

# 19 Memory Verse Games

*Let's make Scripture stick!*

[From Ministry-To-Children](#)

It's not a chore! Learning scripture can be fun if you know the right games. Test these creative ideas and help kids make amazing progress!

Each idea below is easy to learn and gets kids "hands on" with the Bible verses. Taking apart and putting the verse back together is a great way to use repetition without creating boredom!

## 1) Post-it Cover Up

For this activity write the memory verse on the front board of the classroom. Practice reading it once together and then use post-it notes to cover up one of the words. Then, practice reading the verse again followed by covering up a second word with post-it notes. Continue this pattern until the entire verse is covered and the children are saying the verse from memory. This is an interesting spin on traditional drilling of a verse by repetition. You could also reverse the game beginning with some words covered and have children guess the missing words.

## 2) Secret Decoder

In this activity, the teacher will prepare a secret code on paper ahead of time and make enough copies for the class. At the top of the paper, make a code where a number or small icon represents each letter of the alphabet. On the bottom half of the paper write a series of dashes (enough to spell out each letter of the memory verse) and below each dash write the number or small icon which corresponds with the letter of the alphabet. Children enjoy trying to decode the "secret message" and they have fun guessing the verse before they have filled in all the letters!

## 3) Move it or Lose It

Many children learn best by moving. A creative way to break up long lengths of sitting still in Sunday School is to brainstorm motions with the students to match their memory verse. When children learn movements they are less likely to "lose it" from their memory. I can still remember the motions my friend and I made up to Psalm 119:105 in third grade.

## 4) Sparkle

This is a whole group game intended to use as a review of verses already learned. The children will stand in a circle facing one another. The teacher says a reference for a recent memory

verse. The game travels around the circle with each child saying the next word to come in the verse. If the child says an incorrect word or does not know the next word they sit down. The verse continues around the circle until the final word is said and then the next child says “Sparkle!” to finish the verse. The child who says “Sparkle!” also sits down. The children continue to play with a variety of verses until there is only one child standing who is the winner. The teacher can choose any word to be used for the “Sparkle!”

## 5) Word Card Scramble

The teacher writes each word of the verse on separate index cards and mixes them up. Each child is given a set of cards which holds one complete verse. The children spread their cards out on the table or floor face-up and try to unscramble the words to put the verse in the correct order. To add interest this activity can be timed if your class enjoys competition. As a review activity, the children can also create their own cards to be kept in individual baggies for a variety of verses which have already been learned. The children can trade baggies and test their friends on past verses.

## 6) Sketching Bible Verses

This works great on highly visual verses ([see examples](#)). You’ll need a dry erase marker and board. Alternatively, you can use poster board, giant Post-It notes, or sidewalk chalk. I’ve used Bible verse learning activity with K4 through adults. It’s easier for kids than grown-ups to be creative. After rehearsing the memory verse, invite volunteers to sketch one short element from the verse. I typically choose an older child first to set a good pattern for the others. Then I invite other children one at a time until we’ve sketched the verse. You can take a photo of the finished project to print off or post on Facebook. Alternatively, you could easily split this activity into small groups and use a single piece of white paper. I often repeat the same Bible verse the next week except I let each child work independently on their own sketch. Then we compare the end results and discuss the different ways the concepts were represented.

## 7) Erase the Verse

After introducing the Bible memory verse, write it on the dry erase board. Have the children read the verse together. Then ask for a volunteer to read it aloud. This child is then allowed to erase one word from the verse. Call on another child to read the scripture as it was originally written. Then allow them to erase a word. Repeat this process as the children remove more and more of the verse. ([see examples](#)) This process makes the memory verse increasingly more difficult as the words are removed. It also keeps all the kids involved in the activity because they know their turn is coming.

After they gain confidence, you can speed things up by allowing them to erase two verses after each time they recite the verse. I try to include adult volunteers in this activity, the kids always

enjoy learning together with the grown-ups. If the children struggle with the concept, you can replace each erased word with a blank line. This can help them remember where each word is missing. Alternately, you could replace key words with symbols or simple drawings.

## 8) Paper Cut Up Puzzle

Make several copies of the memory verse printed on white paper with a large font. ([see examples](#)) Then each line should be cut into strips so each child will have only a few words each. So, if the verse has 5 cut strips per copy that would be enough for 5 children. Print as many as you need in advance. If the class is larger than I expect, I will pair two children together to share. You'll also need clear tape, or sticky tack so the children can reassemble the verse.

After practicing the Bible memory verse several times with the group, say something like this. "Today we're going to divide into teams and put this Bible verse back together like a puzzle. I need a few older students to be team leaders. Their job will be to gather the rest of the kids together to complete their copy of the scripture verse."

Hand out the last strip from each cut-up Bible verse to the leaders, this is the one that should include a verse reference. Then give the leaders the tape (or sticky tack) they will need to rebuild the verse. I typically sent the leaders out into the hallway first. Next, pass out the rest of the strips randomly so that all the kids have a piece. Then send them to the leader area. The leaders will have to identify each section of the verse they need and recruit the kids for their teams. Walk around to the groups to monitor their progress. Check each team's verse when complete and have the group read it together in unison.

## 9) Discover the Verse

Select a scripture memory verse and write each word on a single paper plate. For my example I am using Matthew 22:29 "You shall love your neighbors as yourself." ([See examples](#)) Before introducing the verse, let the kids discover it on their own. Pass out single plates to children in the group and ask them to come up to the front of the classroom. Make sure you include a few older children who can provide leadership in the activity. Do not announce the verse, just let them line up in the order you've passed out the plates.

Then take a seat with the remaining kids and say: *I've given them each a word from today's Bible memory verse and we'll see if they can arrange themselves in order. I will not offer direction but see if they can do it on their own.*

Once they have put their line in order have them all hold up their plates over their head. Then read the verse aloud to the class and congratulate the children. Then invite the whole group to say the verse together. Next repeat the process with the other children so that all get a turn to sort out the verse. Once they are confident move on to the more advanced game below.

## 10) Organize their Friends

Assign plates one-per-child as in the game above. Instead of letting them set the order, have the seated children without the plates determine the order. Go around the room allowing each child to make one change. For example, "Chloe needs to move up to the spot before David." See how few moves will be required to organize the children in order. Repeat this game several times to allow all children to participate.

For a more difficult variation, attach the verse to the backs of the children and have them face away from the group. The kids enjoy the mystery element of not knowing what is on their back. Once they are all in position, have the children guess which word is on their back.

## 11) Post-It Note Memory Mosaic

This is a fun way to review scripture verses. Especially after several weeks. Have the students brainstorm as many verses as they know, or at least some of their favorites on colored Post-Its. (Have some suggestions on hand for students who are drawing a blank.) Have them decorate pieces of construction paper with these verses to create mosaics of God's word.

## 12) Post-It Notes Review

Similar to some of the games above but using Post-It Notes. Give the kids many different colors for extra fun. Choose a verse to review. Write one word on every Post-It. Scramble the words and have the students work together to put the verse in order. If the class is large enough, write the verse out a few times and compete in teams.

## 13) Balloon Juggle & Say the Verse ([video example](#))

Use this simple game to help a large group of children practice their Bible memory verses. All you'll need is a few balloons. One brave volunteer gets to juggle the balloon while the class recites the verse. Repeat but with a second balloon. Keep adding balloons with each repetition until a balloon hits the group. I start with the verse displayed on the wall – then hide parts of it each time a new volunteer attempts to juggle. That way the kids are gradually forced to say the scripture verse without the written help.

## 14) Ball Toss Over a Friend! ([video example](#))

This little review game is a little twist on the standard ball toss game. You can watch the video below for a visual demonstration. You'll need soft plastic balls, rubber dish tub, and brave children!

After working with a Bible verse during the lesson, we used this activity to close out children's church and have some fun while practicing our memory verse. I always leave the verse displayed on the wall where the children can read. For younger kids, we allow an older friend

to whisper the verse to them as they say it. The point is not to preform the verse but to have fun learning it.

Each volunteer who recites the verse will get to toss three balls. Place the plastic tub around 4 ft away from the child. Have them choose a friend to be their partner during the game. They will lay down on their back between the ball tosser and the plastic tub. After the balls are tossed, applaud their effort and have the children switch places. The other child should also recite the verse before they toss. To get more kids involved you could choose teams of three children. Each one could toss one ball while the other two are on the ground. This would help accommodate a larger group in a shorter amount of time.

**Safety Note:** Be sure the balls are soft flexible plastic. The children should use an underhanded toss and not a baseball pitch. Make sure they aim for the bucket and not their friend's face. Redirect any child who attempts and aggressive throw.

## 15) Say the Verse Under Water

I learned this in summer camp one year. Read the verse out loud together then repeat it rubbing your fingers across your lips as you do. This makes your words sound like they are being spoken underwater. Kids go crazy for this. You could also read it in slow-mo, super fast and try to say it standing on your head.

## 16) Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Remember that song? Use the same hand movements but sing your verse instead. Of course, this might not work well with long verses but shorter verses are better for memorizing anyway. Give it a try. Anything involving movement is great! It becomes a game when you divide the kids into competing groups. After several practice rounds ask who can do it faster. Set a 30 second timer and see who can repeat the process the most times.

## 17) Snap It

Try snapping your fingers in between phrases. Breaking a verse into phrases makes it easier to memorize. For example, "For God" ...snap, snap..."so loved" ...clap, clap..."the world" ...snap snap. You get the picture. Alternate snaps with claps and keep it moving. It takes some discipline in the beginning but it's a fun way to learn a verse. Make it a game when each group of kids takes turns "performing" their rendition.

## 18) Verse race—game show style

I got this idea from the Price is Right game, the old one. You'll need two bulletin boards. I covered mine with felt and laid them on a table. Each week, I have two sets of words that make up the verse. We read the verse a few times then I pick two contestants. The players

come up and try to arrange the words properly to make the verse. The person to do this the fastest is the winner. To make it challenging, I'll add unnecessary words to keep kids focused. We do this over and over again giving quite a few people a chance to try. Sometimes we invite teams to come up, especially for the long verses.

## 19) Bible Verse Hand Motions ([video example](#))

This game is more creative and less competitive. Divide the class into groups. Challenge each to work through the Bible verse creating hand movements that will help them remember the words. Adding simple hand motions is an easy way to help kids memorize scripture. These don't have to be elaborate or even graceful. The key is to connect the body movement with the concept as the kids recite their bible memory verse

After a set period of time, assemble the class and have each group demonstrate their movements while they recite the verse.

## Kids Need To Carry God's Word in the Hearts

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105*

*Your word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against You."*

*Psalm 119:11*

Memorizing scripture is a vital discipline for every believer. Bible memorization helps us find comfort, fight sin, and know our God. Children form habits early which can have a ripple effect through the rest of their life. What a blessing it can be to train a child in the discipline of scripture memorization early in their life. Yet, children don't usually respond well to the traditional drilling of memorization. Here are some creative ways to help children memorize scripture in church on Sundays or at home during the week.

**Need More Ideas?** Read [why Bible Memorization is important](#) or read these [tips for helping kids memorize Bible verses](#).