

Outline:

- I The Bible as Book

- II The Old Testament World (1)

- III Beginning and New Beginning -- Gen. 1-12

- IV The Promised Child -- Gen. 12-25

- V The Old Testament World (2)

- VI The Outcome -- Gen. 25-37

- VII The Way Prepared -- Gen. 37-50

- VIII A Covenant People -- Ex. 1-20

The lessons of this first part of the intermediate program are designed to introduce the pupils to the central message of the Bible.

The key that unlocks the Scriptures is to be found in God's covenant with mankind. After the ruinous outcome of the perfect beginning God set when He created the heavens and the earth, God made a new beginning. God promises to save the world through the Son that is to be born. To this promise God remains faithful in spite of man's rebellion and waywardness. To accomplish his purposes God chooses the people of Israel to be the instrument through which all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Even in and through his judgments God remains faithful to this promise, fulfilling it in the birth of the Son of Man. In the Immanuel - God with us - God reveals Himself fully as man's partner.

The many stories of the Old Testament reveal Yahweh as the covenant keeping, faithful and merciful God. Sovereignly God establishes his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and later with the people of Israel. And sovereignly and graciously God maintains his covenant with the patriarchs and with Israel, in spite of their sins.

Perhaps the children cannot fully grasp yet the total perspective of the history of God's revelation. But they can certainly understand and deepen their understanding of God's covenantal dealings with his people, and what He expects from them in response. They can begin to grasp something of the tense and exciting history of the patriarchs' and Israel's response to God's love and God's final answer to their unfaithfulness. As the children deepen their understanding of God's self-revelation as a covenant keeping God, who never forsakes the works of his hands, they cannot help but relate this knowledge to their own religious selfhood. For it is the same God who speaks to them and to all of us, holding out his promises for now and making his demands upon their lives and ours, for He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

A. The Role of the Bible in the Christian School

The Bible can function in three distinct ways within the total educational enterprise.

- (1) As the living Word of God, the Scriptures are the norm for our lives, including our educational activities. The Word of God is the basis and directive for Christian education. Everything that is done in the school and every subject area that is taught ought to be founded upon and be expressive of this fundamental directive. The Christian character of the school, therefore, depends entirely upon the faithfulness of the school society, the board, the administration, the teachers and the pupils to the Word of God as the religious norm for all of life.
- (2) The Christian character of the school ought to express itself in specific confessional activities. Through singing, praying, listening together to the Word of God (Bible story telling), and confessing, teachers pupils together ought to deepen and enrich their heart commitment and faith response, especially as it comes to expression within the school community and activities. The worship activities within the school ought to be characterized by the nature of the school as an educational institution, and, therefore, ought to have a more specific focus than the public worship services in the church.
- (3) The Scriptures can also function as a primary source in a specific program of Biblical Studies. This use of the Bible is different and distinct from the other two functions of the Scriptures. Conceivably the Christian School could do without specific courses in "Bible".

The Christian character of a school does not depend on the inclusion of Bible courses. Biblical Studies (Junior Theology) is one course among many in the curriculum, no more, no less. There is certainly room for Biblical Studies as a subject in the elementary and secondary school, but then it should be clear that we are engaged in an academic activity which always involves a measure of abstraction. Such a study of the Scriptures in a more or less academic way is peculiar to the school. Like all the other subjects in the curriculum, this course too should be specifically aimed at preparing the child for his many-sided religious task in life.

B. General Objectives for the Projected Biblical Studies Program

The objectives for this alternative Biblical Studies program can be summarized as follows:

- (1) To provide greater flexibility in the Biblical Studies program, emphasizing not only or primarily the "historical-redemptive" approach, but a variety of approaches and methods.
- (2) To incorporate more materials dealing with the geographical, historical and cultural background of the Scriptures, in order to bring the strange world of the Bible closer to the pupils' experience.
- (3) To bring to the fore the fundamental themes of the Scriptures, emphasizing the inner unity and peculiar character of each Bible book to a greater degree than is done in the more traditional, factual, historical approach to the different parts of the Scriptures.
- (4) To clarify the relation of the Word of God to daily life, emphasizing the Scriptural directives as the norm for our lives rather than "truths" and "morals".
- (5) To achieve greater involvement and activation of the pupils through the use of audio-visual aids, art media, projects, the making of workbooks, dramatization, etc.

(6) To provide teachers with good background information, references, and methodological suggestions, thereby enabling the teachers to work out their own lessons for a particular class.

C. Provisional Curriculum Outline

(1) Primary level:

At this point of our development it would seem better not to teach "Bible" as a subject in grades 1 through 3. The emphasis in these grades should be on the telling of the Bible stories. The object of the Bible story telling should be to bring the central religious meaning of the stories closer to the childrens' experience. To accomplish this purpose use can be made of many audio-visual aids and the children can be engaged in a considerable amount of doing (arts, dramatizing). The Bible story telling and the means used to integrate the stories in the childrens' experience should not be considered a subject in these grades for which the children receive a mark and on which they are tested.

(2) Intermediate level:

In grades 4,5, and 6 Biblical Studies can be closely integrated with the Bible story telling. In the grade 4 unit the story telling has been incorporated in the total program. The grade 4 material follows the following sequence of questions: How did we get our Bible? How was it written? Where did all these stories take place? What was the world like in those days? What are these stories all about? What is the central theme of the Bible? How does the Bible direct us in our daily life? Each of these themes is followed up and developed further in the following grades.

(3) Junior level:

In grades 7 and 8 the Old and New Testament themes are developed further and deepened in close relation with the Old and New Testament world.

(4) Senior level:

The final aim of the program in Biblical Studies has been used to determine the scope of the program. The final aim for the elementary and secondary school has been taken to be the deepening of the child's understanding of God's Word as the norm for his many-sided religious task in life. In view of this aim, especially the highschool program has been structured around God's Law as the religious Directive for all of life. The other sections of the program are introductory: to enable the students to read the Bible with understanding and to provide them with a frame of reference for dealing with the many Scriptural directives. Through this program of studies it is hoped that the young people are helped to see and experience the Bible as a light upon their path, enabling them to find the Way, and to go that Way with joy and in hope in today's changing and secular world.

Grade 4:

- I The Bible as Book
- II The Old Testament World (1)
- III Beginning and New Beginning; Gen. 1-12
- IV The Promised Child; Gen. 12-25
- V The Old Testament World (2)
- VI The Outcome; Gen. 25-37
- VII The Way Prepared; Gen. 37-50
- VIII A Covenant People; Ex. 1-20

Grade 5:

- I Joshua
- II The Old Testament World; Geography; Daily Life (3)
- III Judges
- IV Ruth
- V Sacrifices; Priesthood; Worship
- VI Samuel
- VII Kings
- VIII Psalms

Grade 6:

- I The Coming of the Kingdom; Matt.
- II The New Testament World
- III Main Themes; Key Words

Grade 7:

I The Preservation and Translation of the Bible

II The History of Redemption; Gen. - Rev.

III The Old Testament Kingdom Dissolved:

Kings

Prophets

The Old Testament World

Grade 8:

I The Kingdom Established:

Luke and Acts; The New Testament World

I and II Cor.

I and II Tim.

Grade 9:

I The Law of the Kingdom - O.T.

Deut.

Prophets

Proverbs

Grade 10:

II The Law of the Kingdom - N.T.

Matt.

I and II Peter

Galatians

Ephesians

Grade 11:

I Interpreting the Bible

II The Last Days:

Psalms

Prophets

Gospels

Revelation

Grade 12:

I The Bible and the Life of the Christian

Church

Marriage; Family; Sexuality

State

Work

Neighbors; Race

Education

Physical Care; Illness, Death.