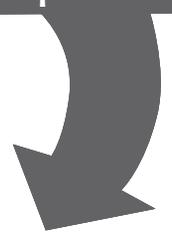




The Recipe for Success



“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2).

- What does “careful instruction” look like in your classroom?
- How prepared were you last week?



▼ Training Session

Remember the last time you bit into your dinner and thought, *That could have had a few more minutes in the oven?* Or maybe you’ve chipped a tooth on an overcooked charcoal burger?

Preparing a lesson is a lot like cooking. Underpreparing is dangerous: We end up reading the lesson from a script. It’s unfocused and confusing. But overprepare and we lose nutritional value and taste: We’ve looked at the material so much that even *we’re* bored with it.

Here’s how to be sure to pop the lesson out of the oven right on time, every time:

- **Review your next lesson right after you teach the previous one.** You’re already in your classroom, so check to see that the supplies you need are there. You’re in teaching mode. Why not spend 30 minutes getting ready for next week?
- **Make Scripture covered in the next lesson part of your personal devotion time.** This is a good way to prepare your heart *and* your lesson.
- **If necessary, prepare in chunks.** Work on one activity a night. Gather your supplies during the week, and set them by your front door or in the trunk of your car.

It’s never too early to start preparing, but it can *always* be too late.

As you prepare, though, remember it’s possible to be *overprepared*. As silly as that sounds, it’s true. You know you’re overprepared when you’ve gone over the material so many times it’s no longer fun and engaging.

You’re overprepared if you can’t imagine making tweaks or changes because the lesson is already memorized.

Prepare so you can be faithful to the content. But be sure you’re having fun, too—that’s what draws children into the learning experience.

The desire to overprepare is often a desire for control. Control is good, but so is spontaneity. Relinquish that control to co-teachers or student leaders. Let them prepare the sections of the class time they lead.

Enjoy the surprises.

And pray. Ask God to calm your nerves and guide you as you prepare.

Gourmet chefs spend years practicing and fine-tuning their greatest recipes. Find what works for you, and bam! you’ll be cooking up effective lessons every time.



Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- Would you say your pace of preparation is a 1 (I wing it) or a 10 (I memorize it) or somewhere in between?
- What would you wish you could be most of the time, a little less scripted or a little more flexible?

▼ Journal

God, I tend to (circle one) a. overprepare b. underprepare because...

Help me to relinquish control to you in the area of...

**You're dedicated.
You're passionate
about serving
God and loving
children. Add
preparation to the
mix and you have a
recipe for success
as a teacher!**

▼ Application

Present one section of a lesson in front of a mirror. You'll get two things: an appreciative audience—yourself—and immediate feedback on how you look and act in front of children.

If you're prone to read your lesson like a script, you won't see anything because you're staring at your script. Practice looking at yourself in the mirror and only glance at the lesson when necessary. What do you notice?

If you're prone to overprepare, you may talk too rapidly or not pause for questions *and* answers.

How did this exercise help you?