

## Points that are especially appreciated about the General Conference Lower Divisions Sabbath School Curriculum

### The Children's Bible Study Curriculum for Lower SS Divisions

The majority of the churches are using the Children's Bible Study. The publishing houses have reported Sabbath School orders holding steady or growing. Be blessed by going to [www.gracelink.net](http://www.gracelink.net) and enjoy the children's activities there. Download the 'gracelink' app on your iPad – there is a great 'felt' activity for each week's lesson.

#### 1. What are some important Children's Bible Study features?

- More than 60 Educators, Sabbath School, and Children's Ministries directors from all the divisions around the world came together to produce these materials that would engage and help children of all cultures experience and love our precious Bible Truths .
- The Children's Bible Study leader-teacher guide contains far more material than you could ever use in a typical one-hour Sabbath School program. This gives you, the leader, lots of choices.
- Doctrines and Bible stories are not only given as information, but they are also practically applied so students can learn to experience Christ's power in their everyday lives—as appropriate for each age level.
- Incorporates the principles of the Spirit of Prophecy in every lesson, and encourages teachers to use it as an additional resource. Also, Bible study is woven into every lesson to encourage deeper study. Many teachers report their students are much more involved with Bible study now than they have ever been. (I especially noted this in the Junior Study Guide.)
- Parents need to encourage children to complete the daily study activities in order to benefit fully. Reading the story from the quarterly is only meant to be a starter.
- Teach that obedience is an act of worship—a response to God's grace. The lessons focused on worship deal with Bible study, prayer, Sabbath keeping, stewardship, and other “do's” as positive worship responses to God's redemptive love for us. (see [John 14:15](#))
- Obedience does not earn us grace, but grace empowers obedience. When we focus on teaching obedience, we tend to put the emphasis on ourselves and what we do—instead of on Jesus and what He does for us. Grace rightly understood is not in competition with obedience. It motivates obedience. Ellen White advocates making Jesus central; that is what the Children's Bible Study curriculum strives to do by emphasizing grace.

“The **cross of Christ must occupy the central place**, Christ be lifted up as never before, and the attention of the people be riveted upon the world's Redeemer” (Missionary Work, p. 856, emphasis added).

“Surrendering your will to the will of Christ, you are drawn into a region where the cross is the central object. The world fades from your view. The glory shining from the threshold of heaven is the all-attractive influence. **The riches of the grace of Christ hold you in willing obedience.**” (Lift Him Up, p. 252, emphasis added).

- Bible-based lessons--the Bible story plus Bible study
- Christ is central to every story and lesson

- All 28 Adventist Fundamental Beliefs are taught, as developmentally appropriate. In a recent evaluation, the General Conference committee found that the “Millennium” and “Heavenly Sanctuary” had not been covered adequately. Six lessons will be added on this in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2013.
- Developing a relationship with Jesus is a priority
- Memorization of Scripture is encouraged
- Christian values and lifestyle are portrayed as appealing

## 2. Where did the name GraceLink come from?

- The church chose this name because Grace is our central belief; grace is a word that implies salvation through Jesus. Grace links all of the curriculum dynamics and all facets of our Christian life.

## 3. What does the teacher's quarterly mean when it talks about four different kinds of learners?

- Educational research shows that there are at least 4 different kinds of learners. While everyone uses all four learning styles, an individual usually prefers one style over the others. Each type of learner has their own needs and preferences.

**imaginative** (relational, sensitive)    **analytic** (thinker)

**common sense** (experimenter)    **dynamic** (doer)

## 4. Why do we need to pay attention to learning styles?

- Because each one is looking for a different learning experience, the **different types of learners experience God in different ways** too. For instance, imaginative learners want to express their feelings about God. They think that there's something seriously amiss when dynamics talk about God in intellectual terms only, and dynamic learners tend to characterize talk about one's feelings for God as shallow and sentimental.
- Would you like to find out more about learning styles and why they make a difference in Sabbath School? AdventSource offers a video and booklet, Learning in Styles, that explains learning styles and the learning techniques that appeal to each.

## 5. How do the Children's Bible Study lessons provide for learning differences?

- The Sabbath School teaching material provides tasks or activities for each learning style, in order to complete a learning cycle for the lesson. We call this method of teaching Total Time Learning. We spend time on each style to answer its particular learning question, as follows

**Style 1:** Why do I need to learn this? (Kids do readiness activities that prepare them for the topic and show why they need to know about it.)

**Style 2:** What do I need to know about this? (Kids dig into the Bible, concordances, and maps to learn all they can about the subject.)

**Style 3:** How does this work for me? (Kids apply what they've learned to real life problems. They figure out what advice they might give to someone in a similar situation.)

**Style 4:** What if . . . (Kids find ways to adapt the information for their own use and then share it with family, neighbors, or friends. Often they make something in Sabbath School that they can use for sharing what they've learned with others.)

## Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What are the recommended age levels for each division

Beginner	ages 0-2	2-year cycle
Kindergarten	ages 3-5	2-year cycle
Primary	ages 6-10 (grades 1-4)	4-year cycle
Junior/Teen	ages 10-14 (grades 5-8)	4-year cycle

### 2. Why don't the Children's Bible Study teach Bible stories in chronological order?

- Imagine for a moment that they did—that the lessons in each series began with Genesis and progressed straight through to Revelation. This would mean that primary and junior children, who have a four-year series, would experience stories of Jesus only *once every four years*. Even in beginner and kindergarten, which are two-year series, the section on the life of Christ would be proportionally tiny if those two years were supposed to cover the entire Bible in order. The primary reason for departing from chronological order is to make sure that children have frequent opportunities to make friends with Jesus Christ.
- A second reason for departing from chronological order in teaching Bible stories is because of the calendar. While many Adventists choose not to make a big deal of celebrating Christmas or Easter, these seasons present a "teachable moment" when much of society is focused on spiritual things. Choosing not to follow chronological order means that Jesus' birth can be taught in December, and His death and resurrection in the spring. It means that each year, parents and Sabbath School teachers can take advantage of these times to focus children's attention on what the Bible says about these all-important events.
- The planners of Children's Bible Study have followed an overall [Scope & Sequence](#) which makes sure that all of the major Bible stories are taught (some of them more than once) throughout the curriculum. In general, each division alternates from quarter to quarter between Old Testament and New Testament. And where possible within the monthly units, stories are taught in sequence.

### 3. Why do we introduce the lesson first at church? What incentive will kids have to study now?

- Teachers used to complain that one child in a whole class would know the Bible story very well and others not at all. It was difficult to teach so that everyone was involved. But when we teach the lesson first at church, everyone is at the same place; nobody has studied it yet. As you teach the lesson, you can encourage kids to study more about it during the week and to share the things they learn with the whole family.
- Challenge them to personal prayer and Bible study as a way to stay close to Jesus—which is the true purpose of Bible study. Keep asking how many times they studied and record their responses, not in order to reward them, but to chart their progress. After a while they will begin to study for themselves. Encourage them to increase their study.
- Children take their cues from adults. When teachers understand the added benefits of the new curriculum and methods, they can model a positive viewpoint.

#### 4. How will kids know answers to the questions if they have not studied ahead?

- How did they know the answers when they were not studying at all? Those who knew the answers were affirmed; the others felt like failures. This does not create the kind of safe emotional climate where children learn best.
- Instead of asking questions about what they were supposed to have studied, the questions we ask now should have to do with what kids think about what the teacher is presenting or about what they have done in class or read in the Bible. So everyone has a chance to add something and there will be no wrong answers--which is very important if you want kids to speak up in class!

#### 5. Why do the Children's Bible Study lessons seem to miss the point of some Bible stories?

- One of the best ways to keep the Bible fresh and alive throughout a lifetime of study is to allow the Holy Spirit to bring out aspects of familiar passages that we've never thought of before. This curriculum develops four of the most important concepts of Christian life to use as lenses for Bible study—Grace, Worship, Community, and Service. Each lesson is approached through one of these viewpoints:
  - How can this story show God's saving love for me? ([Grace](#))
  - What can this story teach me about my response to God? ([Worship](#))
  - What does this passage have to say about my relationship with others? ([Community](#))
  - How does this lesson make a point about reaching out to others? ([Service](#))
- Children's Bible Study lesson may have a focus completely different from the "point" that you might expect. This does not mean that the Children's Bible Study message isn't valid. As children come to realize that the same story can make many different points when studied from a different emphasis, they will learn to appreciate the breadth of God's Word and the infinite possibilities for learning that it contains.

Each lesson focuses on only one message, or "point," of the MANY that are possible in a given Bible story. Research has shown that the most effective way of teaching children—or adults either, for that matter—is to make **one** point in a lesson, to thoroughly explore its applications to everyday life, and to repeat that point (message) at various times throughout the class time. In a Children's Bible Study lesson, the entire Sabbath School time is focused around the message.

#### 6. Why don't the new materials use the traditional style of art that we're used to from the old Sabbath School lessons?

- Traditional Seventh-day Adventist art is not known for being culturally inclusive. When you look at one of the characters, you can't always say, "This person is African," or "This person is European."
- NEW: a decision has been made to change the artwork to more traditional Bible Story styles in Power Point only. This change will be reflected in 2013.

#### 9. What if our church wants to use some other curriculum?

The church has no curriculum police to tell you what you must use. However, most Seventh-day Adventist members want their children to study materials that present Adventist beliefs--those

prepared by the General Conference for worldwide use. The Children's Bible Study lessons are reviewed for theological accuracy by the Biblical Research Institute and reading committees.

A church that replaces these lessons with other materials takes on an enormous responsibility. There is no other Seventh-day Adventist curriculum approved by the church. There may be lessons circulating that claim to be Adventist or other materials that state they are prepared to go with Children's Bible Study. But there is only one Seventh-day Adventist curriculum-- Children's Bible Study - GraceLink--ordered by your church secretary from the [Adventist Book Centers](#).

**10. There will be some updates in 2013.**

NEW: In 2013, the name "GraceLink" and logo will change. The name will reflect that this is the Children's Bible Study of the Seventh-day Adventist church and the church logo will be used.

NEW: All 28 Adventist Fundamental Beliefs are taught, as developmentally appropriate. In a recent evaluation, the General Conference committee found that the "Millennium" and "Heavenly Sanctuary" had not been covered adequately. Six lessons will be added on this in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2013.

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