

A LEADER'S GUIDE TO JR. HIGH TABLE TALK

The overall objective of *Jr. High Table Talk* is to increase the student's concrete knowledge of biblical facts. Providing avenues for young students to dig into the Word of God for themselves is crucial to their spiritual development, and that is exactly what **Jr. High Table Talk** does -- offers topics and exercises that will have them reading, searching and exploring their Bible.

As the leader, focus primarily on the concrete facts, secondarily on the abstract principles. The principles, which will come later in their adolescent development, are important; but they must rest upon a solid foundation of biblical facts. **Jr. High Table Talk** is a tool you can use in helping your students build a good base of knowledge for the soon-to-come principles. Essentially, these lessons, designed for early junior high students (i.e., 6-7th graders), were created with just that focus in mind: helping them gain scriptural knowledge.

Here is a three-step method to use in teaching any lesson contained in the **Jr. High Table Talk** collection:

1. **Go in the front door.** This is the phase of **introduction** where you utilize the various exercises of introduction. Remember -- this is a simple introduction, so don't spend a lot of time here. It's just like going into someone's house -- you don't spend a lot of time at the front door; you simply meet and greet one another there. So it is with these lessons and Bible studies. Use the creative discussion starters as a way to get into the topic. It's a front door, that's all.

Primarily, each of the introductory exercises is designed to get the kids talking. Feel free to add in one of your own personal experiences or vary the way your exercise reads. In fact, you may find that one of the exercises simply spurs your mind on towards another idea that would better suit your group. If that's the case, perfect! The focus of this phase is the **student**, and your goal at the front door is to create an environment where the kids are talking and discussing the topic at hand.

2. **Have a seat in the house.** This is the phase of **investigation**, the place where your kids will spend most of the time during the lesson. It is during this phase that you and your students enter into scriptural study, bringing up passages and reading verses centered on the topic. Sometimes you will be asked to write it in your own words, other times to discuss what it means. Each lesson, however, has a common theme: active participation with the Bible, not just passive observation of the teacher.

The focal point of this phase is the **Bible**; so keep attention directed towards their involvement with Scripture. And since this is the highlight of the lesson, avoid adjusting the time frame in this phase. You may have to tweak your other segments, but try and leave this one with as much time as possible.

3. **Go out the back door.** This is the phase of **invitation**, the time in which you call upon your students to apply what they have learned. In this phase you will want to utilize the closing exercises which enable you to make the lesson specific to your students. In fact, you may wish to customize the application further, applying it to a greater degree so it identifies even more individually and specifically with your class or group.

Remember that application must deal with real life. So the focus here is on **action**: how will the investigation in phase two make a difference in their life? Once again, consider drawing on your own personal experiences, stories or current events to help you apply the concrete facts the kids have learned during their investigation.

PLACE	TIME	PHASE	FOCUS
Front door	5-7 minutes	Introduction	Student
Living room	15-17 minutes	Investigation	Bible
Back door	5-7 minutes	Invitation	Action