

71 Ways to Do a Memory Verse

Are you helping children memorize Scripture? It's one of most important things you can do! When people learn Scripture as children, sometimes it stays in their minds for the rest of their lives! What an opportunity! (What a responsibility!)

Most of the time, learning Scripture verses requires saying the verse multiple times. The idea is to get the children to say the verse **over and over** without it being painful—without realizing that they **ARE** saying the verse repeatedly! Repetition gets the verse down in their heads. Then, we pray that God gets the verse in their hearts!

- 1. Erasing the Verse-** Of all the ways to teach a memory verse, this is the most used. Write the verse on a dry erase board and have the children say the verse a few times. Then let the children erase the verse a word at a time while saying the verse after each word is erased. Pick someone who is saying it loudly. (Twist: You can have a child who wasn't watching to guess what word was erased.)
- 2. Removing the Verse-** This is the same idea as erasing the verse, but it may involve more planning. The words of the verse are written on pieces of paper and put in a pocket chart. Remove all the words one at a time, or leave a few keywords to use in remembering. Or, make a "clothesline" by putting a word or two on paper "clothes" that is strung on a "clothesline." Remove, a piece at a time.
- 3. Remove the Adding Tape-** Take large rolls of receipt paper. Write the verse on the roll and cut off a word at a time as they recite it. A little trickier than just choosing the word to erase, but Laura Smith says it made it more fun.
- 4. Popping the Verse-** Tape a word or two of the verse per balloon. Say the verse together, then have a child come pop a balloon until they are all gone.
- 5. Put Verse to Music-** This can be a familiar tune or a new tune. This is especially helpful when teaching a hard verse. Some children never forget the memory verse songs they have learned!
- 6. Say with Motions (or Sign Language)-** Put actions to the verse. (Twist: Start leaving out words, but continue the actions.)
- 7. Say with Different Voices-** Have fun with the verse! Say with different voices to keep it interesting...deep voice, cowboy, robot, slow, fast, grandma/grandpa, high, silly voice, quiet voice, accents, underwater, pinching your nose, etc. Okay, you get the idea!
- 8. Copycat-** Say it with a unique voice or accent, and see if the children can copy you.

- 9. Disguised-Voice Game-** Send a child out of the room while you pick someone to say the verse in a disguised voice. Bring the first child in and blindfold them (or have them put their back to the others) and have the other child say the verse in the disguised voice. The blindfolded person then must guess who was disguising their voice.
- 10. Different Voices for Key Words-** Say only certain key words with a different voice. Example: The LORD (big booming voice) is my SHEPHERD (high squeaky) I shall NOT (quiver) WANT (shout and stomp foot). (Greg Miller)
- 11. Hot and Cold-** Find something to hide. (Sherry Poff uses a small picture covered in clear packing tape, so she can put scotch tape on it for hanging.) Pick one child to hide and another to find. Send the finder out of the room until the object is hidden. When the finder comes in, the whole class says the verse over and over. They will be quieter, the farther away the finder is and louder when the finder get closer. Some of the hiders get pretty inventive! (Twist: Abigail Hamilton has put this method with her “light” theme. She darkened the room and let the finder look with a flashlight.)
- 12. Chanting and Clapping-** Leah Bryan has had great results with chanting and clapping. Think up a unique rhythm to help the children learn the verse they are working on. In our army theme, we found that putting the verse to a cadence helped with long-term memorization.
- 13. Bag of Instruction-** Have a bag of instructions on strips of paper with phrases written on them such as touch your toes (and say the verse), everybody with green on (say the verse), all boys, or all girls. Reward the children who are saying the verse loudly, by giving them a turn picking strips of paper for the class to do.
- 14. Bounce It-** Bounce a ball back and forth; however, have each person say the verse each time before the ball is bounced.
- 15. Teacher Picks the Groups Who Say It-** Call out the group of people to say the verse. (If you like pizza, stand up and say it/ if you like to eat chocolate ice cream on Tuesdays/ everyone with freckles, pat your tummy while you say it/everyone wearing red/ everyone with birthdays in April.)
- 16. Puppet Finds Wrong Word-** Have children listen to see if the puppet is correct. When the puppet says it wrong, everyone says the verse. Have a child point to a word. When saying the verse, class will clap hands on the word picked and see if the puppet can identify missing word. Pam Atchley says, “Kids love puppets.”
- 17. Pete and Repeat Puppets-** With bird puppets named Pete and Repeat, have Pete say part of the verse, and Repeat repeat it. Start with children saying it with Repeat. Then as they get better at learning the verse, have part of them switch to saying it with Pete. Do different combinations (girls with one, boys with the other), to get more excitement. If no bird puppets, have a competition between the puppet and the children.

- 18. Illustrate it-** For the younger ones, draw figures or characters that they can associate with the words of the verse. Then let them “read” the verse themselves remembering what those symbols mean. (or have **pictures to represent key words**) Twist: Have the children be the ones to illustrate the Bible verse.
- 19. Uncover the Verse-** Cover the verse, and uncover it piece by piece to discover what the verse is. This can be done on a marker board, a pocket chart, or with balloons. When it is done with balloons, put the verse on balloons that will be popped one by one. When the balloons are popped, the children will see the verse underneath. This works for familiar verses or as a review. As each balloon is popped, the children guess what the verse is.
- 20. Sparkle-** Go around the room with each student saying one word of the verse in order. The next child needs to say the reference. You can play that the next child is out or start over. If any child does not know the next word, he or she will be out. (Grace and Elena Wheeler)
- 21. Hangman-** Write the verse with a few missing words. Fill in the letters with a game of hangman.
- 22. Whispering Game-** Have the first child whisper the verse to the child next to him who then whispers it to the next on down the line. Compare what the first child said with what the last heard. (This is a great gossiping object lesson also.)
- 23. Popcorn-** Each side takes a turn to pop (stand) up and say a word. Speed up, popcorn pops faster (relieves some energy). This could be popcorn boys and girls.
- 24. Guess the Missing Word-** Pick someone to stand behind the marker board verse. Have students recite while leaving out a word. The person behind the board tries to guess the missing word. (Leona McCarthy says that this is her children’s favorite method.)
- 25. Put it on a Sack-** Put the verse on a large brown grocery sack with arrows pointing the direction the verse is going—around the corner, on top, etc. Put the sack on the head of a child. Turn the child around the direction of the arrows as the whole group says the verse.
- 26. Beach Ball Throw-** Throw the ball to different people and when they catch it, whatever is under their right thumb, they have to do. The message under their thumb could say things like, “Say the Bible verse” or “Give the reference.” (Melinda Heyer)
- 27. Sticky Darts or Magnetic Darts-** Write the verse on a dry erase board that is magnetic. Let the children take turns throwing darts with magnets on the end. Or make a dart with a sticky tip to throw at the dry erase board. Erase whatever word that the dart lands on. Keep saying the verse all together in between turns. (We found sticky darts in a Valentine set and magnetic darts in a Christmas set. Keep your eyes open.)

- 28. Other Balloon Activities-** Put phrases inside the balloon, and let the children pop the balloon to get the phrase out and build the verse. Or, put papers inside the balloon like “row 1, seat 3” and have that person say the verse. (Kim Blake.)
- 29. Quiet and Loud-** Use hand signals to have children say verse louder or quieter—when hands are high you are loud, quiet when hands are low. Or hold hands out like daddy shark like Morganne Wheeler does. Then when her hands are close together, the kids whisper the verse.
- 30. With Movement-** Do motions while saying the verse to add involvement. Students take turns picking a letter. All words that start with certain letters, you can do a motion. For example, for all words that start with “S” touch your nose; all words that start with “T” stomp your foot. If the letter is “E” everyone stands in all words containing the letter “E”. (Regina Nickerson says that you can do these one at a time, or it is kind of fun to just keep adding actions and try to remember the actions you are already doing.)
- 31. Another Movement-** Another way to add movement is to stand up and sit down every other word. Or, do the verse in the same way you would “head, shoulders, knees, and toes”...only do this while saying the verse.
- 32. Unscramble with Balloons-** Write the verse on balloons to be placed in the right order. (Denise Mahan)
- 33. Unscramble with Mega Blocks-** Put the verse on Mega Blocks and put together.
- 34. Puzzle pieces-** Rhoda Bryan says that you can write the verse on puzzle pieces with the verse on it. You can use a paper and cut into puzzle pieces. Let the children put it together. This can be a relay or a group activity. If magnet strips are put on the back, the puzzle will stick to a cookie sheet or a magnetic dry erase board.
- 35. Unscramble with Flashcards-** Write the verse on flashcards. Each child takes a turn and turns over a card then places it in the correct order. (Twist: Write the verse on pool noodle pieces or anything else, and have the children come unscramble.)
- 36. Repeat Animal-** Tammy Hallam got a parrot from Cracker Barrel that she would use to help teach the verse. She would say the verse, and it would record and repeat. (We found an elf mike on an after-Christmas sale that would distort the voice. The children loved taking turns using it to say their verse!)
- 37. Picture Hunt-** Put pictures around the room and verses. Let the children match which pictures would illustrate which verses.
- 38. Puppet Ventriloquist-** Have a child use a puppet while saying the verse, trying to be a ventriloquist. (Tammy Hallam)
- 39. Rewards-** Prizes, candy, taking someone out to eat, or a reward system are incentives for learning verses. Elisabeth Hemmeter came up with a list of things they could do like

saying their verse, coming back, telling what the last week's lesson was about, bringing their Bibles, having their devotions, etc. Then she gave them little plastic coins that they could save up and buy prizes. She liked to keep their coins at the church, so that they didn't lose them. She said, "One of my Sunday school teachers used to take us out individually to do something fun if we said our verses every week for so many weeks. She took me to the children's museum."

- 40. Cherry Tree-** Hang cherry lifesavers over pins on a paper tree on a bulletin board. Each time a verse is recited correctly, the child can pick a cherry.
- 41. Give Immediate feedback-** Giving treats as soon as students are learning the verse for immediate feedback. Or have them turn around and say it without looking at the board.
- 42. Say It Before-** See if the children can say the verse before a feather or bubble hits the ground.
- 43. Footprints-** Put the words of the verse on paper footprints and have the children say the verse as they follow the path.
- 44. Visual Aids-** Use visual aid/objects like a lantern and flashlight for "Thy word is a lamp." (Kim Saylor)
- 45. Sound Effects-** Put in sound effects wherever you can (giggling with "laughter doeth good" or growling in verse about Daniel in the lion's den).
- 46. Competitions-** One group stands and says the first half of the verse and then they sit down, and the other group says the second half of the verse. See who can say it the loudest or the best. Then change the order of the groups. This increases participation and interest (Girls against boys, or whatever groups you want. Adults versus children, if you have adults in the room.) Your teens may respond to a competition seeing who can say the most verses.
- 47. Relay Race Scramble-** Make two sets in different colors of paper. Cut into words or sets of words. Hide these two sets around the room (tape under chairs, etc.) After practicing verse, divide class into teams and have them race to find the verse and put it together on a table.
- 48. Fishing-** Put pieces of the Bible verse and reference on fish. Attach paper clips to each fish. Make four fishing poles by hanging a small magnet on a string from the end of dowel rods or pencils. Practice saying the Bible verse in unison. When the children are familiar with the verse, scatter the paper fish on the floor. Give four children each a fishing pole. Tell them to catch only the fish needed to complete their Bible verse. If they catch a word they already have, they are to throw it back. This would also work as a relay. (Seth Drummond)

- 49. Hot Potato-** Pass around a potato. Or Kim Blake says, even a stuffed animal, and call it Hot Chicken or Hot Dog or whatever your stuffed animal is. Pass the object around, and when the music stops that person says the verse. Another method is to have no music but have everyone say the verse as they pass the potato. If you learned your verse by putting a tune to it, the whole group can sing the verse as the potato is passed. Whenever you stop, whoever has the potato has to say the verse.
- 50. Magic Carpet-** Children walk in a circle as they say a verse. When it ends, the one standing on the rug, says the verse.
- 51. Cheering-** Use saying the memory verse as cheering for your team. Do any kind of competition (peeling an orange, getting the egg on a spoon to the front, etc.) and the louder you say the verse, the more your team will win. (Kim Blake)
- 52. Ping Pong-** Put two chairs in front of everyone. Have two children sit. One “serves” by reciting the reference. The next child says the next word, thereby she “returns” the ball. They keep going back and forth until the verse is finished. They both get a point. If one of them messes up or pauses over three seconds, the other player gets a point. Another version is to have a paddle and each side say a word when you put the paddle up for their side. Then you put the paddle to the opposite side for them to say a word. You can get going faster and faster or have pauses. They have to say the next word only when the paddle is on their side.
- 53. Echo-** Say a phrase loudly. Then the whole group repeats it three times getting softer each time.
- 54. Break the Sound Barrier-** Say a verse at least five times, starting in a whisper, and getting louder each time. The last time should be very loud!
- 55. Spy Word-** Using an empty paper towel holder, “spy” out a word. Children guess what word the leader picked. When they pick the wrong word, the whole group must say the verse again. Repeat until someone picks the right word. Then he or she is the leader and uses the paper towel holder to “spy” out a word.
- 56. Cut and Make a Mess-** Write the verse on a big poster board, and let the children cut one word out anywhere. Cheryl Brewer says, “They love it when I just toss the piece over my shoulder and make a mess for some reason! Also, they think it’s funny when I hold up the poster and peek through the holes at them.”
- 57. Bopping them on the head-** This works for shorter verses of like 7 or 8 words. Write the words on separate pieces of paper. Have the children hold up their word. Cheryl Brewer explains, “I take a pool noodle and stand behind them. When I bop them on the head, they say their word and hold it up for the rest of the kids to say. I do it slow and then faster. Depending on the children, sometimes I let a child do the bopping. They absolutely love this.”

- 58. Crafts-** To reinforce the verse, make a craft out of it. Memory verses can be illustrated with a drawing or picture and turned into booklets. Or, cover 8 ½ x 11 inch sheets of white paper with wax paper, pressing hard with a sharp pencil, writing the verse. Let the children brush tempera paint on the paper. The paint will not stick to where the wax paper was pressed on the paper, making the verse appear.
- 59. Room Décor-** Make the verse part of the décor. (In a sailing theme, use roll-down blinds as the sails and have verses written on them.)
- 60. Mirror-** Write the verse backwards. Have children write it correctly either with a small mirror or even without one.
- 61. Drama-** Act the verse out.
- 62. Get a Chair-** Begin with all the children on the floor in front of their chairs. Say the first word of the verse, then point to a child who will say the second word. If her answer is correct, she stands up and sits in her chair. If the child cannot say the next word, she remains seated on the floor. Continue through the verse several times. The objective is to get everyone on a chair. (Seth Drummond)
- 63. Jump Rope-** If you have a chance for outside activities...Use a jump rope to make a large circle. Let children (up to ten kids may fit inside) who think they can say the verse jump into the circle at the same time and repeat the verse in unison. Every time a group successfully repeats the verse, the rest of the group claps heartily. This recognizes the kids inside the circle as winners because they learned God's Word. (Cathy Peek)
- 64. Tic-Tac-Toe-** Review verses by allowing children to place an x or o after they have said their verse.
- 65. Potato Race-** Sitting in a circle, the first child starts by holding a potato. He says the first word of the verse and passes the potato to the person on the *left*. That child takes the potato and says the next word and passes the potato on down the line. If a child does not know what word comes next, the potato is passed to the *right* until someone knows the correct word. Once the correct word has been given, the potato goes back the original direction and continues as before. If anyone drops the potato, the next word of the verse cannot be said until it is back in the proper person's possession. This can be played in teams as a race. (This probably needs to be an older class or teens.)
- 66. Match the Reference-** Tape a reference card to each person's back, and give them a verse card (making sure they do not match). Have them find the verse that matches their reference card by looking at others' backs.
- 67. Find It-** Good to review after you have learned several verses. Hide papers around the room with references on them. Make at least two copies of each reference. Give your teams a few minutes to locate references, but **not** to take them. Then gather back in seats.

Begin reading a review verse, when someone remembers that reference for that verse, they can jump up and go get the paper. See who can get the most references. (Best for older kids.)

68. Target Practice- Make cardboard targets out of index cards, folding them in half and marking point values on them. Place the targets in a row, and shoot at them with a marble from a line. You get the point value on what you knock over, but if you knock over more than one target at one time, you lose the point value of those targets. To get a turn, you must say the verse. (This same game can be played with a safe dart board.)

69. Draw Out- Put 12 red checkers and 12 black checkers into a paper bag and shake them up. Divide everyone into two teams. Read a reference and have a child say the verse. If he can say it, have him get a checker out of the bag. If it is his team's color, he keeps it. If it is the other team's, he must give it to them. The team with the most pieces at the end of the game is the winner. This is good to review several verses. (Seth Drummond)

70. Jenga- Set up a Jenga tower. (Or set up two, one for each team if you want.) Divide children into two teams. After each child says her verse, let her come up and pull a Jenga block. The side with a tower that is left standing the longest wins. Or you could have the whole class say the verse together, and then one child come pull a Jenga block, if you would rather do it without a competition. (Merilee Barnard)

71. Hit the Flies- Put pictures of flies with points underneath them on the wall. If a child says his verse, blindfold him and let him come up and use a fly swatter on the flies. Count the points that are underneath all the flies he hit in one swat. This worked great for Merilee Barnard's bug theme. Keep tally of the points until the game is over.

Tips:

"Always read from the Bible to verify the words for the kids and to show where it came from." - Kim Marshall

Have the children look up the memory verse in their Bibles.

Ask the children questions. Let them answer the questions with Bible verses. For example:
What should be a Christian's attitude toward taking something that belongs to someone else?
"Thou shalt not steal. Exodus 20:15"

"I think the biggest thing that we try to remember is if it's a game, it's always more fun. And if you get into it, they'll get into it." -Melinda Heyer

"I would have the children read the verse with me. Then I'd ask if they could tell me what it meant. Then I would explain what it meant."-Debbie Peachey

“I like to remind the class that the reference is like the verse’s directions or it is like the bread on a sandwich. Very important. So we say it before and after the verse.” -Sis. Hallam

“I also try to make sure they understand all the words; we always discuss the verse and especially if they have a bigger word or an old English word”-Leah Bryan