EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

For High Impact Discipleship

1. **Repeat one main point.**

It is better to emphasize one point that sticks with kids than to teach so many concepts they cannot grasp the main idea. John 16:12 says, *“I have many more things to say to you, but they are too much.”* Repeat the take home point several times throughout the lesson.

1. **Know where you are going.**

Begin with the end in mind. If you don’t know where you want to end up at the end of the lesson, you will end up lost in the journey. Also know what you want to accomplish over the entire year and ten-year experience. (See the quick glance 10-year scope and sequence in *Vision and Values*.)

1. **Use multiple senses.**

The more senses used in teaching (hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, smelling), the more effective the learning:

* We remember 5-10% of what we hear.
* 25% of what we see and hear.
* 40-60% of what we act out.
* 80-90% of what we directly experience.

1. **Capture the kids’ attention.**

Before anyone learns they need to pay attention to the topic.

1. **Use the “surprise principle.”**

When surprised with a new experience, people learn quicker and remember longer.

1. **Speak the language of kids: fun!**

When kids, and adults for that matter, enjoy learning, they learn more. Use humor!

1. **Connect with feelings.**

Encounter the lesson at a deeper level by encountering it emotionally. How do certain situations make you feel?

1. **Start with the learner’s context.**

Learn how to listen. This is where Jesus began. He spoke of fishing and farming. He used water and wine. He pointed to fig trees and flowers. He spoke to people in their language about their problems. He understood them and their world. What is going on in these kids’ lives?

1. **Know the best large group techniques.**

Jesus was one of the best storytellers of all times. How will we present? Consider: costumed characters, audience participation drama, audience refrain storytelling, object lesson storytelling, etc.

1. **Ask open questions, not just closed questions.**

Closed questions are those that have only one answer. Though they are necessary in the observation portion of discovery, use open questions to dig deeper. These are the questions that challenge kids to think about what the text really means and finally “what it means to me.” Affirm the answers to those questions as though they were a treasured gift.

1. **Choose a teaching style to fit small group dynamics.**

Small group time is more of a discussion and team project than it is a lecture. Consider the techniques that work well here: crafts, group experience games, art, role-playing, etc. Note that effective small groups range from 4-8 in size.