

Teaching Non-readers to Memorize

Most Cubbies can't read, but they love to learn. Children develop most of their capacity for learning during the first three years of life. Three- and four-year olds are often characterized by their bombardment of questions. Every day is a new adventure in acquiring knowledge. Memorizing comes naturally to them. Here are some tips on how to make learning easy and fun from preschool teachers, leaders and parents.

Start by saying the verse several times. Make sure the child understands every word. For instance, when teaching Genesis 1:1, explain the meaning of the word, "beginning" in one of these ways:

- Hold up a piece of string. Tell the child, "This is the beginning. This is the end."
- Sunday is the beginning of the week. Saturday is the end."
- A is at the beginning of the alphabet. Z is at the end."

Make repetition fun. Repeat the verse here and there throughout the day. Don't sit the child down on the couch and make him or her stay there until the verse is memorized. Find ways to fit the verse into the day's events. Again, using Genesis 1:1, you could point to things God created (the sky, a flower, bird or kitten) and say, "Did you know, In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth?" Allow the child to point to things and repeat the verse.

Put the words of the verse to music. Make up your own songs, or use the tapes and CDs available through Awana. These tapes include all the memory work in the Hopper or Jumper Handbooks. To find out more, click here.

Use pictures to help the child associate the word with an idea. For instance, show the child a picture of a heart when teaching the verse, God is love.

Dramatically emphasize important words. When teaching the verse "He ... made everything beautiful ... " spread out your arms and draw out the word "everything." For "beautiful," say the word with a sense of awe.

Use various activities to make learning exciting. Whisper the verse as you tiptoe around the room. March up the hallway while shouting the verse. Allow the child to call Grandma and say the verse on the phone.

And keep in mind, a child will have more fun learning if he or she can see that you are having fun teaching.