

Practical pointers for urban ministry

How Do I **Teach Them?**

Part 2
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A typical inner city Bible club began one sunny afternoon with a gathering of kids on a blue tarp placed between several apartment buildings. Children were carrying babies. Boys were flipping onto old mattresses. The air was thick with humidity. An oversized ball used during game time was now stuck in a tree. Some kids hung from the same tree and threw things at others sitting on the tarp. Yet the teachers pushed through the club time with a group of hot, agitated, and distracted kids.

Suddenly, screaming erupted from residents when a teenage boy ran through the neighborhood and was quickly knocked to the ground and handcuffed by police. The quick chain of events gripped everyone's attention. The drama unfolded before the eyes of everyone as a drug deal went bad.

How does one teach them in the midst of such difficulties? What would you do?

Never Give Up

These teachers, who were serving as summer missionary interns, never quit teaching. They emphasized the consequences of sin as it pertained to the Bible verse for that day, Romans 3:23, as the timely object lesson unfolded behind them. The persistence of the interns allowed these city kids to fully realize the lesson that day.

Be Right or Be Happy

Even though they handled the situation well and did not quit they were acutely aware that they needed some help. Even without a drug bust it can be difficult to maintain the attention of city kids. Someone has said, you can be right or you can be happy. One can be right and stick to teaching methods you have always used or you can make adjustments and be happy. After sharing their memorable experience, a few street-

wise staff members offered several suggestions. After implementing the changes the interns became very happy because the kids were having fun and actually understanding.

OK, what did the teachers learn? -- Probably the same things that everyone needs to use in working with city kids. Ask yourself the following questions about your teaching.

Who are you teaching? If your answer is children, then who are they? City kids like many others have little or no biblical foundation or an understanding of how a Bible club is to operate. So do not force it on them. Always consider what, how, and the length of time you will teach them. Keep it short in the beginning. A little bit goes a long ways.

Do you empower kids? Equip them to practice discipline. Repeat 3-4 simple rules in every class and expect them to be followed. Use positive reinforcement with a specialized “quiet seat prize” procedure as an incentives for good behavior. Allow them to participate in the teaching with drama, puppets, mime, music, or other creative ministries. Invest into city kid’s lives outside of the class session.

How do you present the Gospel? Present the message of salvation throughout the entire class time emphasizing certain parts within selected teaching activities. Use the “6 Most Important Things in the World” (6MIT) to indoctrinate. Kids recite the 6MIT and are quizzed of its contents. Teachers give progressive instruction and drill their students in the 6MIT every class session. Every child is expected to master these.

Do the kids remember and apply what you teach? Repeat a “Word Up” action statement appropriate for every class (explained in the July/August 2004 issue of ETC). Offer city kids straight talk about current neighborhood news and life issues. Highlight city kids and teens that have demonstrated consistent godly lives.

Once again the ball is in your hands. If you do as these interns you can really score big for the sake of many city kids. There’s more stuff to come—on the inside!