

Memory Verse Games

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Bounce the Ball - Have one student bounce a ball while saying the memory verse. If the ball rolls away, have the student pick up where he or she left off. Students can also compete against each other to see who can say the verse the fastest, without letting the ball roll away or messing up. If a student cannot remember the next part of the verse, the ball is passed to the next person. Instead of bouncing the ball on the floor, it can also be bounced between one's hands, tossed between two students, or within a group. If you choose to toss the ball between the group, you can either have the whole group say the verse while passing the ball to the next person or throwing it to a random person, or each time the ball comes to a person, he or she says the next word in the verse. If the ball is thrown or rolls outside the group, you could have the students restart the verse to avoid them wildly throwing the ball around.

Word Scramble - Write the different parts of the verse on slips of paper or print it off the computer and cut into pieces. Then have the students arrange the verse in the correct order as one large group, in teams, or individually. If you have multiple teams doing this at once, see who can do it the fastest. Or you can have different verses available so that when one group gets done, they can move on to a new verse. Once completed and taped together, these verse scrambles could also serve as decorations in the classroom to remind the students of the verse.

Picture This! - Have the students write out the verse on the top of a piece of paper (or have it written out for them). Then have them draw a picture on the bottom of the paper to illustrate the meaning of the verse. Or have the students write the verse on their paper with enough space to add a small illustration above the words that helps them to remember key words that you are teaching in the verse. For example, in John 3:16 a student might draw a heart above the word "LOVED" and a lot of stick people to remind him of the word "WORLD", since God loved the people of the world. The purpose of this project is not necessarily to be artistic. It is to create personal pictures that will help each child remember the verse.

Action! - Create actions with the kids for key words that help the children remember the meaning of the verse.

Alphabet Actions - Have a child choose a word from the verse and identify the first letter of that word. Whenever that first letter appears at the beginning of any of the words in the verse, the children are to do a specific movement. This movement could be clapping, stomping, jumping, hopping, spinning, etc. Then as the verse is repeated each time and new first letters are chosen, different actions will be added to the verse. By the end of the verse review you may be spinning on F, jumping on G, and clapping on T. You could make it unique by letting a child whose first or last name begins with the special letter, pick the movement for that letter.

Promptorizing - Promptorizing describes the memory technique of taking the first letter from each word to learn the verse. For example, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world..." would look like this: F G S L T W. You can write this out for the children and then have them say the verse together while you point to each letter. It might be easier to memorize the verse if you write out all the words to begin with and then each time you say the verse erase one of the words and replace it with its beginning letter until it is all promptorized. This is a link to promptorize a long verse or passage on the computer. <http://www.productivity501.com/how-to-memorize-verbatim-text/294/>

Erase a Word - Write out the verse and then each time have a child come up and erase a word, or words, until the whole verse is gone and can be said from memory. Or you can cover up the word(s) with a sticky-note and the children can move it around to different places each time. To make it more challenging you can cut out a large circle out of black paper that would cover up quite a few words or lines of the verse. Then let the children put it on the verse with sticky-tack to see how many words they can cover up.

Thus Saith the Lord - Each time the children say the verse have them shout, "Thus Saith the Lord!" to teach them that the Bible is God's Word.

Quizzing - Once the memory verse has been learned, ask question based on the memory verse. When a child gets the answer right they can get points for their team or a piece of candy. Here are some sample questions that you can pattern any memory verse question after.

According to John 3:16,

- *WHO so loved the world? God*
- *WHAT did God so love? The world.*
- *WHAT did God give so that we would not perish? His only son.*
- *HOW do we have eternal life? If you believe in his only son.*

- *WHO can have eternal life? Whoever believes in his only son.*
- *If you believe in God's only son, you will not? Perish*

All of the answers for these questions are straight out of the verse so if the children have memorized the verse they will be able to answer the questions.

Musical Verse (This game is like “Four Corners”) - Write (or print) out different sections of the verse on different pieces of paper and hang them around the room. Then have the children march around the room while music plays in the background. If you have a musical version of the verse, that's even better as the children can learn to sing the verse with actions that you/they create. When the music is paused, the children stop at the paper closest to them. Then the children go around the room repeating their section of the verse that is at their station. To make it a challenge you can close your eyes when the music is playing and then when the music is stopped and the children are in their section, you can point to one of the sections and those children after saying their section of the verse will have to sit out for the rest of the game. The last child left or last few are the winners. Or you could have the children sit out for one round before jumping back into the game.

Volume Control - Have someone come and choose whether to start saying the verse in a loud, medium, or soft voice. The volunteer will hold his or her hand high for loud, in the middle for medium, and low for soft. The other children will say the verse at different volumes as the volunteer slowly moves his or her hands to the different positions while the group is saying the verse.

Guess the Word - Have one child stand with his back to the group so that he cannot see the verse. Have another volunteer come and point to a word. Tell the other children that the word that was chosen will not be said when the children repeat the verse together but will be clapped on. After the recitation, the child who is standing with his back to the group is shown the verse and will have to guess what word was clapped on. To increase the challenge, you can tell the person guessing that he cannot look at the verse to guess the word or you could have the children clap a few words. It is also fun to have the teacher participate at the very end. Pick a teacher that knows the whole verse to stand with his back to the group. Then instruct the children to clap the whole verse. The teacher then has to say the verse without looking.

Voices - Teacher says: “Let’s repeat the verse in the _____ voice.”

- *Animal voices:* After the animal is picked, have the students pretend to put on different features of the animal. Like if you picked a dog, say “Everyone put on your puppy dog tail, ears, fur, spots, etc.” Then say, “At the end of the verse you will bark three times.” You could bring stuffed animals and let the children pick which animal they want to pretend. They can also choose what sort of pretend features their animal is going to have. The end activity (after saying the verse) can be anything that has to do with the animal. For the dog example it could have been “panting until I hold my hand up”, “running in place like a dog until I say stop,” or “eating three dog treats.”
- *Occupation voice:* You can ask the children what job they want to do when they grow up. You could do the ‘doctor voice’ and pretend to put on a doctors coat and then after the verse pretend to bandage up an arm. Or you could put on your western outfit on and at the end of the verse say, “Yeeeh-haw!” or any other sort of western action---ride a horse, rope a steer, etc.
- *The freezing voice:* For this voice you say, “Everyone turn the thermometer WAY DOWN. Now it is really cold in here and we have to talk like we are REALLY COLD! When we get done with the verse, I am going to say FREEZE and you can’t move until I tell you.” This works great at the end of club or any other time you need them to sit still for a moment , such as in between teachers, going to small group time, waiting to line up, etc.
- *The Robot voice:* This is also a good voice when you need the children to sit still. Say, “Everyone is going to be a robot. But first you are unplugged so everyone put your head down. When I plug you in you can sit up and we will do the verse. But when I unplug you at the end you have to put your head back down. You cannot look up until I tell you.”
Plug in *They can say, ‘beep, beep’ and wave their arms like a robot for a few seconds if they want at the beginning and end of the verse.

Odds and Ends –

- You could have the children say the verse while giving a partner high-fives or any other rhythm pattern.
- When you point to a word on the verse you could have the children shout, whisper, make a certain face (happy, sad, etc), or do a certain action (stomp, clap, jump, etc).
- Each time you say the verse have the child shout a word. Start with the first word and move through the verse in order. This will help the children think about each meaning of the word of the verse. For example:

- JOHN 3:16-*For God so loved the world.*
- *John 3:16- FOR God so loved the world.*
- *John 3:16-For GOD so loved the world.*

Musical Chairs - If you have a musical version of the verse you could play musical chairs by setting up the chairs in a circle. The amount of chairs that you set up is the amount of students minus one. When the music stops all the children try and find a seat but the one that is left out has to tell you what part of the verse comes next from the place where the verse song stopped. If the child can remember the next few words, he can stay in the game but if not then he is out. You may want a teacher dedicated to following along with the song to know where the music stopped to help the child determine what part of the verse needs to be said next. This could also work for learning the words to a new song.