

# Object Lessons

## What is an Object Lesson?

An object lesson is using an everyday object to teach a spiritual truth. Sunday School teachers can and should use object lessons in their classrooms regularly. First, object lessons make great visuals, they teach a lesson, and thirdly, they bring an abstract idea into the concrete. An object lesson can stimulate a learner's interest before the lesson, it can emphasize what you have taught in your lesson, and it will help the student retain memory of your message long after leaving the classroom.

## Object lessons in the Bible

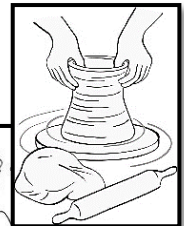
1. God created pictures of Christ long before He was born in Bethlehem.

- Passover Lamb:  
Exo. 12:1-7, John 1:29, Heb. 9:11-14, 1 Pet. 1:19
- Bronze Snake:  
Num. 21:4-9, John 3:14-15



2. Prophets used objects to communicate what God is saying to His people.

- Clay at the Potter's Wheel: Jer. 18:1-6
- Jerusalem will be Captured: Ezek. 4
- God's Love to His people: Hos. 3:1



3. Jesus used objects when teaching.

- Used Fish, when Calling Disciples:  
Luke 5:4-11
- Used Fig Tree, when Teaching about Faith & Faithfulness:  
Matt. 21:18-22
- Used Coin, when Questioned about Taxes:  
Matt. 22:15-22



## Types of Object Lessons

### 1. EXPLANATORY

An explanatory object explains an event or concept which has already taken place.

- Crucifixion: Nails, wooden cross, thorny branch, a whip: are items which can help a child understand the pain of Christ's suffering.

- Resurrection: An empty container (jar, box): are items which show that though Christ was buried, three days later, He was no longer there.

## 2. APPLICATIONAL

An object which helps carry across the application of the truth into the practical life of the learner.

- Parable of the Sower and the Seed: good and bad/dry/rocky soil: are items which would help a learner to realize the condition his/her heart must be for God's Word to take root and bring fruit for God's Kingdom.
- Salt of the Earth: saltshaker, unsalted/fresh vegetable, pickles: items which show why Jesus tells His Followers to be the Salt of the Earth.

## Using Object Lessons

Objects have great potential to leave a lesson imprinted on a child's heart and mind, but a teacher must be careful when choosing an object to bring to class. Keep these things in mind when preparing to use objects in your lessons.

### Abstract Idea



Abstract ideas are non-material concepts that cannot be attached to human senses; like love, hate, faith, faithfulness, discipleship, friendship, freedom, government, poverty, etc. They are especially difficult for younger children to understand. An object has the ability to bring an abstract idea into the concrete giving them comprehension of the lesson you are teaching.

Ex: Apple

- It can be used to teach about the Trinity of God.

### Connection



Objects are not chosen at random. To use an object in your lesson, you must find its connection to your lesson. One item can have multiple meanings, but you as the teacher must make that connection for the learner and be able to explain it clearly.

Ex: Light Bulb

- It can be used to explain that Jesus is the "Light of the World."
- It can be used to show that Jesus calls us to be "Light to the World."
- It can show that you have a great idea. 😊

### Engaging



Admit it, you dislike boring teachers! Well object lessons can be boring as well. If you were lazy in your lesson preparation, chances are your object lesson will turn out one of two ways. First, it may be boring, without the effect you wish to see. Second, it may get out of hand, causing a disruption in class. Object lessons must be rehearsed with in order to be engaging to the audience and be effective in your lesson.

Ex: Toolbox

- We who are united in Christ make up one body, though various parts have different functions. -1 Cor. 12:12-41
- Any science experiments that teach Biblical Truth.
- The Teabag Gospel or Paper Tear Gospel etc.

### Front-Loader



An object lesson doesn't necessarily need to conclude your lesson. Because objects are wonderful stimulants, teachers use them to arouse the students' attention on the subject matter or to divert attention when switching topics. When an object is used to grab attention before your lesson, it is known as the front-loader.

Ex: Crown

- A beauty contest was announced and the winner would become a queen. (Introduction to the story of Queen Esther.)
- In Revelation and James, a crown of life is promised to those who are victorious and withstand trials- even to the point of death for Jesus' sake.

### Meaningful



Occasionally, you will spend much time thinking about which object to bring into your lesson to make it meaningful. Other times, the Holy Spirit, will instruct you when teaching, right on the spot! God stands behind His Word to convey His Message to the audience, no matter how old your audience is. As the teacher, you must be ready to teach with objects that have purpose and relevance in order for the object to be meaningful to you, your lesson and finally your students.

Ex: Letter

- Ap. Paul wrote many letters, called the epistles, to churches he had started. We still read today to grow Spiritually as individuals, and to learn how to conduct ourselves when we are with other believers.
- "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone." -2 Cor. 3:2

**Purpose**

The object you are using must have a specific purpose. If it is for the children's pure entertainment, it has no purpose being in your lesson. There are many resources which give teachers ideas for object talks, science projects in class, or various creative lessons. Just because it's a great idea, does not mean it needs to be incorporated.

Ex: Tube of Toothpaste

- Be careful with what you say. Once our words come out of our mouth, they can't go back in. *-Eph. 4:29, Prov. 10:19, Prov. 12:17-19*

Ex: Football Player in gear

- Armor of God *-Eph. 6*

**Realia**

Realia is when an object, such as coins, tools, clothing, or other easily found items, is used by a teacher to illustrate the lesson.

Rather than showing a picture of a \$20 dollar bill, the teacher takes out real the real bill. This forces the student to change focus from the board or PowerPoint to an item, giving him/her reason to remember it later.

Ex: Stone or rock

- David picked 5 stones before meeting Goliath on the field.
- Devil tempts Jesus by offering to make stones into bread.

**Relevance**

Not all objects are relevant to every audience. The object you choose must be relevant to your audience based on culture and age. If you are using an item not relevant to your audience, it needs to be explained.

For example, a Menorah, would mean different things to a Jewish child and an American child who would see the object as an elaborate candlestick.

Ex: Glasses

- Holy Spirit helps us "see" and know God when we read His Word. *-Eph. 1:18, 2 Cor. 3:15-1*
- Simplest way to define "Worldview" is: the lens through which someone sees the world.

**Sensual**

When an object demands that other senses be used to study it, it becomes a sensual object. The more senses that a child uses during your object lesson, the better the odds of him/her remembering that lesson. (That's why children always remember "snack time" or "play time" above other activities that took place in the classroom.)

If they can feel the hardness of a rock, the taste of salt, the smell of the lilies, hear the roar of a lion, or see the brightness of the sun as opposed to simply talking about it- they will be able to recall it later.

Ex: Cotton Balls or Snow (weather permitting)

- The blood of Jesus washes away our sins to make us white as snow!  
-Ps. 51:7, Is. 1:18

The object you bring to your lesson fulfills the role of a visual. You don't always need to be very creative to have a visual aid. Any object, or it's representation, from the Bible story you are teaching about can be used. (Toys, stuffed animals, blocks, legos, etc. will work.) Maybe several objects can be used to grab and keep the attention of students.

**Visual**

Ex: Sheep, Coin, Son

- Parables of Jesus of the Lost -Luke 15

Ex: Fresh Fruits

- Fruit of the Spirit -Gal. 5

Ex: Crown, handcuffs, books, vegetables & water, calendar

- King Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and took young men as captives to train in all the knowledge of Babylon. Daniel and his friends remained true to God by refusing to eat off the King's table and being tested for 10 days.