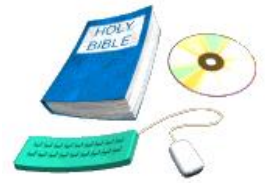


Teaching with Software

A brief introduction for volunteers

Thank you for teaching the children! Your guiding presence and love for God's Word is an important part of their faith journey. Our teaching methods include computers because they are an exciting (and normal) way for this generation to learn. They command the kids' attention, present important content in a memorable way, and give them a desire to come back for more.



The attraction also creates a challenge for you the teacher. Unlike some other teaching methods, the kids will be eager to get into the software and want to quickly push through it to see all there is to see. And unlike some other learning activities, the kids' attention will be focused on the screen, and not the teacher. This is why you will need to create structure and expectations in your lesson. And most importantly, you will be their "guide by the side" when they are exploring the software.

Structure and Expectations

When your students first come in, have them come first to the discussion table rather than sit at the computers (which you have cued up ready to go). They will immediately want to know "what program" they are using today so write it down on the board along with helpful instructions and teaching points.

Guide by the Side

Rather than standing back and watching, we need to sit down at the computers with your students as much as you are able, --and go through the software *with them*. If you are "presenting" software using a single computer, plan on inviting students to help you navigate.



This will accomplish a couple of things:

1. Your presence will settle them down and let each child know their needs will be met (such as "getting their turn" at the keyboard).
2. You can help pace them through the software, rather than letting them rush through.
3. You can point things out, make comments along the way, and stop for discussion. (Without you, kids will naturally try to bypass some content.) You'll also be able to hear and respond to their comments.
4. Guiding by their side will let you hear the software, and your proximity to the volume control will allow you to quickly make adjustments as the software's sounds and narration require.
5. A guide by the side can help younger children navigate and read onscreen texts. This will allow you to extend many of your software choices 'down' to the younger grades.

Depending on how many computers and students you have, you may need extra volunteers to help you. Most teachers have found that they can cover 2 to 3 kids per computer at 2 computers. In order to bring additional volunteers quickly up to speed, make sure you do a thorough introduction at the beginning of the lesson and write down instructions, key points, and questions on the board for all to see.

Many teachers like to create a worksheet for students (and teachers) to follow and complete. This worksheet can have "steps" and instructions, plus content and questions for students to complete as they progress. Rotation.org has many computer lessons and worksheets you can look up by Bible story in their lesson forums.

How Software "Fits" in a Lesson Plan

Software is a component in a lesson plan, not a replacement for one. You'll still be welcoming your students, engaging in face-to-face discussion, sometimes including other types of learning activities, and reflecting and praying with them.

Some programs were designed like a mini-lesson and some may take up most of your lesson time. They may include the Bible scripture, have background notes or narrations that go deeper, ask questions, and may include games and quizzes. Most have life application and reflection in varying degrees.



Some programs have activities that fit into a specific part of your overall lesson and don't take up a lot of your class time. Such programs may only offer a short story presentation --which would be used as part of your Bible study with your students. Or they may offer a puzzle or quiz activity for use after your study. In some cases, the software may simply provide a content-related game for students to play near the end of your lesson.

The length of time you spend in a program varies depending on the type program you are using. With some software you may only be at the computer for 10 or 15 minutes. With other software, you may be at the computer almost the entire lesson. For these lengthy programs, be sure to plan plenty of time at the computer.

Depending on your lesson needs and the software you have, you may address the class as a whole throughout their software use (example: "I'd like everyone to pause for a moment and look over here") or you may simply share comments and instructions with your helpers throughout the lesson for them to share with their students. After using the software, you will mostly likely bring everyone back together for discussion and Q & A. Because the kids would rather "play at the computer," Having them go to a "discussion area" will help. It's important to let the kids know in advance when they need to be off the computer.

Teaching Prep and Materials

- Print the program's Guide, as well as any other helps available for the software.
- Check to make sure your software is installed and running properly by playing through it -- guide in hand.
- Consider age appropriate adjustments.
- Highlight certain parts of the Guide and lesson plan, including key points.
- Read the lesson, Bible story, and background materials.

Beginning the Lesson Plan

- **At the beginning of every lesson**, tell the students what you hope they'll learn today. Don't save it until the last 5 minutes of class. (And tell them *why* it's an important lesson to you and to their faith.)
- **Outline the lesson plan** on the board from start to finish. Label each step with how much time they will be spending in there. This will give your students a sense of structure and expectations, and it will help your other volunteers get up to speed.
- **Write out the software's key points, content and instructions** on the board: "Here are the sections in the program we will be looking at, here's what to do when you get to this point, and here's what I want you to skip." By writing it down for everyone to see, you'll not only help your students and volunteers, it will be a good refresher and guide to you as well.

Closing for the Day

1. Put away any CDs and supplies you may have used.
2. Shut down the computers using the operating system's shut down method.
3. Check to make sure the monitors and speakers are turned off.
4. Remember to turn off the lights and lock the door behind you (if needed).

In Conclusion

Yes, this *is* more involved than teaching with popsicle stick crafts or watching a DVD! ...but we are also hoping for better results. The kids will be ecstatic about your lesson and want to come back for more. If you have any software or lesson questions, check with our contacts listed below.

Our Teaching and Tech Support Contacts:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Notes: