Using Tablets in Disability Ministry

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There are many different ways in which tablets can be utilized in disability ministry. Here is a brief overview of some helpful tips for preparing the tablet and ways in which apps may be used. Currently there are more apps for Apple devices, but that is rapidly changing. New apps are constantly being developed for other tablets including Android and Kindle Fire. It is important to keep checking for new apps on iTunes and Google Play. Availability, versions and prices listed are as of December 2015.

Tablet Preparation

1. **Settings**. In settings disable the internet; the ability for apps to be added or deleted; and the ability for in-app purchases. This will provide the teachers with peace of mind that students will not accidentally go to places that aren't helpful.

2. **Protection.** Get a good cover for the tablet. Check amazon.com Some possible choices:

   - Gum Drop
   - Otterbox
   - I-Blasson
   - Moko
   - HDE

3. **Guided Access.** One of the biggest concerns that teachers have when using tablets is having students leave the desired app. Guided Access solves this problem. Excellent instructions for how to put guided access in place can be found here: http://www.imore.com/how-restrict-access-specific-app-guided-access-iphone-and-ipad

Transition Apps

Children with special needs, particularly those with autism, benefit from a consistent routine and knowing what will come next. The following apps can help design schedules, specific behavior plans and create social stories.

1. **Book Creator.** This is a great app for making social stories and can be used to make simplified and adapted Bible stories. Pictures can be taken on the iPad camera and then easily imported into the program. This app has the ability to export the book as a PDF, *.MOV file and share the book on YouTube. Audio can also be added to these books. It is also possible for students to make their own books and share their art. There is also a Book Creator for Android. It also has a good support page to assist you in learning all the features of the app. www.support.redjumper.net. Created by Red Jumper Limited.

   Cost: Free / $4.99 for export option   *Android and Apple (iOS)*

2. Choiceworks. This is a schedule and behavioral app. It has three different basic boards: Schedule, Feelings and Waiting. The pictures can be renamed in the library to make it fit for the choices you need at church. Pictures can also be imported from other media. The Waiting boards allow the app to be used as a visual timer. The boards can be exported as a PDF so that schedules and behavioral plans can be prepared on the tablet and then printed or sent to a parent via email.

   Cost: $4.99   *Android and Apple (iOS)*

Communication Apps

1. Magnetic ABC. This app has been helpful for students who communicate by spelling out a word. It also has scenes and themes that may be purchased. A few of the themes, including woods, sea and farm themes might be used for creation stories.

   Cost: Free
   $1.99 for HD
   $.99 for each theme   *Android and Apple (iOS)*

2. Tap to Talk. The free version of this app can be useful in helping students communicate by touching a picture which communicates different needs. Very basic communication options, such as bathroom, food, activities, schedule, and more. This app may be helpful for students who use a communication board, but whose parents are hesitant to bring the expensive device to church. The full version is over $100 making it too pricey for most churches.

   Cost: Free for Lite version   *Android and Apple (iOS)*

Bible Songs Apps

1. Cubbies Bible Verse Music. This app was designed to be used with the Awana Cubbies program, but it is a fun way for children to sing-a-long while learning Bible verses. There is an option for the child to be video recorded while singing the song. There are two albums available.

   Cost: $3.99 to unlock the album   *Apple (iOS) only*

2. Bible Songs by 4Soils. These songs are from Child Evangelism Fellowship. The first two songs of each album are free, but there are only seven songs in each album. The student can select a character to sing the song. It has a video recording feature as well. More information is available at www.4soils.com

   Cost: $4.99 to unlock the album   *Android and Apple IOS*

Bible Teaching Apps

1. Deaf Bible. A large portion of the Bible as well as the Jesus film is done in sign language. The Jesus film has an insert of sign language so that it could be shown and used with both hearing and deaf students.

   Cost: FREE   *Android and Apple (iOS)*

2. The Beginner's Bible. This app is based on The Beginner's Bible by Zondervan. The first story pack is free and starts with Creation and ends with the story of Joseph. Additional story packs are available. As the story is read, the words change color. The pictures on the page are interactive with a simple touch and it does not require a lot of fine motor control. The games include a coloring page which has a nice feature of a "star" palette which is like a scratch and color page. There are also puzzles and different games.

Cost: $1.99 for each additional story pack   *Apple (iOS) only*

3. Rocket Pop's Bible Kids 3D. These apps are very interactive and the graphics are the best of all the Bible apps I have reviewed. Memory Game and Puzzles related to the story are included in each app. They have a blog and it is good to check it frequently because their apps often go on sale for $.99. Blog: biblekids3d.com/blog Stories available: Christmas Story, The Prodigal Son, Noah's Ark, Daniel & Lion's Den and David and Goliath.

Cost: $1.99 to 2.99   *Android and Apple (iOS)*

4. The Bible Boo Clips by Castle Builders. This app has some great features for people with special needs. It has an option of seeing the story with a sign language video. There is a magnifying glass button which can magnify the text and images. There is a button which translates the text into Spanish. It also has an option to record your own voice reading the story. There are no puzzles or games. Very limited stories available: Creation and Cain and Abel.

Cost: $0.99   *Apple (iOS) only*

5. Bible Heroes/Life of Jesus. This app has a series of stories of Old and New Testament produced by 4 Soils (**www.4soils.com**)   Each story has the following sections: Read, Color, Sing and Solve. There are games, puzzles, coloring pages and sing-a- long activities. Also available in other languages: Dutch, French, Italian and Traditional Chinese.

Cost: $9.99 for The Life Of Jesus Bundle with 10 stories
    $7.99 for Bible Heroes Bundles of seven stories
    $1.99-2.99 for Individual stories
    Available in Apple (iOS) and Android

6. Bible App for Kids. This is a free interactive Bible experience that has fairly easy navigation, special activities connected to the Bible stories and touch activated animations. Contains both Old Testament and New Testament stories.

Cost: Free   *Android, Apple (iOS)*

7. Superbook. This free Bible app has multiple versions of the Bible including an audio version of the New Living Translation (NLT). There are videos and interactive games embedded in the Bible as well as engaging visuals. It also includes a simple sharing of the gospel message.

Cost: Free   *Available in all tablet platforms*

Bible Games

With all the games and activities in the Bible Story apps, there isn't much need for additional apps for Bible games. However, these apps have been popular with some students.

1. **Easy App Finder Coloring Books.** There are a series of coloring books and each book includes 12 pictures, including Old Testament, New Testament and Christmas, This app requires less fine motor skill since the object touched will automatically be filled in with the selected color.
   Cost: $0.99 per book   *Apple (iOS) only*

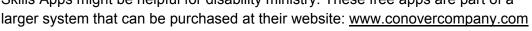2. **Bible Word Find.** This app has pictures with the words that are to be found to increase understanding. There are three different options: Easy, Medium and Hard. Easy has 8 words to be found in a 8X8 grid; Medium has 12 words to be found in a 12x12 grid; Hard has 16 words to be found in a 16x16 grid. The PEC symbols are nice, but the fonts are small for those who can read but have vision problems.
   Cost: $1.99   *Apple (iOS) only*

LIFE SKILLS AND SOCIAL SKILLS APPS

1. **Functional Life Skills Series Apps.** These apps are put out by the Conover Company and are based on the concept of video modeling to teach skills. The Manners and Social Skills Apps might be helpful for disability ministry. These free apps are part of a larger system that can be purchased at their website: www.conovercompany.com
   Cost: Free for limited videos   *Apple (iOS) only*