

# PREPARING YOUR PROGRAMME

So, you're preparing the programme.

Preparing a programme takes a bit of time and effort to get it right but following a few steps can help make the likelihood of things going smoothly much higher. It's important to follow these steps and not be tempted, the more experienced we become, to wing it.

So here are a few things to keep in mind.

The first thing to do is pray.

Before you even think about the story or what brilliant craft or game you're going to do to illustrate it, sit down and pray. Commit your preparation, the children who will attend, yourself and the lesson to God, believing that He will work in and through you.

The second is to study.

Open the leader's guide and see what the story is for that week. Then set the leader's guide aside and open your Bible. Read the passage thoroughly and think about what it has to teach you for ***your*** life and ***your*** personal walk with God. Spend time asking God what He is teaching you and only then begin to think about the children in your group.

The third thing is to be clear.

Only at this point are you going to begin to plan how to implement the programme with the children. What is the one thing that you want the children to know when they leave? What is the thing you definitely want them to know and remember? Then start thinking about how you're going to achieve that.

The fourth thing is to plan really well.

How are you going to *introduce* the topic? Try and think of something that's going to grab the children's attention and get them excited about what they're going to learn.

How are you going to *develop* their thinking? Your aim must be to take them from being introduced to the topic to helping them think through how this is going to change how they live.

How are you going to *involve* the children? They will learn much more if they can be active learners rather than simply passively listening to the adults in the room.

How are you going to *reinforce* the teaching? For the children to remember the one thing you planned, you need to reinforce it in different ways so that it sticks in their heads.

And lastly, how are you going to *challenge* the children? For Bible teaching to be effective for anyone, there needs to be something that changes how we look at the world, how we act and how we speak. It is important to challenge children to allow God's Word to change their lives.

The last thing to do is evaluate.

You've got to the end of the programme and you're probably just relieved it's over.

However, it's important to ask yourselves a couple of questions while you are clearing up or driving home in the car.

- What went well and why?
- Were your objectives achieved?
- What difficulties did you encounter?
- Was there a good atmosphere?
- What would you do differently next time?

Taking the time to evaluate your programme and then adjust how you do things the next time, will take your programme from being good to being better. Otherwise we'll just continue to do the same things even if they don't quite work.

As the person who is preparing and planning the programme, you are the one who ensures that the theme runs through the whole session and everything runs the way it's supposed to. Never underestimate how important planning and preparation are in helping children to understand more about what it means to follow Jesus.