

# Scripture Memory

## Memory Joggers

Christmas

Hometown

Vacation



What memories do these words bring to your mind?

Our memories are rich storehouses of information ready for us to retrieve. What could be better to store in our memories than God's Word?

Memory work for Sunday school has traditionally been assigned as homework. Sometimes we help children work on it in class. But rarely do we teach them how to memorize. How can we help children hide God's Word in their hearts? How can we help them use Scripture in their daily lives?

## A Scripture to Think About

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

- How does this Scripture relate to you?
- What verses have you hidden in your heart lately?

## How to USE this Folder

- If you are a teacher, use this folder to help you teach children to memorize Scripture. If you are a teacher trainer, use this folder as a guide to help you train your teachers to teach children to memorize Scripture.
- By the end of the unit, you should know why and how to teach children to memorize Scripture, desire to teach memory verses in ways that children can understand and remember, and use a variety of ways to teach memory verses.

**This folder contains material for multiple teacher training sessions.**

page 1 theme and goals

page 2 defining memory

page 3 reasons for memorization

page 4 more reasons

page 5 keys to memorizing

page 6 ideas for the ears

page 7 ideas for the eyes

page 8 ideas for the hands

# What Is Memory?

## According to the scientist

- Memory involves chemical and physical changes in nerve cells in the brain.
- Memory resides in the cerebral cortex which controls such functions as problem solving and use of language.
- By the time a child is three years old, the brain is 75 to 80 percent of its adult size.
- By the time a child is four years old, the brain is 90 percent of its adult size.
- As the brain grows, it becomes more wrinkled and thicker.

This means that there are more connections between the parts of the brain.

More connections increase alertness, attention span, and memory.

## According to the psychologist

There are three kinds of memory.

### 1. Sensory memory

You hold the memory for only an instant.

### 2. Short-term memory

You hold the fact as long as you are actively thinking about it (about 20 seconds).

For example, you look up a phone number and repeat it to yourself until you dial the number. Then you forget it.

### 3. Long-term memory

Some long-term memory will last a lifetime.

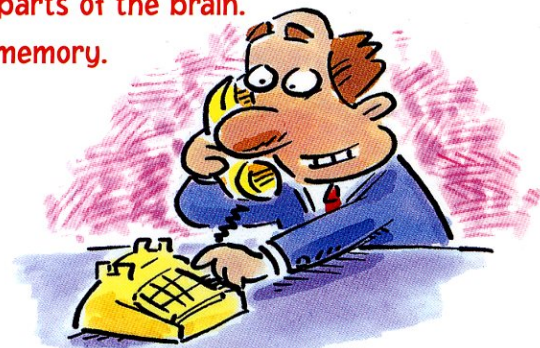
How does information enter long-term memory?

#### • Intense emotion

Can you think of long-term memories you have because of intense emotion? What was the emotion?

#### • Repetition

You use the information day after day.  
Or rote memory: mindless repetition with little or no intelligence involved.



“Rote memorization is the worst strategy for trying to learn anything we do not understand, including poetry, multiplication tables, and historical dates. Learning by rote is the hardest and most pointless way to learn.”

—Frank Smith, *Insult to Intelligence* (Heinemann Educational Books)

Discuss the above quote.

What do you think? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

# Why Teach Scripture Verses?

1

## To fight temptation

- The psalmist wrote, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11).
- Jesus fought temptation by quoting Scripture. “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4).
- “Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).



2

## To meditate on God’s ways, to think about him

- Psalm 119 talks about meditating on God’s precepts, decrees, statutes, and promises.
- David was called a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). What did David do? One thing he did was meditate on God’s deeds and ways. David wrote, “I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done” (Psalm 143:5).
- God told Joshua, “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it” (Joshua 1:8).



3

## To use in prayer

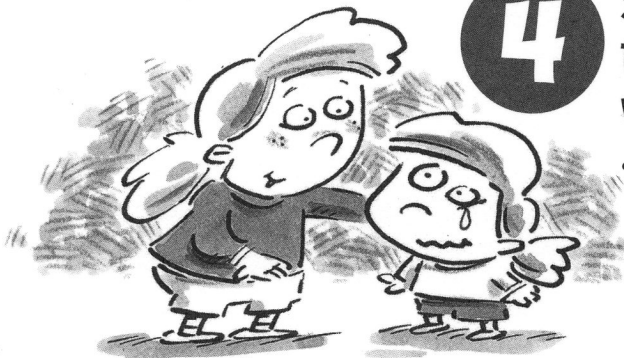
- John wrote, “If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him” (1 John 5:14, 15). How do we know we are asking according to his will? One way to know is to pray Scripture.
- Teach children to pray some of their memory verses. “Help me to be kind to others” is a way of praying Ephesians 4:32.



4

## So God can bring them to mind in circumstances when you need them

- Molly was frightened by a bee. She ran into the house crying. Big sister Jenni said, “Remember: ‘In God I trust, I will not be afraid’” (Psalm 56:11).



# Your Turn

Can you think of other reasons to memorize Scripture?

List some verses that might help you or a child to fight temptation.

(Hint: Think of a specific temptation first. Then ask what God says about that sin. You may want to use a concordance. For example, look up *pride*: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

1

2

3



Name a Scripture that you like to meditate on (think about). Think of a good Scripture to teach children to meditate on.

Write a Scripture that would be good to use as a prayer. Then write it in the form of a prayer.

List some Scriptures that a child might apply to his own life and learn to quote in the context of a normal day.

Write or quote a Scripture that you memorized as a child. Why do you think you remember it? How has that Scripture affected your life?

# Keys to Memorizing

When teaching children to memorize, we need to help them in three specific areas. Help them to

1. **FOCUS** on what they are trying to memorize.
2. **LINK** it to something they already know.
3. **UNDERSTAND** what they are memorizing.

God gave his people ways to remember him.

## Things to **SEE**

“Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you may obey them” (Numbers 15:38, 39).

More visual symbols God gave his people include

- rainbow
- Passover
- communion

Can you think of other visual symbols God gave?



## Things to **HEAR**

Aaron and Hur held Moses' hands up while Joshua led God's people in a fight against the Amalekites. God's people won. “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it’” (Exodus 17:14).

God gave Moses a song to teach the people so they would remember God. “Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it. . . . This song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants” (Deuteronomy 31:19, 21).

Can you think of occasions in the Scripture when God's Word was read in the hearing of the people?



## Things to **DO**

“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. . . . Be careful that you do not forget the Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 12).

Can you think of other things God said to do so his people would remember him?



# Ideas for the Ears

For children who learn best by hearing, repetition is one of the best ways to learn the verse. How can we make repetition fun?

## 1. Repeat the verse in the same rhythm each time.

For example: "I know (pause) that God (pause) can do *all* things" (Job 42:2).

Every time you repeat the verse, say it with the same emphasis on the same words, pausing at the same places.



## 2. Set the verse to music.

Try the verse with well-known melodies such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" or "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Challenge the children in your classroom to put it to music.

## 3. Choose a signal to remind you to repeat the verse during class time.

Say the verse every time you turn the lights on and off,  
or every time you ring a bell,  
or every time your watch alarm beeps,  
or every time you clap a specific rhythm.



## 4. Say the verse in different voices.

What would it sound like if an elephant said it?

What would it sound like if a mouse said it?

How would a cat say it? Or a bird?

Start the verse in a normal voice and get louder.

Start loud and get softer.

Start fast and get slower.

Start slow and get faster.



## 5. Replace words with a clap.

Say the entire verse.

Say it again, leaving out the first word and clapping instead.

Say it again, leaving out the first and second words and clapping instead.

Continue leaving out words and adding claps until the entire verse is done by clapping.

# Ideas for the Eyes

For children who learn best by seeing, there are many visual ways to teach memory verses.

## 1. Word Take Away

Write each word of the verse on a separate index card. Lay the cards out in order. Let one child turn over any card he chooses so that the word no longer shows. Everyone says the verse together, inserting the missing word. Now choose another child to turn over another card. Say the verse again, inserting the missing words. Continue this way until all the cards have been turned over and no words are showing.

Variations:

- Use sticky notes and let the children remove them one at a time.
- Write the words on a chalkboard or dry erase board and let the children erase them one at a time.
- Write the words on a transparency sheet for an overhead projector and let the children erase them one at a time.

## 2. Poster

Let the children make a poster of photographs, drawings, or magazine pictures that represent the words of the verse. One teacher asked her children to stand in poses that portrayed the fruit of the Spirit. She photographed them. Then the children put the photos together on the poster and saw themselves acting out love, joy, peace, and so on.

## 3. Cereal Letters

Let the children glue alphabet-shaped dry cereal onto paper to spell out the verse.

Variation: Cut letters out of magazines and newspapers to spell the verse.

## 4. Memory Joggers

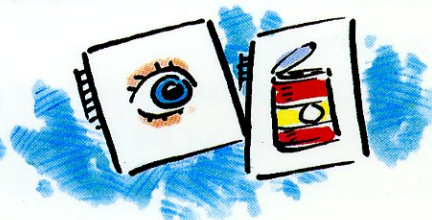
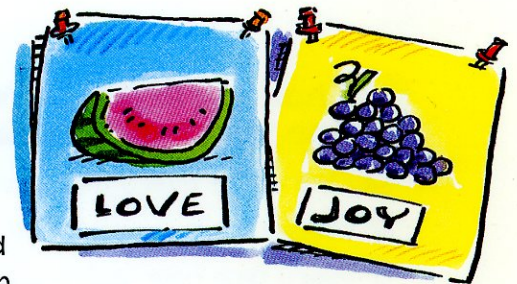
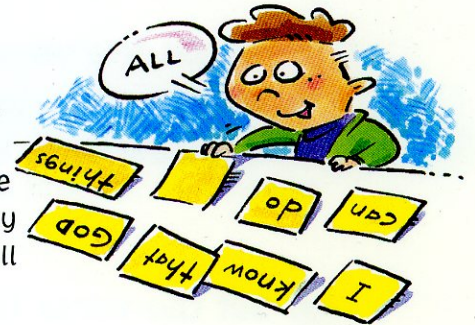
For young children, use a symbol for each verse they learn. For example, cut out a red paper heart and hold it up each time you say, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

## 5. Mural

Ask the children to make a mural by drawing the verse. They can create symbols or pictures that help them remember.

## 6. Rebus

Make a rebus of the verse. Write the verse, substituting pictures for words where possible. Young children can help you "read" the verse when it's done this way.



# Ideas for the Hands

For children who learn best by doing, there are fun hands-on ways to learn verses. You will notice that most of these are also visual and auditory in some ways.

## 1. Hand Motions

For example: Love (hands on heart)

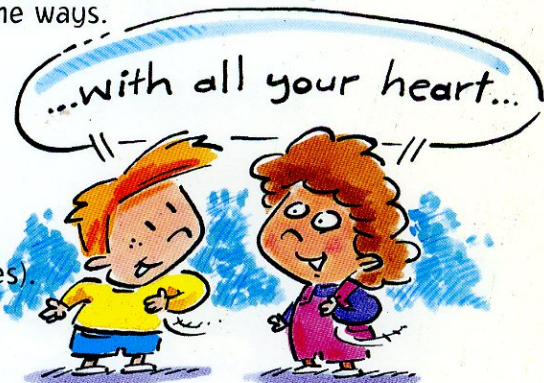
the Lord your God (point upward)

with all your heart (pat heart)

and with all your soul (pat heart again)

and with all your strength (bend arms to make muscles).

(Deuteronomy 6:5)



## 2. Ball Toss

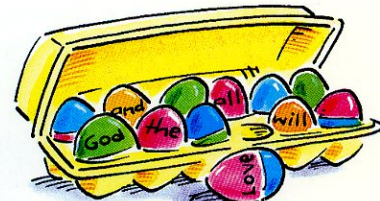
Inflate a beach ball. Seat the children in a circle. Toss the ball to one child. That child says the first word of the verse and tosses the ball to another child. The second child says the second word, and so on.

Variation: Toss the ball to one child. He says the entire verse and tosses it to another child who says the entire verse and so on.

Variation: Use a Koosh® ball instead of a beach ball.

## 3. Scrambled Eggs

In a clean, empty egg carton, place plastic Easter eggs. On each egg, write one word of the verse. Some eggs can remain blank. Mix up the order and ask the children to unscramble the eggs. This can be done as a relay using two boxes of "scrambled eggs."



## 4. Balloon Pop

Inflate one balloon for each word in the verse and write a word on each balloon.

Tape them in order to the wall or bulletin board. Give one child a pin and let her

pop any balloon she chooses. Then read the verse, inserting the missing word. Give

the pin to another child and let her pop any balloon. Read the verse again, insert-

ing the missing word. Continue in this way until all of the balloons are popped.

Variation: Instead of asking the child to pop the balloon with a pin, ask her to sit on the balloon to pop it.



## 5. Duck, Duck, Goose

Seat the children in a circle. Choose one child to walk around the circle behind the other children. He taps the heads of the children as he walks around. On some of his taps, he says a word of the memory verse. When he taps a head while saying the last word of the verse, the child tapped jumps up and chases him. The tapper tries to run around the circle and take that child's place. If he succeeds, the tapped child becomes the tapper and the game continues.



Teacher Training Series  
**Scripture Memory**

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