

Encouraging Students to Memorize the DL Top 12 Verses

The Discovery Land Top 12 verses are a core piece of the DL program. Our goal is that our students and leaders know, think, and do (live out) these verses throughout their lives. Teachers should role model how to use these verses often as situations or topics surface throughout their lesson or as they answer questions in the classroom.

We call these verses the “DL Top 12 verses”, but we are not implying that they are the most important or best verses in Scripture. We chose twelve that fit well with our curriculum and could be used by students to share the Gospel, explain their faith, and help them stand firm through all seasons of life.

DL Top 12 verse cards/bookmarks and classroom posters are available as part of the curriculum.

Below are some ideas for encouraging your students (and their families!) to learn the DL Top 12:

Repetition is key

The DL Top 12 are introduced with hand motions in the Runners (two-year-old) and Preschool curriculum. At this level, two verses are introduced and taught to the children each quarter as the Think Right verse of the lesson. Make the most of these opportunities as you teach the Bible verses, and do not underestimate their ability to memorize Scripture. We believe repetition is important, so the verses are often practiced through songs, games, Discover Time, Review Time, and Worship.

In the Elementary curriculum, a DL Top 12 verse is often the “Think Right” point of the lesson. When weaving the verse into the lesson, the teacher can start the verse and leave out a couple of key words. The students will begin to chime in with the missing key words. Start easy. For example, with John 3:16, you could leave out an obvious word in the beginning, like the word ‘world’ (“For God so loved the _____”). This builds up confidence in the kids, because they can figure out the missing word.

When teaching, you may say, “God loved the Israelites. Did you know God loves you? What verse teaches you that God loves you very much? John 3:16.”

Using and reciting the verses together often is one key to helping students memorize these verses and equipping them to use these verses for their full life!

Learning in and outside the classroom

Display a matching game on a bulletin board at the entrance of your DL. Mix up the references and have kids try to match the references with the verse. Record the speed and let the students try to break the record. For double the fun, create two matching games and have student race against each other or their parents.

Mystery Verse: Around your DL, post words from one DL Top 12 verse. Have kids search for clues (words) and guess what verse is scattered throughout DL. Students can then write down the reference with their name and enter to win a door prize. Do a weekly drawing and post the winner the following week.

During your Pre-Service Review Game, review the DL Top 12 verses by doing a "fill in the blank". The more they hear the verse, the more they will learn it and recall it. Example: "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be _____."

DL Top 12 verses are often part of a Discover Time activity. Utilize those particular DTs when they are available. Take time to ask students the tough questions, if the environment is free for discussion. For example: While students are making Play-Doh letters for Acts 16:31, ask questions such as, "Who is the Lord Jesus? What are you saved from?" The intention of memorizing verses is not to gain a reward, but rather to apply them to life.

Dunk Tank Challenge: Challenge all kids to learn the DL Top 12 (or a certain number of verses from the Top 12). All kids who reach the goal get a chance to dunk their leader in the dunk tank (or some other fun challenge)!

Encourage them to be learned at home

Encourage, encourage, and keep encouraging families to use the weekly take home papers. The DL Top 12 verses are often in Tracker's Treasures and they are always in Tracker Jr.

You hit the target! After students memorize all 12 verses, have them recite the verses to their parents. Bring a signed form back to DL and write their name on a "DL Challenge" bulletin board (target). At the end of the month, have someone randomly throw three darts at the board (or shoot an actual arrow). Each dart will be worth a family prize (movie tickets, pizza, or a family water park pass).

Take 5 Challenge: Challenge students to take five minutes each day to review their DL Top 12 verses. If they complete this challenge for one week, give them a "Take 5" candy bar the following week.

DL Top 12 Video Challenge: Have families creatively make up a video (music, rap, drama) about one of the DL Top 12 verses. Announce the winner and share the videos with other families so they can learn the verses, too.

DL Top 12 Family Challenge: Encourage parents to set up their own challenge at home (examples could be if a student memorizes all 12 verses, dad gets a pie in the face, or they get to go to a movie, etc.). Encourage families to send in a picture of the results of their challenge. Post the pictures in your Discovery Land area.

DL Top 12 Verse-A-Thon: Utilize the DL Top 12 verses to hold a Verse-A-Thon to raise money for missions. For more information: <https://www.awana.org/go/go-verse-a-thon/>.

Discovery Land Top 12

(NIV 1984)

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ~ John 14:2

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. ~ Romans 3:23

...and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. ~ Hebrews 9:22b

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household. ~ Acts 16:31

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ~ 2 Peter 3:18a

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. ~ John 3:16

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." ~ John 14:6

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. ~ Ephesians 2:8-9

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. ~ Proverbs 3:5-6

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. ~ Joshua 1:9

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. ~ 1 Corinthians 15:58

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these. ~ Mark 12:30-31