

Help Your Students Make Connections Between What They Study and What the Bible Teaches

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You're excited about teaching in a Christian school. You're especially excited about helping your students develop a Christ-centered worldview.

Question: In the following four scenarios, what exciting things are happening—and what's *not* happening?

1. Tanya, one of my students, shared the gospel with a friend. Tanya took the truth that Jesus is the light of the world and ran with it. She understood a biblical perspective of photons, and she used it in real life.
2. It's great teaching in a Christian school. Here, I can start my first-period math class with devotions. Just today, Taro led devotions. He read Psalm 1. Then we sang "I Love to Tell the Story" and prayed. Daily devotions help my students focus on living for God, which results in their applying a biblical perspective in the math project they're working on—making a recommendation for the best way to pay for a computer.
3. My language arts students are demonstrating Christian character in terms of collaborating effectively—they're functioning like the Body of Christ. That's exciting, because it means they understand a biblical perspective of the stories we're studying, like *Miss Nelson is Missing*.
4. My social studies students are raising money to stop human trafficking and to feed the hungry. That's exciting. My students are really getting a biblical perspective of what we're studying in class—the American Revolutionary War.

Answer: In the above four scenarios, exciting things are happening. Students are using object lessons to share their faith, participating in daily devotions, working effectively with each other, and doing service projects. Great! These are good things that we want students doing.

And while good things are happening, please note what's *not* happening. Students are not making authentic connections between what they study and relevant biblical teaching.

1. Tanya, instead of making connections between photons and God's creative power, shares an object lesson: Jesus is the light of the world.
2. Math students, instead of connecting payment plans with biblical stewardship, are participating in the reading of Psalm 1 and the singing of "I Love to Tell the Story."
3. Language arts students, instead of connecting themes from *Miss Nelson is Missing* with biblical teaching regarding authority and respect, are demonstrating Christian character by collaborating effectively.
4. Social studies students, instead of connecting the American Revolutionary War with biblical teaching regarding government and preserving life, are doing service projects.

Again, these students are doing good things. These teachers are having their students do good things—things that help their students develop a biblical worldview. Another way to help students develop a biblical worldview is to have students make connections between what they study and relevant biblical teaching. However, teachers might not do this. Why? Because they might assume that object lessons, devotions, collaboration, and service projects already involve students in authentically connecting what they study with biblical teaching.

Action Step #1: Continue involving your students in object lessons, devotions, character development, and service projects. But keep in mind that these good things don't necessarily involve students in connecting what they study with biblical teaching.

Action Step #2: Prepare to help your students make connections between what they study and biblical teaching by considering the following four questions:

1. What relevant biblical teaching can you teach? That depends on what your students are studying. For example, if your science students are studying photons, use biblical teaching on God's creative power. If your social studies students are studying a war, use biblical teaching regarding governmental authority.

2. How can you determine what biblical teaching your students should connect with what they study? You want relevant biblical teaching that naturally connects with what your students are studying and that helps them answer the question "What is God's perspective on what we're studying?"

Here's what you can do: Think of what your students are studying. Then identify one or more items from the list below that naturally

connect with what your students are studying. For example, a study of photons fits with creation.

Here's the list:

- God, people, morality, death, history, creation
- Creation, fall, redemption, restoration
- Loving God, loving neighbor, caring for creation, making disciples, being part of the Church
- Respect and disrespect of authority, sanctity of life, murder, sexual purity, promiscuity, private property, theft, truth telling, bearing false witness, contentment, covetousness

Got one or more items? Good. Now ask yourself, "What does the Bible say about this item that naturally connects with what my students are studying?"

3. What form should the biblical teaching take? Bible verses—your students should definitely connect what they are studying with Bible verses. For example, when your

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Exciting Things Happen When Students Make Connections Between What They Study and What the Bible Teaches

I'm excited that my fifth-grade science students can connect course content with biblical teaching, resulting in their making healthy choices. In an essay at the end of a recent health unit, a student wrote this: "The first step in being healthy is to have a good relationship with God. I will put God first and trust Him that He can help me with my health." —*Heidi Schaeffer*

My sixth-grade social studies students are beginning to see that God is at work through history and that history connects to them. In a presentation at the end of the unit on ancient Egypt, one student said, "The Egyptians believed there were lots of things you had to do to get eternal life. That's why they made mummies. That's not what Christians believe; we know that it's only through Jesus!" —*Anda Foxwell*

My kids were able to see how something as simple as PlayStation affects their lives and hearts, that technology has positive and negative impacts. During the presentations, one student said, "It's important to be content, rather than wanting the latest technology." Another student said as she demonstrated her blood sugar tester, "Without this device, I wouldn't be alive.... The Bible says we are not to murder, which means we are to protect life. This device protects lives." —*David Marshall*

I'm excited that one of my English 10 students wrote, "I have no right to choose whether I should help or not; the day I chose to follow my consistent and loving God, I threw away the option of apathy." —*Kim Essenburg*

science students are studying photons, they should consider Genesis 1:1. Having your students connect what they are studying with Bible verses reinforces the idea that God's Word is the foundation of a Christ-centered worldview.

In addition to Bible verses, your students should connect what they are studying with biblical principles—principles that are supported by three or more Bible verses. For example, when your social studies students are studying a war, have them consider the biblical principles of submitting to governmental authority (Romans 13:1–6, 1 Peter 2:13–14, Mark 12:17), preserving life (Genesis 9:6, Exodus 20:13, Romans 13:8–10), and using nonviolence (Matthew 5:39, 44; Romans 12:17–21).

Why use principles supported by three or more verses? Because it helps students to understand what the Bible teaches (not just what one verse teaches) and to better connect biblical teaching with what they study. Trust me: a biblical perspective is better communicated with principles—supported by verses—than just with verses. And having students use principles supported by verses decreases the likelihood

that they will misapply Bible verses.

4. *What biblical principles are other Christian school teachers teaching their students? Here are sample principles from Social Studies 6, Science 8, and English 10:*

Social Studies 6 unit on ancient Egypt, with a focus on major cultural achievements (mummies, pyramids, religion, hieroglyphics): God is one, above all other gods (Deuteronomy 6:4, 28:58; Joshua 1:8; 2 Chronicles 17:9; John 20:31). Eternal life is available through faith in Jesus (Revelation 14:13, John 11:26, Hebrews 9:27). People are creative because they are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 8:5–8, Hebrews 2:5–9). God values writing (Deuteronomy 6:4, Joshua 1:8, John 20:31). Building is not the way to reach God (Genesis 11:4, Psalm 127:1, Hebrews 11:6).

Science 8 unit on electricity and magnetism, with a focus on the impact of technology: Be content with what God provides (1 Timothy 6:6–10, Proverbs 30:7–9, Philippians 4:12–13). Be unselfish (James 2:1–7, 15–16; 4:1–3; 5:1–6; Titus 3:3–9). Possessions are temporary (Proverbs 23:4–5, Matthew 6:19–34, Ecclesiastes 4:6).

English 10 unit on a holocaust memoir, with a focus on discrimination and racism: Because the Bible tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves, we must seek the good of anyone it is within our power to help (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8, Matthew 5:43). Because people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), every human being is worthy of honor and respect; he or she should be neither murdered (Genesis 9:6) nor cursed (James 3:9).

Action Step #3: To help your students connect what they study with what the Bible teaches, identify relevant biblical principles. Then, teach your students the biblical principles and help your students make connections between the principles and what they are studying.



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