye kind one to another" (Eph. 4:32).

"Children, obey your parents" (Eph. 6:1).

"Be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15).

Jeannie Estrada

Teach the character of God. Give children a true picture of what their Heavenly Father is like through Psalms.

As your children grow, hand-picked verses can help you over rough spots. Pick verses to meet individual needs.

Deb Deffinbaugh. Excerpted from the Timberdoodle Catalog.

Make your children comfortable during Bible reading. I gathered our little boys around me on the couch and put my arms around them.

Read through the entire Bible regularly as a family, explaining things your children are ready to understand.

Choose Bible storybooks carefully. Bible characters should be depicted as they would have appeared in real life. The text of Bible stories should accurately represent the truth in Scripture.

Bible story tapes can also be used. Men and women of God portrayed should sound serious, tender, and real.

Bible story videos are often portrayed in a silly and unlikable way, giving children the impression that Bible stories are no more real than cartoons.

Joy Marie Dunlap

(See the Bible reading schedules on page 23 to read the Bible through in a year with your family.)

Pray Together

As soon as a child can talk, he can pray.

Our children learned to give thanks to the Lord; to pray when afraid, hurt, sad, or sick; and to pray for others. They also learned that God would answer in the way He knew best.

Encourage children to talk to God as a real person who loves and hears them.

Children can pray effectively. Help them to pray in their own words.

Help children to recognize and give thanks for specific answers to prayers.

Pray with children at mealtimes, during family devotions, while riding in the car, when hearing an ambulance, when seeing or hearing about a need, and in their own quiet times.

Guinn Jenkins

Use Scripture promises and commands as the basis for prayers to know that you are praying according to God's will.

Sing Hymns and Scripture Songs

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

Teach little children to sing and understand the great old hymns of the faith (e.g., "This Is My Father's World," "Fairest Lord Jesus," "Jesus Loves Even Me," "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "Now I Belong To Jesus," "One Day").

Many hymns are based on specific Scriptures or biblical truths not found in many children's songs.

Select songs and choruses (e.g., "Whisper a Prayer in the Morning," "I Have Decided To Follow Jesus," "His Sheep Am I") for their deep and true meaning and reverent tone.

Distinguish between joyful praise and merely "fun" songs.

Disciple Your Child

It is not enough for our children to know God and His Word. They must also be trained to trust Him, follow Him, and obey Him.

Lead by your example. Be careful that all of your words and actions reflect honesty, integrity, faithfulness, responsibility, self-control, diligence, patience, contentment, thankfulness, love, and forgiveness.

Verbalize your motives. Don't assume that your children know why you do the things you do. Speak of your love for God and desire to please Him. Point out the Bible passages that you are trying to obey.

Confess your sins. Whenever you fall short of God's standards, make it

clear to your children that you are sorry. Quote a Scripture that gives the command you have broken, and ask for forgiveness from God and from those you offended in the hearing of all who witnessed your sin.

Set standards for your children's behavior based on scriptural commands. Then refer to these as you consistently commend or correct your children.

Establish habits in your children's lives that will foster their spiritual growth—daily Bible reading and prayer times, church attendance, Scripture memorization, confession and restitution for offenses, tithing, and singing hymns.

Cindy Short, Oregon

You can read through the Bible in one year with your family by spending just 15 or 20 minutes a day.

Carefully and prayerfully reading the Bible through every year will do more to keep one correct in his interpretation of the Bible's various parts than anything else one could possibly do.

If we compare the time we spend in God's Word with the worldly influences that come into our family's lives, 15 to 20 minutes a day seems small indeed!

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

There are audio recordings of the Bible that you can listen to with or without following along in your own Bibles. This is especially helpful to get through the names in the Old Testament and to keep the pace from getting bogged down.

Online Schedules. The following websites have schedules and/or text for Bible reading.

Choose from five ways to read through the Bible: chronologically, historically, Old and New Testaments together, beginning to end, or blended: www.backtothebible.org/devotions/journey

Four categories of readings for each day: historical, devotional, prophetic, and doctrinal: www.rejoicing.com/bread.html

Charts progress; choice of translation if reading online: bible.crosswalk.com/BibleInAYear/

Unique 6-day week, 4-week month readings allow for Sunday evening church, start in any month, and "catch-up" days. Psalms and Proverbs are read throughout year with daily Bible reading of complete Bible. Optional second reading of New Testament also included: www.TeachingHome.com

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7 KJV).

An important application of this commandment needs to be taught to our children.

Many people do not realize that they are using God's name in vain when they use common forms of His name.

People who would never use "God" or "Jesus Christ" as swear words may not realize that "Gosh," "Golly," "Gad," "Gee," "Geez," or "Jiminy Cricket" are forms of His names and are called "minced oaths."

Even exclamations like "goodness," "gracious," or "holy mackerel" can be a misuse of God's character qualities in order to add

emphasis to our own speech. Similarly, "dam," "tarnation," and "heck" are substitutions for curses like "damn" and "hell."

James 5:12 says, "Swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath" (Matt. 5:34-37).

Jesus warned, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36 KJV).

We should also avoid telling jokes that use the person of God as a character within a joke. Even if it does not directly attack or mock His being, it does use Him in a light or disrespectful way.

Eph. 5:4 says, "There must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."