



Show and Tell



▼ Training Session

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:14–15).

• Jesus didn’t just tell his disciples to be servants, he showed them how—he used an experience. How do you think the disciples felt after having their feet washed?

• How long do you think the disciples remembered the experience of having their feet washed?

• How do you think that experience affected their lives?

Think about the most important life lesson you learned.

Now think about how you learned it. Did you read it? Probably not. Maybe you picked it up from a sermon. Doubtful. No, you’re probably remembering an *experience* that led you to this important life lesson.

That’s because most of us learn through experience! In fact, on average people only retain 5 to 10 percent of what they hear or read, 25 percent of what they learn through media, 40 to 60 percent of what they learn during a role-playing exercise, and 80 to 90 percent of what they experience personally and directly. Those are pretty significant percentages! And they’re percentages that directly relate to our classrooms.

If our children are only retaining a small fraction (one-tenth at best!) of what they read or hear, we have to think of ways to help kids creatively *experience* learning—so they have positive and meaningful memories associated with that lesson.

Experiences are the glue of our memory because they evoke emotions. We remember more when our emotions are engaged. Emotions make learning stick in a way that everyday logic never can. As teachers, we must not ignore that fact.

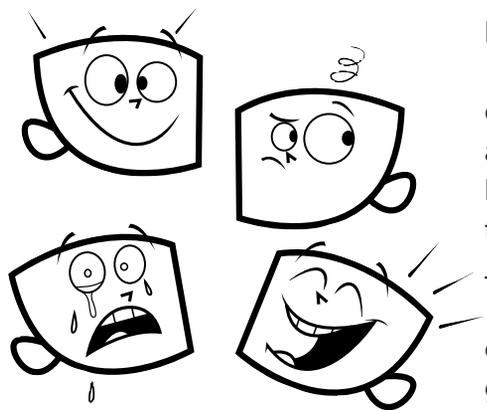
So how do you create these emotion-evoking experiences in your classroom? It’s simple!

Read through the next Bible story you’ll be teaching and make a list of the emotions that story involves. For example, if your story is about Jesus washing his disciples’ feet, the emotions involved in that story might be love, humility, vulnerability, embarrassment, and joy.

Once you have a list of emotions, think of some activities that are designed to evoke those emotions. For example, you might have kids wash a partner’s feet so they can experience the vulnerability the disciples might have felt. Or you might have kids do something really gross and dirty, like taking out all the trash for the church, so they can experience the humility Jesus expressed when he served his disciples.

You’re not done yet! An experience is simply an experience until you debrief it. Design two or three questions that you can ask kids after they’ve gone through each experience. These questions are most effective when they relate directly to kids’ lives and move the experience out of the hypothetical and into the applicable. For example, you might ask kids how they felt being served and how they can serve others as Jesus served his disciples.

So now you’re ready! Go out there and *experience* the difference!





Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- What's an experience you remember?
- What are some emotions connected with that experience?
- What Bible story evokes those same emotions?
- How could you pull those emotions into a classroom while teaching that Bible story?

▼ Journal

The most powerful experience I've ever had was when . . .

God, I want to follow Jesus' example as a teacher. I want to effectively use experiences and emotions to help children grow in their friendships with you. Please inspire me, encourage me, and aid me as I work to incorporate creative experiences into my classroom. In Jesus name, amen.

▼ Application

Think of a Bible story.

Now think of two or three emotions that story evokes, such as joy, frustration, fear, or hope. Imagine you're going to teach that story in your class this week.

Think of an activity for each of the emotions you listed. For example, you might come up with a game that is specifically designed to evoke the emotion of fear. Or you might design a craft that leads kids to feel joy. Come up with a full lesson plan that effectively uses each emotion in your list.

And don't forget to include debriefing questions for each activity!