



Object Lessons & Demonstrations

Objectives

After this lesson participants will:

- To understand the use of object lessons and the process of creating lessons for presentation to children
- To value the use of object lessons for teaching children difficult spiritual truths
- To practice creating an object lesson for presentation to children

Lesson Overview

Welcome and Warm-Up	10 min
Understanding Object Lessons	15 min
Creating an Object Lesson	20 min
Practicum	30 min
Wrap Up & Prayer	5 min

Approximate Total Time: 80 min

Materials

Illustration option:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Ball
- Teapot
- Tissue
- Puzzle pieces
- Seed pod
- Mobile phone
- Objects for any other object lessons you may present
- Prizes/treats (optional)
- Selection of objects for participants to use to create their own object lessons (optional)

Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

Scripture passages:

- Nehemiah 8:8
- James 2:10
- Deuteronomy 7:9
- Genesis 12:1-3
- Matthew 25:14-30
- Ephesians 4:15-16



Welcome and Warm-Up

10 min

Play a Game: How Many Can You List?



(Divide into groups of eight to ten people and explain that you are going to have a competition. Groups will have three minutes to compile the longest list of objects or activities that Jesus used in His teaching to explain spiritual things to His followers. After three minutes stop the groups and share answers together. Cheer for the good answers. Optional: give a prize/treat to the team with the most ideas.)



What do these objects have in common? Why do you think Jesus may have used these objects?

Jesus used everyday objects and activities because they were part of the common experience of His listeners. Everyone was familiar with the objects and they easily understood the connection He was making between the objects and what He was teaching. We also see examples of prophets in the Old Testament using objects or demonstrations to teach the people spiritual truth.



Can you think of any examples?

Like Jesus and the Old Testament prophets, children's teachers can look for and use ordinary or interesting objects from a child's environment to help them explain spiritual truths that may be difficult for children to understand.

(Invite a volunteer to read **Nehemiah 8:8**.) The Levites read the Book of the Law to all the people and then they made it clear, explaining it in a way that everyone could understand. Even more important than just giving children basic Bible knowledge, a good teacher will work to discover ways to help make it clear to children, explaining it in a way they will understand and be able to it apply to their lives. Object lessons are one way to increase children's understanding of spiritual lessons.

This lesson takes a closer look at object Lessons and how to create them. **THE 1for50 HAND: This lesson helps us consider important skills to help us "Make Disciples."**



Understanding Object Lessons

15 min

Purpose of an Object Lesson:

(Read the following purpose statement together:) To use facts about ordinary objects to help kids discover truth they will need to grow in their life with Jesus. (Go through the purpose statement, explaining the underlined words:)

- **Ordinary Objects** – things in a child's world with which they would be familiar
- **Facts** – a truth about or a function of an object
- **Discover truth** – something about the object needs to relate to spiritual truth
- **Grow & Jesus** – the goal is to help our children grow in faith and understanding of spiritual things

Abstract Thinking and Children

Christian concepts are often intangible (cannot be touched or felt). This is difficult for children.



What are some Christian concepts and Bible truths that might be difficult for children to comprehend? (Make a list on the board. Responses may include faith, love, mercy, Trinity, forgiveness, salvation.) Object lessons help these concepts become more concrete or tangible for a child.

Object lessons work best for school-age children who have moved beyond literal, concrete thinking to abstract thinking. Younger children, especially preschoolers, do not understand the symbolism of object lessons. They believe what they touch, see, and hear. (Consider using examples like "The Body of Christ", "Light of the World" or "The Lord is my Rock" and decide what each would mean to a concrete thinker who takes this literally and an abstract thinker who understands it figuratively.)

Object Lesson: "Sin is Sin to God, No Matter How Big or Small"

(Materials: tissue)

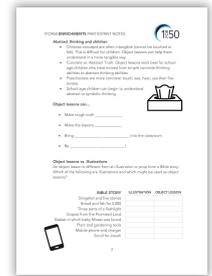
In talking about sin with children, sometimes they think that there are big sins and small ones. But to God it does not take much disobedience at all to consider us sinners! (As you are explaining this, you begin to cough and finally sneeze into the tissue. Afterwards, offer the used tissue to someone in the classroom, who quickly refuses it because it's soiled. Insist that just a small section of the tissue is soiled, but they will insist it is full of germs.) Even just a bit of dirt on the tissue makes it useless! **James 2:10** reminds us that breaking even one law makes us guilty of breaking all the law! Sin is sin to God, no matter how big or small.

What Object Lessons Can Do

(Share the following list of what object lessons can do, comparing it to the object lesson you have just demonstrated:)

- They make tough truth simple
- The lessons last
- They bring real life into the classroom
- They are also great fun!

(Ask participants to think back over previous teaching sessions and remember object lessons that have been used by other presenters:)



- How did those object lessons accomplish items on the list?
- Which ones explained something simply?
- Are they easy to remember?
- How did they apply to real life?
- Which ones were fun?

Object Lessons vs. Illustrations

Most items used for object lessons are not illustrations or props from the Bible story. Here is the difference:

- An illustration can help children imagine parts of the Bible story – like having palm branches when talking about Jesus' Triumphal entry to Jerusalem.
- Object lessons can help explain the concept or truth of the Bible lesson by comparing the object to the truth you are trying to teach.

Each one has its own value and importance depending on what the teacher needs to accomplish.

Let's see if we can decide which of these things are illustrations from a Bible story and which ones might be used as object lessons. (This can be done either by raising hands or having people stand and turn to the right if it is an illustration and turn to the left if it is an object lesson:)

- **Slingshot and five stones** (illustration)
- **Three parts of a flashlight** (object lesson)
- **Basket in which baby Moses was found** (illustration)
- **Mobile phone and charger** (object lesson)
- **Bread and fish for 5,000** (illustration)
- **Grapes from Promised Land** (illustration)
- **Plant and gardening tools** (object lesson)
- **Scroll for Josiah** (illustration)

(Allow participants to identify each one and give a reason for their choice. Make sure that you correct misunderstandings and clarify the difference, since this will be very important in the next part of the lesson.)

So now that we understand more about object lessons, let's learn the steps to creating them for presentation to children.

Creating an Object Lesson

20 min

Any good lesson needs to be well thought out and prepared. We need to know clearly where we're going and plan how to get there. Here are five simple steps in making a good object lesson. Let's talk about them together. (Share all five steps with the class and explain them clearly.)

1. **SAY IT:** Identify what your students need to learn or understand and say it clearly in one sentence or phrase. Keep it simple.



2. **FIND IT:** Find an interesting item that will help you explain or demonstrate this lesson. Make it fun. Be sure the object relates well to the lesson!
3. **PRESENT IT:** Decide how and when the children will discover the truth from this lesson. Practice it several times!
4. **TEACH IT:** Connect this lesson to a very specific truth in God's Word and use the object to help explain it. Read the Bible verse.
5. **APPLY IT:** Help your students apply the Bible truth to their personal lives. Make it personal.

(Afterwards, go back through the list and demonstrate an object lesson for each step that clearly illustrates that step. Some suggestions are here, but you can choose other object lessons if you wish.)

1. **SAY IT:** God is Faithful... always dependable. (Object: **Ball and Gravity**. Hold a small ball in one hand and drop it into your other hand. Do this many times, asking participants to guess what the ball will do when you drop it again.) It's always the same. Gravity will always act on the falling object. You can depend on it. Just like God's Faithfulness... He's always dependable. (Read **Deuteronomy 7:9**. Be sure to say the simple words, "God is Faithful" many times as you do this object lesson.)
2. **FIND IT:** Blessed to Be a Blessing. (Object: **Teapot**.) Like the opening at the top of the teapot, everything we have comes from above, God gives us everything we have. Like the spout, we also designed to give that blessing away and not keep it for ourselves. And finally, the handle reminds us that it is the owner of the teapot, like God, who decides when and where we are to bless. (Use **Genesis 12:1-3**. The teapot was selected because it is easily found and available as a common item on every table.)
3. **PRESENT IT:** Sin is Sin to God, No Matter How Big or Small. (Object: **Tissue and sneezing**. Remind them of the object lesson done earlier in the lesson, linked to **James 2:10**. This object lesson demonstrates that the discovery of the truth can be as a result of a surprise or action. The point of the lesson can happen at the beginning or end of the demonstration.)
4. **TEACH IT:** Every Part of the Body of Christ is Important. (Object: **Puzzle pieces**. Ask class to put together a simple puzzle without telling them that a piece or two is missing. As they are doing the project, ask which piece of the puzzle is the most important. They will give lots of different ideas, from corner pieces, straight edges, key patterns... When they are unable to complete it because of a missing piece, you can explain that every piece is important because without even one, the puzzle is incomplete. Read **Ephesians 4:15-16**.) We need everyone in the body of Christ,



because each one does its' job. (This object was chosen because it really allows the teacher to use the entire passage in Ephesians 4 to teach the concept of the body of Christ, not just one verse or thought.)

5. **APPLY IT:** Use the Gifts God Has Given to You. (Object: **Seed pod**. Show a seed pod, shaking it to confirm that it is full of seeds. Explain how long you have had the pod and that in that amount of time you have kept every seed, not one of them has been lost! When you ask the class if they are impressed with you, some will notice that you did nothing with the seeds and should have planted them. Ask if they can think of something Jesus taught about this. Read **Matthew 25:14-30**. Remind the class that they have each been given talents and abilities by God and that they should use them for His purposes. This object was chosen for this section because the participants will be asked to get into groups of two and share with one another what gifts God has given to them that they have been hesitant to use. Encourage them to pray for each other so that they can begin to apply this truth and use what He has given them.)



You can see that each time we demonstrated an object lesson we completed all five steps! We made sure to connect it with God's Word and allow the class to apply it to their own lives. Using all five steps will help you make a practical, personal, and powerful object lesson.

Now that you've learned more about what object lessons can do and discovered the steps to creating them, it's time to apply what you're learning and try it for yourselves!

Practicum: Create Your Own Object Lesson

30 min



(Show participants a mobile phone. As a group, make a list on the board of qualities or attributes of a mobile phone.) **What can the phone do? What's it typically used for? What does it need in order to work properly? What can go wrong? Can it be used for good and for wrong?** (Note that any of these qualities or uses could be used to create an object lesson. Caution: participants to try to use *only one* of the ideas in an object lesson... more than one may begin to confuse children and complicate the teaching.)



(Instruct the participants to get into groups of three to four. In their groups they should decide which idea they will use for their object lesson and what spiritual truth it will help explain. They should clearly use the five steps— noting that the object itself has already been provided for them—and create an object lesson for presentation to children. Remind them to say the point clearly, decide how children will discover it, choose a Bible verse and decide

how children can apply the truth to their lives. Then give the participants 10-15 minutes to work together.)

(Afterwards, ask for as many volunteers as time will allow to present their object lesson to the class. Encourage the participants to evaluate the presentations, making sure that the process was completed through all five steps!)

(Let the participants know what a good job they did with their presentations. Encourage them to write these ideas down and try them in their classrooms.)



(Alternate Activity: Have the participants get into groups of three to four. They must select an object from their handbag or backpack or from a selection of objects you have gathered and create an object lesson with that object. After 10-15 minutes have them share their presentation with the class.)

Wrap Up & Prayer

5 min

Think about the next lesson you will teach children. **Is there a difficult concept that you will need to help them understand? What object lesson can you use?** Remember that you have lots of other people around you who can share ideas and encourage you!



(Ask participants to return to their small groups and pray for one another, asking God to help them creatively teach so that children will clearly understand His Word and apply it to their lives.)

(Close in prayer.)