

# Handle Your Sword

## 1. What is Handle Your Sword?

This is a new part of the Creation Celebration, to take the place of Show What You Know this year. It will focus on learning how the Bible is put together and how to look up verses in it.

## 2. Why would we do this?

If the Bible is to be of any use to us we need to know how to handle it. These days congregations are less likely to read scripture together, fewer people carry actual Bibles to church, or read from them at home. Sunday Schools, if they exist at all, often do not make use of actual Bibles. Even children who attend church are often unable to look up a scripture reference, or know how the books of the Bible are arranged. So this initiative is meant to highlight the fact that families carry the responsibility for biblical literacy in every sense.

## 3. How will Handle Your Sword work?

**Part 1** is families learning (or reviewing) the order of the books of the Bible at home before the Celebration. Songs, memory aids and ideas to help are available online, or from others who have taught them. Each entrant will recite the list to one of the designated persons during the lunch hour. Those who have learned part, but not all, of the list will still be able to recite what they do know.

**Part 2** is preparation at home for a Handle Your Sword Quiz (in place of Show What You Know) this year. To do this, teach children how to look up a scripture reference, also to understand how the Bible books are arranged, and what sort of groups there are. (Law, History, Prophets, Gospels, Epistles, etc.) Look at charts together. Who wrote some of these books? Choose information suitable for your child's age, of course.

**Part 3** is practicing Sword Drill at home, so that participants can look up scriptures in a real Bible when given the reference. (See below for instructions about Sword Drill). Choose references that will lead the child to look up verses that will be meaningful. This is your chance to expose your family to special verses that you have come to love and lean on. Discussion will surely arise from reading these verses. You might pick verses from passages that your children have memorized, or have quizzed on. You might practice using references from famous scripture passages. Always choose references that the child has a hope of reading, and from books that the child is learning to locate. Keep practice sessions short and pleasant, and give all the help needed so that this is a happy experience. (Note that children can be taught that Psalms and Proverbs are around the middle of the Bible, the Gospels are at the start of the New Testament, Acts follows the Gospels, Revelation is the last book, Genesis is the first book, while Exodus is the second, Job is just before the Psalms, etc.)

**Part 4** is participating in the Handle Your Sword Quiz at the Celebration. It will be made up of Sword drill, answering questions about the arrangement of the Books, and also the "where would you find..." kind of questions, but all in that one quiz. The young people will be put in groups according to age, and

the content of quizzes will reflect their age. We will try to do them all at the same time, so that this can go quickly. Obviously, the value of this will be in the teaching that happens at home to prepare for this quiz. Please call for help or if you have questions!

## **What is Sword Drill?**

Sword Drill is so old that it is new to many! It is simply a learning activity with friendly competition for practicing how to quickly look up and read aloud a scripture reference: LEADER says:

1. PRESENT ARMS - students hold closed Bible in both hands
2. SHOULDER ARMS - students hold Bible up to one shoulder
3. JOHN 14:1 – Whole group, leader and students repeat the reference together
4. "FIRE!"- students search for verse, first one to find it will stand and read it aloud.

(If anyone has a less military version of this to share, let us know!)

## **Suggestions for Preparing for Handle Your Sword:**

1. Make or buy an enlarged chart of the Books of the Bible in order and display it on the wall where children can see it easily. Show both Testaments at once so they can see the whole picture. You might color code groupings to make them easier to remember. Even preschoolers used to learn these in song form. Short repetitions, scattered throughout the day, in little groupings is key, as well displaying them visually! It should not be made a burden.
2. DO use Bibles that that have large enough, easy to see print. The tiny print in many children's Bibles is way too hard for young children to read...They can understand your explanations of the words, if needed, but they need to be able to properly SEE them! A Bible should be chosen for its usefulness, rather than its looks. Expense does not guarantee exposure or use! Handling our sword is how we become familiar with it.
3. Beware of paraphrases, as opposed to actual translations.
4. Explain to children what a concordance is, how and why it is used, and give a little practical demonstration of how it can be useful.
5. During church, or family Bible reading, use that opportunity to have the child look up the reference so there is a practical use for what you are learning.
6. Show children how the Table of Contents lists all the Books of the Bible and that it is possible to find a reference by page number if you do not know the books in order, although it takes longer.

## **Sample references that might be used for practice if you are looking for ideas:**

**Level 1-** Psalm 23:1, Matthew 4:4, John 1:1, Psalm 100:3, Matthew 6:11, Luke 2:7, Proverbs 3:7, Exodus 20:13, Psalm 150:6, Revelation 3:20, Genesis 11:1, Psalm 122:1

**Level 2-** (Anything above as well), Romans 12:18, Psalm 119:105, 1 Thessalonians 5: 17 and 18, Matthew 5:44, 1 John 1:9, John 1:14, 1 Timothy 4:12, Proverbs 3:5 & 6, Psalm 139:14, 1 Timothy 3:16, Job 40:15, Acts 17: 24, Psalm 91:2, Romans 1:21 & 22, Exodus 20:12

**Level 3-** (Anything above), 2 Peter 3:9, Joshua 1:8, Hebrews 11:1, Lamentations 3:40 & 41, James 4:7, Malachi 3:10, Micah 6:8, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 4:12, Ecclesiastes 12:1, Genesis 7:18, 1 Peter 4:9, Acts 8:4, James 5:16, Colossians 1:16, Daniel 1:8

**Ideas for teaching:** (Not graded for level...do what is reasonable for age of children, and your own ideas.)

Where would you find... the giving of the Ten Commandments, the story of Babel, The Flood, stories Jesus told, the beginnings of the New Testament church, Jesus' ascension, the Love chapter, the Faith chapter, wise sayings, descriptions of dinosaurs...

Who wrote... the books of the Law, the book of Revelation, most of the epistles, etc.

Name... 5 books of the Law, 3 Poetry books, 3 major prophets, the Gospels, 3 epistles of Paul, writings of King David, 2 historical books of the Old Testament, last book of the New Testament, 3 minor prophets, 3 books of prophecy, a book named for a queen, the book recording the beginnings of the New Testament church, the books of the Pentateuch