



Technology in the Ministry

by Suki Kangas

Introduction

Teachers, grab your cellphones and start your imaginations, because we are going to take advantage of technology in our ministries! Use these ideas for your classroom, youth group, or even with large groups in an auditorium. This book is not a comprehensive list, nor will it teach you to do everything step-by-step. However, you can use this book to help you think of ideas, and then find other tools online to learn how to make all your ideas happen.

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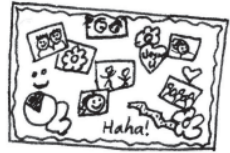
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Photos

Picture board

Take pictures of all the children and fun moments in your classroom. Include all your students in the pictures. Decorate a bulletin board with photos and other memorabilia.

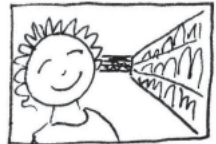


Bible scene

Have the students act out a scene you want them to remember from the Bible story. Hang a photo of it on the wall with the Bible verse so they remember it every day when they walk into the room.

Real-life photos

Before class, go to a location that is the modern version of a location in the Bible story - a farm, a hill, or a grocery store. Take a photo of yourself there and bring it to class for part of the story. Connect modern times and the Bible story to help them apply it to their everyday lives.



Photos with names

Take a picture of each child in your class holding a paper with their name. Keep the pictures on your computer and use them to help you memorize their names. Print and cut out the photos for craft projects, like the CSI badge craft or the Destination picture frame.

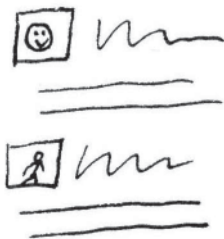
Social Media

• Announcements and reminders

Use the internet to remind your students of upcoming events or remind them of the lesson mid-week. You could use social media, a website or blog, or group texts on your phone.



• Online club



Make an online club for your Sunday school class - a group on Facebook, a blog, an account to follow on Twitter, etc. Connect with your students, start discussions, and pray for each other during the week. Use privacy settings to limit who can see the posts to only the teacher, the students, and their parents.

• Posts as rewards

Use social media as a reward. It is easy to post about artwork, performances, etc., but if we only write about these things, the children will think this is what God cares about most. Instead, watch for a child's improvement in godly character - success midweek in practicing self-control or giving something away, and post about it as an accomplishment. Whatever you reward is what you will receive from the children.



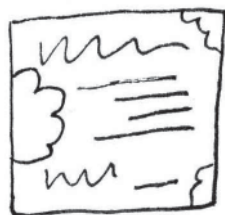
Also be careful not to post everything online, or you will be teaching them to live for others to see. Save some of the special things that God does as private between you, the child, their parents, and God. Using social media to reward your children for living a godly life, but using it sparingly, can teach them what to value.



○ Meme / picture with a message

Make "memes" or pictures with text, with the main point of the lesson this week and post it online to help the kids remember it. Look for programs online to help you make a "meme". Decide what you want to say and use a background image that matches the message. Keep the message as brief as possible.

If your class is not online, make a paper "meme" as a take-home reminder for the kids.



○ Safety online

Be very careful regarding the safety and the privacy of the children while online. If you decide to interact with your students online, you must become their protector in that area. Practice some guidelines to protect them:

- Ask their parents before posting anything about them online. Involve the parents in the posts, and continually make sure you are operating within the parents' wishes.
- Never use full names.
- Examine every photo before putting it online. A license plate, a storefront, a statue or mountain could announce the location of the child to predators. All backgrounds tell a bigger story than we realize.
- Carefully re-read your post with the child's safety in mind before publishing. Make sure there is no information that could reveal a child's location. Keep in mind that the post may affect more people than just the child himself.
- Carefully check your posts for something that might embarrass a child online or give others an opportunity to say something malicious.
- Watch comments by others. Even if we are careful with what we say, we cannot trust that others are careful. If necessary, delete your whole post. Speak up for the child and ask people to be kind. Be the child's protector online.





Teach the children about social media

If we do not actively teach our students what to do on social media, the world will teach them instead. With both words and your personal example, teach them how to use social media in a way that honors God.

- Online is public at a global level, regardless of privacy settings. Teach the children not to put everything online, not to slander anyone, not to publish every opinion, to practice self-control, and to treat God and His things in their lives with reverence in the sight of others.
- Social media will never bring us the fulfillment God designed for us. Only God can bring that fulfillment, and there will never be enough "likes". Teach the children to use social media with restraint and to prioritize real relationships with people and with God.
- Teach children not to accept everything as OK or right. Teach them to value God's Word over people's opinions while respectfully loving others. Teach them always to read the Bible so they can know the Truth and to use God's Word to evaluate everything they hear. Do not believe slander until you have proof and have given the accused person a chance to respond.

Your words will carry no weight with the children if you are not also practicing what you teach. The small children may not be online yet, but when they are, make sure they see that you have always practiced what you taught them.



Videos

Video as a teaching element

Use a video as a fun element in your class.

- Scene from a biblical movie - Play just the scene that applies to the lesson, then ask the children questions that lead toward the main point of the lesson.
- Search online for videos by other children's ministries. Take note of the lessons or ideas in those videos and have them ready to use in your classes.
- Funny video of a kitten trying to jump - Application: we should always try our best to do what God wants. Even if we did not do very well last time, like this kitten, we keep trying and getting better at it.



Download videos off YouTube

If you do not have internet at the church building, download a video from YouTube onto your laptop and bring it to church. Search online for programs or methods to download videos off YouTube. Be careful when you download a program to keep from downloading a computer virus with it. You can also go to your local cyber cafe and ask them to download a YouTube video for you.



Make your own videos

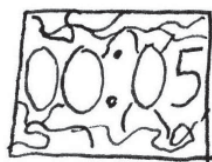
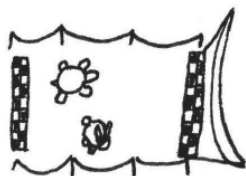
Make your own video to help illustrate the lesson. Do not worry about making a high-quality video when something simple will work. Make a 30-second video with your smart phone. Even a 5-second video may be useful to your class.

- Start small, then continue to improve
- Stay less than 2 minutes
- Write a script ahead of time
- Record more than once, so you have extra footage
- Watch your video to check for errors
- Do not move the camera while recording
- When editing, change to another view if you have it.
- Use transitional clips when editing
- Add background music and voice to your video



○ Games

Have competitions, either real or fake, and let the children participate in what they see. For example, pretend to have a race between a rabbit and a turtle and display the race on the screen. Have the children pick one and cheer for it during the race. These styles of PowerPoint games are available online.



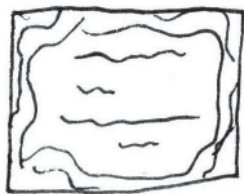
○ Countdown

Find a countdown video online. Use it at the start of class or after a break for games or snack. Tell the kids that when the countdown reaches 0, they need to be in their seats facing forward and paying attention.

○ Sections of class

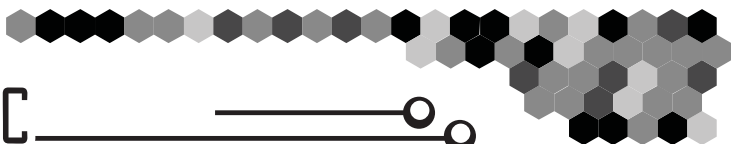
Use PowerPoint to show the different times of class, like game time, Bible story or prayer time. Insert videos, photos, or music into the slide show so it is ready when you get to that part of the lesson. If multiple people teach during class, let them use these tools in PowerPoint to prepare their section of class.





○ Song lyrics —

Make slides with the lyrics of the songs to help the kids learn the songs. Put only one or two lines of the lyrics on each slide and use fun transitions between the slides. Look online for moving backgrounds. Make a set of slides for each song ahead of time, then copy the slides into the day's slideshow or have the slideshows ready for each song for the day.



○ Songs in the classroom

Use songs about Jesus in your class. Try to find a song that matches or reinforces the lesson for that day.



○ Background music —

Play some wordless music in the background during parts of the class. Music will keep part of the children's active minds busy and make them less likely to find other distractions. Change the background music for every activity. Use the music to set the tone or atmosphere of the room - slow music during prayer and exciting music during game time.

○ Schedule sounds —

Use music or little sounds to indicate a change in activity. When you say a main point of the lesson or something they should pay attention to, play a little "ding!" right before you say it. If you pick the same sound for the same thing every time, the children will know what each sound means.



Story backgrounds

Find background sounds online and use them while telling the story. For example, when telling an application story, have some city noises playing in the background, or while talking about Jesus being born in a stable, play some barn sounds in the background.



Tools and Resources

Here is a list of different programs or equipment you might want to use in your ministry. These are only a few of the available tools. Use these as ideas to help you search for more tools and equipment to help you use technology in your ministry.

Photo editing programs

- Google Picasa - free
- Microsoft Paint - free
- Pixlr - free
- Gimp - free
- Corel Paintshop Pro - advanced
- Adobe Photoshop Elements - advanced

Projector / presentations

- PowerPoint - already installed on most Windows computers
- SlideDog - free
- OpenLP - free
- VideoPsalm - free
- Slide projector

Layout/Design programs

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Publisher
- Corel Draw - advanced
- Adobe InDesign - advanced
- Adobe Illustrator - advanced

Make your own website

- Blogs - FREE- like blogger.com, start with a template then customize it.
- "Domain names"
- Web Host / Domain Host - company that provides domain names or a web server that hosts your website (if you decide not to start from a blog). GoDaddy, IPower, even Google can provide a domain name.
- Microsoft Web Expressions - advanced website builder
- Adobe Dreamweaver - advanced website builder
- WordPress - semi-advanced website builder, start from templates

Cameras & filming equipment

- Smart phone - don't forget to turn the camera sideways before recording to have a wide view.
- Selfie stick
- Camera
- Webcam
- Camera stand/tripod
- Drone / hele-cam to record from a sky view
- Sound jack on camera to capture better sound. Plug in a microphone or plug directly into the soundboard.
- Light reflector - put a soft continuous light across someone's face, prevents shadows
- 2nd camera - have 2 cameras recording at once for different view points, or record the same thing twice from different view points.

Video editing software

- Windows live movie maker - free
- VirtualDub - free
- Wax - free
- Wondershare Filmora - free
- iMovie - advanced
- Corel VideoStudio - advanced
- Adobe Premiere Elements - advanced



Audio recording/editing software and equipment

- Voice Memos app on a mobile or iPod
- Apps on mobile devices for audio editing
- Audacity - free editing program
- Wavosaur - free editing program
- Standard microphone
- Pop filter - a foam shield in front of the microphone to eliminate popping sounds
- Headset / lapel - lets the user move freely.
- Acoustic panels - removes the echo from a room, panels of soft cushion material scattered around the room, preferably at different angles or including different angles in the material.

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