

Notebooks Vs. Workbooks

by Dr. Dayton Hobbs

The Case for Notebooks

I am not naive enough to think for one moment that I am introducing something new to the field of education when I speak of notebooks. Many teachers use them today and many have in the past. In some cases they may not be used as effectively as they can be used, and in other cases their use may be detrimental instead of helpful because of a lack of planning and follow up on the part of the teacher. First let me give a few reasons why I believe the proper use of notebooks is an excellent teaching method and consistent with the principles of the Word of God.

1. Notebooks encourage individual initiative on the part of the student. He is taught responsibility for having all the required materials in his notebook and the proper care of that notebook.

2. Notebook usage encourages excellence. Students can rise above the average and put as much work and care into them as they desire.

3. The notebook becomes a reflection of the student, his work habits, carefulness, etc. It will point out to teacher, pupil, and parent alike areas that need improvement.

4. Notebooks are an excellent tool for Parent-Teacher Conferences. The full record is there for the parent to see, making it possible for parent and teacher to better agree on a course of action for helping the student.

5. Notebooks teach order and proper management to students, when teachers are diligent and consistent in seeing to it that every student carries out every detail in keeping his notebook. The injunction of I Cor. 14:40 "Let all things be done decently and in order" is obeyed through the use of notebooks.

6. Notebooks give the students a permanent recorded document at the end of the course, the compilation of a year's work. It is in fact the student's recorded history of his work for the year, and may prove a valuable resource book in future years.

Other important values of notebook usage could be cited I am sure, but these will suffice to establish their superiority over workbooks, I believe. As has been stated, the value of notebooks will be in proportion to the training of the student in their proper use and in the step by step execution of this method by the teacher. No substitute for diligence on the teacher's part is acceptable.

THE PREREQUISITES TO USING THE NOTEBOOK METHOD

There must be a decision on the part of the teacher and administration as to which subjects (in elementary, Jr. High, and Senior High) will be employed in the notebook approach. I would suggest that in the first year only one or two subjects in the elementary grades employ this method. In the junior and senior high at least one subject per teacher should be taught through the use of notebooks the first year. The ideal would be to have notebooks used in every subject area within two to three years.

There must be a decision as to just how the teachers will implement the notebook approach in their subject area. I suggest that an outline of this plan be turned in to the administrator for approval. Within the framework of the overall plan of the school as to the basic requirements of these notebooks, the teacher should have the liberty to develop a plan in keeping with the distinctives of his particular subject area. Some of the things that must be determined include:

1. Type of notebook (I suggest individual notebooks for each subject of the small 3 ring variety.)
2. Divisions of the notebook, such as (a) tests and quizzes (b) homework (c) class notes (d) handouts by the teacher, etc.
3. Grading system. (No grades should be given at report card time unless the notebook is absolutely up-to-date in every detail).

It is obvious, I believe, that over-all school policies must be established so that each teacher is working from the same basic set of rules. This will give continuity to the notebook program throughout the school and the students will know what is expected as each teacher in each grade follows the same basic set of rules for notebooks.

Students must be responsible for their own notebooks. Any notes or materials missed becomes the responsibility of the student. Lost or unreturned borrowed notebooks are the student's responsibility. Remember, no grade if the notebooks are not

absolutely complete at each grading period. Spot checking by the teacher becomes important especially during the first few weeks the program is implemented to be sure the students understand and are carrying out instructions regarding notebooks. Personal pride and care of these notebooks develops with consistent use of this system, teaching responsibility and a good reward for a job well done.

Admittedly, this system requires much more work by students as well as teachers, but I believe the results will be found to be worth the efforts expended, and nothing can replace the joyous feeling of having done a quality job of teaching.

Luther

On Teaching

“But one day, for instance Saturday or Wednesday, shall be appointed on which the children are given Christian instruction. For some are taught nothing out of holy Scripture. Some teach their children nothing but holy Scripture. We should yield to neither of these practices. It is essential that the children learn the beginning of a Christian and blessed life. But there are many reasons why also other books beside Scripture should be given the children from which they may learn to speak.”

“Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors”

“He (the teacher) should emphasize what is necessary for living a good life, namely, the fear of God, faith, good works. He should not touch on points of dissension. He also should not accustom the children to lampoon monks or others, as many incompetent teachers do.”

“Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors”