

Sharing the Gospel with Children - Basic

Toolbox I

Suggested Session Length: 60 minutes

PowerPoint Available: "Toolbox I - Sharing the Gospel with Children - Basic"

Audience: All DL volunteers

General Topic: Overview of the Gospel, introduction to the Wordless Book tool, and coaching to develop skills for sharing the Gospel.

Supplies:

- Bible
- Wordless Book video: <https://youtu.be/f1wOtWO8rKE>
- 5-hook coat rack (or clothesline with 5 clothespins)
- Multiple items in each Wordless Book color to hang on the hooks (such as towels or hats)
- Wordless Books (one for each participant)



Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome participants to the training on sharing the Gospel with children. Explain that this training is going to focus on the Gospel message and how we can share the Gospel using the Wordless Book tool.

Slide 2: The Gospel

The Gospel is foundational to the Discovery Land program. This program exists to inspire kids to know and love God, so the Gospel is central to what we do.

What is the Gospel?

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

The Gospel is salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as presented throughout the Bible.

Slide 3: Weekly Gospel Presentation

The opportunity to share the Gospel and give an invitation for salvation is woven into every DL lesson.

Why?

- There are two types of kids in your class: saved and unsaved. Only God knows which kids are saved and which kids aren't.
- As believers, we all need to hear frequent reminders of the Gospel. This helps us remember that our salvation is not earned, it reminds us of who we are now in Christ, and it helps us stay focused on living in relationship with Jesus.
- When leaders share the Gospel in class, they are modeling this skill for their students and equipping them to go share the Gospel with their friends and family.

Slide 4: The Tool: The Wordless Book

The Wordless Book is the **tool** we use to share the Gospel. We recommend that churches use one consistent tool when sharing the Gospel with children. This is important for the following reasons:

- For volunteers:
 - Using one consistent tool helps volunteers grow in familiarity and confidence. Many new or inexperienced volunteers are uncertain or uncomfortable sharing the Gospel. This tool helps train them to share the Gospel.
 - Using a kid-friendly, color-based tool helps us remain more concrete in our teaching. By remaining concrete in our teaching, we can avoid stumbling over complicated theological concepts and stay focused on the main message (without getting distracted by “rabbit trails”).
- For kids:
 - Using the same, consistent method minimizes confusion for kids. When we use different Gospel presentations, models, illustrations, and language/terms, kids can quickly become confused. (i.e., “the bridge illustration”, the Wordless Book, the Romans Road, etc. All are helpful illustrations, but they can become confusing for kids because they have different language, images, and “steps”.)
 - Repetition trains kids (and other leaders in the classroom) to share the Gospel with others!

Slide 5: The Basic Components of the Wordless Book

Using the chart provided on the PowerPoint, walk participants through the basic components of each page of the Wordless Book (color, image/icon, key word/phrase, verse).

Slide 6: The Wordless Book is a framework

It is important to understand that the Wordless Book is a framework. It isn't a magical formula or script, rather it is a tool developed to help the leader share key elements of the Gospel message in an organized manner. A script is a one-and-done “formula,” while a framework is a guide that can be contextualized to different environments and audiences.

We will discuss contextualization more at the end of this training, but right now let's watch a video that demonstrates how a leader can use the Wordless Book to share the Gospel message with students.

Slide 7:

Watch the Wordless Book video.

Slide 8: Building Blocks

When we first begin to share the Gospel using the Wordless Book with our youngest children, we are establishing basic building blocks that students will continue to build on as they grow. Just like us, as they grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, our students will develop a richer understanding of the Gospel.

Here are the building blocks we introduce in each age group (these building blocks are outlined in the On Track Map resource):

- 2 years through Preschool: key word, verse, and introduce the invitation
- Kindergarten-2nd Grade: key word, verse, and present a clear invitation
- 3rd-5th Grade: key word, verse, present a clear invitation, and help students grow in their ability to share the Gospel
- 6th Grade: key word, verse, present a clear invitation, help students grow in their ability to share the Gospel, and saved students learn how to confidently share their personal testimony of when and how they became a Christian

As you can see, students' understanding of the Gospel grows and becomes multi-faceted as they mature.

Slide 9: The Colors

Skillfully sharing the Gospel using the Wordless Book requires leaders to be familiar and comfortable with the key words, verses, and key concepts that connect with each color. We can think of each color as a “hook” that we can hang specific Gospel truths on. We already watched a demonstration of how to share the Gospel using the Wordless Book. Now, I’m going to unpack each color (each page of the Wordless Book) and explain what kinds of biblical truths we can hang on each “hook.”

Distribute Wordless Books to each participant so they can follow along.

As you describe each color and key biblical truths, hang the corresponding colored towel/hat on the coat rack.

Slide 10: Gold (God’s Love)

The gold page is all about God, His love and holiness, His creation of each one of us, and His perfect plan. We use the color gold because it symbolizes treasure, value, royalty, and beauty. The key phrase for this page is **God’s Love**. As we heard in the video, God loves each of us and wants us to be part of His eternal family! He is our perfect, loving Father.

Because God loves us so much, He has prepared a beautiful home for His family. That home is called heaven. The key verse for the gold page is **John 14:2**, which describes this beautiful home God has made. *Read John 14:2 from your Bible.* Heaven is a real, amazing place. There is nothing bad, sad, or scary in heaven. There’s no sickness, no crying, and there’s never darkness in heaven. The most incredible thing about heaven is that God is there. Heaven is a perfect place where everything is good *because* God is there! He makes it perfect and good!

Here is a summary of some biblical truths we can hang on the gold hook:

- The attributes of God
- God’s creation and plan for the people He created
- Heaven
- God’s promises

There is one key thing that isn’t in heaven, and that’s sin.

Slide 11: Dark (Sin)

The dark page is all about **sin** (and “sin” is the key word for this page). Sin is what separates us from our perfect, holy God. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that is against God.

We use dark colors, such as black or gray, when talking about this page, because these colors represent darkness. We heard this in the video - sin separates us from God and prevents us from seeing and understanding God, which means we can’t truly understand ourselves or our purpose, either. This makes us feel lost and confused, like we’re in the dark. This concept of sin causing darkness is a frequent theme in Scripture.

The key verse for this page, **Romans 3:23**, teaches us that ALL have sinned. *Read Romans 3:23 from your Bible.* Nobody can be perfect, which means we are all separated from God until we accept Christ as our Savior. There is nothing we can do to get rid of our sin. We cannot do good things to make it up, we can’t pretend that we don’t sin, and even having Christian parents won’t help us get rid of our sin.

Sin is what causes death, destruction, and pain in our world. Everything scary, dangerous, harmful, etc. in the world is because of sin, and there's nothing we can do to solve the problem on our own.

Here is a summary of biblical truths we can hang on the dark hook:

- Sin nature
- Sinful behavior
- Broken world
- Death, grief, pain, fear, loss, etc.

Fortunately, there is Good News... God had a rescue plan!

Slide 12: Red (Jesus' Blood)

The red page is all about Jesus! He is God's rescue plan. God's perfect Son came from heaven to live here on earth to show us what God is like and to save us from our sin. He made a way for us to be rescued from the punishment for our sin when he died on the cross and took our place. The key verse for this page is **Hebrews 9:22b**. *Read Hebrews 9:22b from your Bible.* Jesus was the only one who could shed His blood to save us because He was the only perfect sacrifice - the only one who never sinned. The key phrase for this page is **Jesus' blood**.

But there is *more* Good News! Jesus died to rescue us from the punishment for our sin, but He didn't stay dead. He literally rose again and had victory over sin and death! That means Jesus is stronger than sin and stronger than death.

When Jesus did this, He gave everyone the opportunity to be saved. God loves us so much that He gives every single person a chance to believe in Him, be rescued from their sin, and follow Jesus.

Here is a summary of biblical truths we can hang on the red hook:

- The attributes of Jesus
- Christ's death and resurrection
- Sacrifice (the need for shedding of blood for forgiveness)
- Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah

Slide 13: White (Clean)

The key word for the white page is **clean**. This page is all about salvation and how we are transformed when Jesus saves us. The key verse for this page is **Acts 16:31**. *Read Acts 16:31 from your Bible.* Salvation is a free gift, but we need to have faith and believe in Jesus, accept His gift of salvation, and surrender our lives to Him. When we ask Him to forgive us, our sin is forgiven, He takes away our shame, and God sees us as clean! We begin a new relationship with Him, and He transforms us!

Once we are saved, we are able to live as God's beloved children, and we are part of His royal family: the Church! God is with us now, and He will be with us forever. God promises that His children have eternal life and will live forever with Him in heaven when our life on earth comes to an end.

Here is a summary of biblical truths we can hang on the white hook:

- Belief, surrender, forgiveness, and salvation
- How God transforms us - we are a new creation, we are adopted into His family
- The Church (God's family)

Slide 14: Green (Grow)

Once we're forgiven and saved, we get to grow closer to Jesus and become more like Him! We use the color green to remind ourselves of things that grow (like grass and trees). **Grow** is the key word for the green page, and **2 Peter 3:18a** is the key verse. *Read 2 Peter 3:18a from your Bible.*

There are many, many ways that we grow as believers. We grow closer to Jesus and become more like Him when we study His Word (the Bible), when we talk to Him in prayer, when we spend time with other believers, and when we obey His Word and choose to live life His way.

Once we are saved, we spend the rest of our lives experiencing the green page! As we mature, we will continue to learn more about Jesus and continue to become more like Him.

Here is a summary of biblical truths we can hang on the green hook:

- Growing to become more like Jesus
- Scripture memorization
- Bible study/devotionals
- Obedience
- Christian friendship/fellowship
- Worship, service, giving/tithing
- Believer's Baptism
- Evangelism
- *And so much more! This page represents living the Christian life!*

Slide 15: Invitation

Every time we share the Gospel using the Wordless Book, it is important to include a clear invitation for kids to pray and surrender their lives to Christ. We do not recommend using a scripted prayer, instead, we want to encourage kids to genuinely talk to God. We believe that kids can know, love, and follow Jesus. We trust that the Holy Spirit will use us as we share the Good News, and this invitation to salvation is the opportunity for kids to pray and surrender their lives to Christ.

There are two general styles you can use when sharing an invitation for salvation:

1. You can pray together as a group. This is often when a teacher has all students close their eyes, and the teacher will provide some prompts for how students might talk to God.
2. **The preferred method** is to invite students to meet individually with a leader. The leader can then ask the student questions about their desire to meet, so they can assess if the student understands the invitation. Then the leader can also support the student as they pray and can respond to any questions or concerns at that time.

There are a few resources that leaders can use during this time:

- The Believe it or Not booklet
- Coaching Kids for Salvation card
- Now What? Booklet
- "I Believe" Bookmark

We explain these resources in the “Toolbox II - Sharing the Gospel with Children - Advanced” training, but you can ask your ministry leader about these resources any time.

Slide 16: Contextualizing

When we use the Wordless Book as a tool to share the Gospel, it is very important that we prayerfully allow the Holy Spirit to guide us. The general outline of the Wordless Book helps us stay organized and focused in our communication, but only the Holy Spirit knows what each student needs to hear.

When you have relationships with the students in your classroom and understand their background, you might choose to present the colors in a different order and/or to emphasize different biblical truths as you share. It is very important to rely on the Holy Spirit’s guidance, and to be in prayer before and during the Gospel presentation.

Here are some examples of how you might contextualize the Wordless Book elements and presentation:

1. For kids with broken, torn apart families, you might choose to spend a lot more time on the gold page because these students need to hear about how much our perfect Father loves us.
2. For “good church kids”, you might spend more time on the dark and red pages, to help them understand the weight of our sin nature and that we can do nothing to save ourselves (Ephesians 2:8-9), and to help them recognize the cost of Christ’s sacrifice.
3. For a classroom of students that have just experienced some kind of tragedy or loss, you may choose to spend some extra time on the gold and dark pages, to help them understand that our broken world is not God’s design, and that sin is what brings suffering and death into our lives.

Slide 17: Practice!

Every leader in your children’s ministry needs to be trained on how to share the Gospel. We never know when a child may be ready to trust in Christ, and we never know when an opportunity to share the Gospel will arise, so we all need to be prepared. The best training for sharing the Gospel involves **modeling** and **practicing**. You’ve watched a video demonstration of how to share the Gospel, and I have talked you through the framework. Now it’s time for us to practice!

Prior to having the participants practice sharing the Gospel using the Wordless Book, the trainer should demonstrate how to share the Gospel with children, using the Wordless Book, in three minutes or less. Make sure to use language that is developmentally appropriate, and to emphasize the key concepts and verses.

Once the trainer has demonstrated, divide participants into pairs and instruct them to use their Wordless Books to share the Gospel with each other. One participant will act as the leader (sharing the Gospel), while the other will act as the student (hearing the Gospel). After five minutes, have participants switch roles.

Slide 18: Q&A

After participants finish practicing, allow time for questions, then close in prayer.