

Total Time Teaching

Using your time effectively during Discovery Land Toolbox III

Suggested Session Length: 60 minutes

PowerPoint Available: "Toolbox III: Total Time Teaching"

Audience: Experienced preschool and elementary DL volunteers (Lead Teachers, Discover Time Leaders, and Shepherds)

General Topic: How to use every moment of time during the Discovery Land program to foster spiritual growth and development.

Slide 1: Title

Slide 2: Total Time Teaching

Why Total Time Teaching is so important: We all know that kids need the hope and salvation that is found in knowing and following Jesus Christ. The spiritual needs of children today are immense, but the time we have with them at church for discipleship is limited. Even if we have children in our programs for two hours each week, that is only 120 minutes out of 10,080 minutes in a week. We shouldn't be discouraged by this! Instead, we should recognize that we can have a big impact in just those two hours, and we need to be wise stewards of the minutes that we are given!

To be good stewards, we strongly encourage all leaders to be well-prepared and intentional about the time spent with kids in Discovery Land. This helps create an environment of Total Time Teaching where students are constantly engaged in learning the main point of the lesson or one of Discovery Land's On Track Map objectives.

Training idea: When talking about how many minutes we get in a child's week, hold up a visual representation such as a glass jar of identical candies or craft pom poms. Use 168 of the same color items and two of another color to represent the two hours of discipleship vs. the 168 total hours in a week. You can also use all the same color items and take two out to illustrate how many we get.

Slide 3: Wasted Time

If we are not intentional and proactive, we can be tempted to waste valuable time.

Training idea: Before sharing the following ways we waste time, ask the group for examples of how we might be tempted to waste time. See how many of them they think of or if they come up with other ideas.

Ways that we waste time: Some ways that we might be tempted to waste time during the Discovery Land session are:

1. Preparing our props or materials
2. Reviewing the directions or lesson
3. Talking with other leaders
4. Taking care of other church business

Of course, none of these things are bad, but we want to avoid them while children are present because we could be using that time for much-needed discipleship instead!

Ephesians 5:15-17 says “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” NIV1984

Let’s look at some specific, practical ways that we can use all our time during Discovery Land for discipleship.

Slide 4: Check In

As kids are checking in:

- **Shepherds:** Greet children first and then their parents. Get down to a child’s level and talk to them eye-to-eye. This helps build a relationship and helps kids to feel welcome. When parents see leaders talking with their child and calling them by name, they know their child is valued.
- **Shepherds:** Notice if a child has a Bible. If they do not, find out if they have one at home. Reassure them that there will be one they can use at their seat. This will especially help new visitors feel comfortable.
- **Discover Time Leaders:** If students will need to be divided into teams for Discover Time, mark their hands with colored markers as they check in.
- **Lead Teachers:** Make a connection with your students. This helps build a relationship, and they will be more ready to listen to you when it’s time for the lesson.

Training ideas:

- *Break into groups and brainstorm questions to ask or topics to talk about as kids are coming in.*
- *Model this concept in the leader training. Have all the setup done in advance. Greet and talk with your volunteers when they arrive. Spend time focusing on them rather than on preparation. Have available any supplies they might need for the training, such as Bibles, pens, or paper. Mark their hands to put them in teams for the activity in the next section.*
- *After completing slide 4, ask leaders to identify the ways that you modeled this in setting up the training and welcoming them.*

Slide 5: Pre-Service Review Game and End-of-Class Review Game

- Keep these games moving! The more questions you're able to ask, the more review the students get.
- Ask questions that have clear answers. This helps kids build confidence. Developmentally, preschool and elementary students like to "know stuff" and want to be able to give a correct answer.
- Adjust questions and your approach for your specific audience to achieve these goals. Ways to do this include:
 - Turn questions into 'true/false' or 'yes/no'.
 - True/false: "What verse tells us that we shouldn't be ashamed of Jesus?" becomes "Romans 1:16 tells us that we shouldn't be ashamed of Jesus." (True)
 - Rephrase questions to be 'fill-in-the-blank' or 'finish the statement'.
 - Fill-in-the-blank: "What does Immanuel mean?" becomes "Immanuel means God with ____." (Us)
 - Finish the statement: "What did Mary and Joseph name the baby? Why?" becomes "Mary and Joseph named their baby Jesus because an angel told them the baby would..."
 - Include visitor-friendly questions for new students so they can participate:
 - Example: What day of the week do we come to Discovery Land?

***Training idea:** Gather leaders into groups based on the color you marked on their hands when they came in (see training idea under Slide 4). Give them a set of Lesson Review Questions and On Track Map Questions from the curriculum (available in the appendix of any quarter of preschool or elementary curriculum). Have them work as a group to adjust the questions.*

Slide 6: Discover Time

- **DT Leader:** Make the most of the time traveling to the DT area.
 - Build anticipation for the upcoming DT - "Let's line up for DT where we're going to be SPIES/have a mystery to solve/have an important challenge/have a way to serve others."
 - Recite a verse or chant an applicable phrase as you're walking, such as "God is #1!"
- **DT Leader:** The DT needs to finish on time so there will be adequate time for the Bible lesson. If you can't get a DT activity done in the allotted time, you'll need to break the students up into smaller groups. This will ensure that everyone has a turn or a chance to participate before time is up.
- **DT Leader:** Literally bring the students into a huddle to give them instructions. This prevents distractions which keeps you from having to repeat the instructions many times. State the main goal of the DT, and then give the students short, concise instructions. Practice this ahead of time:
 - Bad example: You're in teams and you're going to use marshmallows and spaghetti to construct a tower. You want the tower to be big, and you have to use the supplies, and it has to be sturdy. Try to win! OK...go!

- Good example: Your goal today is to work with your team to build the tallest tower possible. The winners will get five Tracker Tickets. You are going to make the tower out of only mini marshmallows and uncooked spaghetti noodles (show both items). The tower has to stand up on its own without your touching it. Give me a thumbs up if you understand the directions. OK...check the color on your hand and go to the table that has that colored tablecloth on it. You can begin building your tall tower as soon as you get to the table. Ready...go!
- **DT Leader:** Assign the other classroom leaders the job of being coaches. All leaders can be helping students with directions, encouraging them, answering questions, cheering them on, reinforcing the main phrase (when applicable), etc.
- **Lead Teacher:** Observe the emotions of the students.
 - Example: There is a DT that gets students thinking about *waiting*. In this DT, students need to blow up a balloon with a pump until it pops. The Lead Teacher should be watching the students' reactions while they are blowing up the balloon. Are they excited, nervous, or impatient if it's taking too long? Then weave that into the DT transition: "Some of you seemed excited while you were waiting for the balloon to pop. I could see that some of you seemed nervous. Sometimes it took a little longer for the balloon to pop, and I could see that some of you were starting to get impatient. And some of you didn't want to wait at all - you wanted the balloon to pop so you could run back to your team so the next person could go. It can be hard to wait. How do you think God's people felt waiting for the promised Savior?"
- **Lead Teacher:** You will need to ensure that the main point is being accomplished. You might need to make quick adaptations if the main point is not getting across.
 - Example: There is a DT that illustrates how frustrating and hard it is to be in a "dark" world and our responsibility to those in the "dark." Students are paired up. A non-blindfolded student helps a blindfolded student do a specific task like cut certain shapes out of Play-Doh. If you notice that the blindfolded student is having an easy time completing the task, you can make it more difficult! Move the supplies so they are harder to find, suggest a more difficult shape, etc. The DT only works if the person in the dark struggles.
- **DT Leader:** Make the most of the time while you're traveling from the DT area.
 - Chant the main DT idea/statement or verse, such as "I will do things God's way!"

Training idea: Have all leaders get up and move to a different part of the building for a break. As they are traveling, encourage them to shout, "_____!" several times.

Slide 7: Bible Lesson

The lesson time can go quickly, and sometimes when we're done, we realize we've gotten sidetracked and haven't covered what we intended to cover. Or perhaps we have too much time, and we aren't sure how to fill the time in meaningful ways.

If you generally find yourself running out of time:

- Have your props ready to pull out - displayed, in the right order, etc. Arrive early and stage them in advance.
 - **Training idea:** *Have a set of props on a table, laid out and covered with a cloth as a visual example.*
- Have the students' Bibles at the tables as they enter the classroom. This helps them quickly find their seats. You can minimize distractions by strategically placing student's Bibles in locations that will help the students focus.
- Create an effective schedule/pattern for your in-class lessons. Write it on the whiteboard to help you keep on track. Include how much time you have for each component. A schedule/pattern is especially important for preschool children. This includes having clear, designated places where they should sit.
 - **Training idea:** *Work together to create an example of this based on how much time your church typically has.*
- Keep the first components of the lesson - DT Transition, Find It, and Prayer - short. They are supposed to take about 5 minutes combined. Remember, we're going to cover these items every week.
 - **Training idea:** *Choose a lesson and "teach" the first five components as an example, showing how to keep it moving.*
- Tracker Tickets should be an undercurrent component. The Shepherd and/or DT Leader should hand them out discreetly; the Lead Teacher should not stop class when they are handed out.
- When kids are looking up Scripture, the Shepherd and DT Leader should quickly jump in to help.
 - **Training idea:** *Designate half of the participants as Shepherds/DT Leaders. The other participants will be students who need help looking up Scripture in their Bible. Give a passage of Scripture and have the "Shepherds/DT Leaders" help look up the verses. Switch roles and do it again with a different Bible passage.*
- If you have kids that have lots of questions that are unrelated to the lesson or would take significant time to answer:
 - Have a box present when they come in. Let them write down their questions and put them in the box. At the end of class each week, choose a question to answer that complements the lesson.
 - Have a separate Q&A gathering after class or weave the questions into your mid-week program.
 - For urgent questions, have the teacher answer it during the End-of-Class Review Game and have the Shepherd or DT Leader greet parents and hand out Tracker's Treasures.

If you generally find yourself with too much time:

- Resist the temptation to default to meaningless games like tic-tac-toe.
- Spend time working on the Think Right verse - memorize it and define/discuss any difficult words.
- Break into small groups and go through the review questions in more depth.
- Have kids write out or draw what they learned from the lesson, and then let them share what they've put on their paper.
- Pull questions out of the question box and answer/discuss.
- Play extra rounds of the End-of-Class Review Game (elementary) or Think Right and Know Right activities (preschool).

Slide 8: Conclusion

We have an amazing opportunity to steward the time we are given with students! Let's commit to focusing on a new skill each week.

Training idea: Give leaders a few minutes to identify and write down a couple of ideas that they would like to implement next week.

Close in prayer.