

understood, therefore. To combat this we should make an effort to instruct our children and ourselves concerning the elements of good music, so that we can better learn how good music can be used in the home, school, and church to its intended purposes.

Two publications come to mind that would be helpful to us as parents and teachers. The first is a book by Dale Topp, *Music in the Christian Community*, published by Eerdmans. The second is a series of cassette tapes and workbooks put out by the National Union of Christian Schools, which teaches some of the elements of music using a programmed approach to listening to the oratorios, choirs, organ and piano. This series would be useful in home or school, and would greatly enhance our understanding of the music we hear and perform today. God grant that we all may strive to make our music an ascending expression of praise of God.

Report on the Bible Curriculum

by Gertrude Hoeksema

For some years prior to 1973, some of the teachers in our schools had complained about the lack of unity and continuity in the Bible curriculum of our schools. Not only did each teacher "do his own thing" without knowing exactly what Biblical instruction his pupils already had, but the Bible program had no

line, theme, nor structure.

After the problem was discussed among staffs and at teachers' conventions, the Committee for Teacher Educational Development from the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Boards asked me to draw up a long-range program and then to take a year off from teaching to begin writing a Bible manual for grade one.

I began work during the school year of 1973-74, and the Committee for T.E.D. met with me several times that year. They gave me guidelines, which we discussed, and I submitted periodic reports, which we criticized. Because the Federation of P.R. School Boards, and we as schools, were breaking new ground in preparing this course of study, the Committee for T.E.D. cautioned me to do slow, careful work, bearing in mind three basic principles:

1. The basis for teaching Bible in our schools
2. The goals for teaching Bible in our schools
3. The methods and materials for implementing the basis and goals.

Therefore, before I began writing lessons, I was asked to prepare a lengthy introduction which would establish the principles and set the tone for teaching Bible in our schools. I was asked to prepare it as an Introduction for Book 1, and the Committee for T.E.D. intended that each teacher read that introduction, as a basis, before he would teach Bible on his own grade level.

In 35 pages I stated briefly the Reformed — the Protestant Reformed — doctrine of Scripture, including the following elements: that Scripture is revelation in the realm of *the wonder*; the complete authority of Scripture; the infallible inspiration of Scripture; and the organic unity of Scripture. Although these bases lie in the area of the doctrine of Scripture, these doctrines underlie every classroom session of Bible study, and are indispensable to a Reformed teaching of Bible in our schools.

There is a section in the introduction about the approach and the attitude of the teacher both to the Bible which he opens to his pupils and to the covenant children sitting before him. The idea that Bible teaching is different from other teaching areas because teacher and pupil must come to class with faith and with spiritual preparation is also explored.

The goals in planning and executing a Bible curriculum need careful defining. It is not the prerogative of the Christian School to preach the Word. That is the duty of the church officially. Therefore the teacher will not set up as one of his goals careful sermonizing. Nor is the teacher a catechete. He is a teacher, and his goal is to instruct the covenant seed in a thorough, systematic knowledge of the Scriptures. That is also the primary goal of the Bible manuals. But it leads to this problem, both in preparing materials and using them in the classroom: shall we teach the historical facts of a precious, vibrant, spiritually rich Scripture as cold facts, or shall we teach experience and application? The goal of the Bible manuals, as explained in the Introduction, is to instruct the covenant seed, not with cold facts, but with the assurance that the exposition and interpretation of sacred history will be applied to their experience by grace.

The materials I used in preparing the textbooks are roughly the same a classroom teacher will be using as reference and further study: Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, soundly Scriptural commentaries, and our own Protestant Reformed publications, in pamphlets, books, and volumes of *The Standard Bearer*. Our own Protestant Reformed writings have been of inestimable help to me, for they are not only soundly Scriptural, but they are also written by Reformed men who stand on the shoulders of their Reformed fathers. Maps, charts, time-lines are all essential aids, and, if available, authentic pictures of the geography and customs of Bible times. Bible pictures, in the sense of "Bible story-book pictures" often do more harm than good, for they often create wrong impressions, or totally false ones. Because Scripture's language in itself is an elegant book, the teacher need not supplement it with man's feeble pictorial efforts. I refer the reader to a more thorough investigation of these principles and their implementation in the Introduction to Book 1.

With these principles and goals as a background for my work, I planned a Bible series for grades one, two, and three. (In kindergarten I believe it is wise to teach central truths of selected

stories, concentrating on brevity, action, and concrete details.) Beginning with first grade, in our traditional methods of teaching primary Bible, many facts of sacred history have often been omitted and some books of the Bible were skipped altogether, because the research involved in explaining some of these incidents of Scripture, and then bringing them to the level of a small child was too big a load for a busy primary teacher to shoulder. Therefore I deemed it wise, in setting up the scheme of primary lessons, to proceed more slowly through Scripture, covering Scripture's material only once in the three grades. The lessons in grade one cover Biblical history from Genesis 1 through the death of Saul in I Samuel; in grade two they cover the history of the reign of David through the prophecy of Malachi; and in grade three they cover the history of the New Testament.

The format of each primary Bible Manual is similar. The title of each is *Suffer Little Children* (Mark 10:14) with the supplemental titles of Book 1, Book 2, and Book 3. The pages are designed for ease of teaching; for each lesson in all three books is printed on two facing 8½ by 11 inch facing pages, with six possible divisions, although all the divisions are not necessarily present in all lessons. The divisions are:

1. the Background and Introduction, a transition from the previous lesson, or an introduction taken from the experience of the child
2. the Lesson Material, in semi-outline form for easy reading and scanning
3. the Point (s) to Remember, which is the application of the central thought of the lesson — a gem of truth which the covenant child can carry home with him
4. Memory Work, a text which states the central theme of each lesson, and which is included, either for memorization, or for reading and discussion, at the end of the lesson
5. a Suggested Activity, an enrichment activity, usually interdisciplinary, in art, music, science, which a teacher may use at his discretion
6. Resource Material, the source material for each lesson.

Each primary Bible Manual includes a Teacher's Guide and explains the following:

1. that the Background and Introduction and Point to Remember are designed to be read to the pupils

2. that the Lesson Material is written in a simplified vocabulary directed to the level of the young child's comprehension, and sometimes speaking directly to the child
3. that chronology and simple geography are present in the lessons, but are neither stressed nor ignored. Because primary children have not yet developed a full chronological nor geographical consciousness, these elements are present incidentally; but as their perception of *before* and *after*, *near* and *far* develops, the manuals aid the teacher in guiding the pupils' growing understanding
4. that in each manual there is too much material for a teacher to present to any given class, so that a teacher may vary his approach and materials and stay fresh and new in his treatment of Scripture's truths
5. that the main method of teaching Bible in primary grades is by telling Bible stories. The manual for grade one gives guidelines for effective story-telling, not the least of which is the element of pure enjoyment for both teacher and pupils, according to Psalm 119:24, "Thy testimonies are my delight."
6. that abstract concepts, such as grace, repentance, faith, are explained and made concrete for the pupils' understanding by means of using examples of the concrete acts, or using picture-words of concrete things.

The first grade manual contains 125 lessons, designed to be taught at the rate of four lessons a week, with the fifth school day devoted to review, testing, or supplemental activities. Included in the subject matter are lessons on Job, the ten commandments, feasts, and the tabernacle, material often not included at this level. Because a first grader does not yet have the skills for a Bible workbook I have added only a few simple activities, such as very simple maps, and suggestions for an ongoing project for the year. There are also two types of review questions at the end of the manual, which the teacher may use as guides in reviews.

Workbooks to accompany the second and third grade manuals have been prepared; and the scheme for both grades is four lessons and one double-sided worksheet per week. Usually this amount of material is too much to be covered in one week, but because there are only 125 lessons, the teacher may proceed slowly, with ample time for testing and special activities, and still

be able to finish the manual in one year. Besides the history of the kings, the captivity, and the return, there are lessons treating some psalms and proverbs, the historical settings of the prophecies of the major prophets, with the thrust of these messages, in Book 2. As in Book 1, the vocabulary is kept simple and concrete.

The activities in the workbooks for grade 2 not only offer the pupil a review of the four lessons he just covered, but also the enjoyment of a variety of activities. Most of these stress review of the *facts* of the four previous lessons, and make use of puzzles, filling in blanks, color-cues, maps, charts, and some work directly from Scripture. There is also a two-page sketch of the temple and a time-line chart of the kings of Israel and Judah.

At this time I am still working on the manual for grade three. Book 3 will begin with a transitional lesson on the highlights of the intertestamentary period, and one on the setting of the New Testament, defining new terms such as synagogue, Pharisees, etc. It will include most of the miracles and parables, as well as the history of the life of Christ on earth, the history of the Acts, and the historical setting of the epistles. So far 75 lessons (through the death of Christ) with the accompanying worksheets have been finished and will be tested, the Lord willing, (along with the rest of the lessons I hope to finish) by two teachers during the coming school year.

The projected Bible curriculum for grades four through nine, and approved by the Federation of P.R. School Boards, is as follows:

1. Grades 4 and 5 will study Scripture with the thematic approach of the time-line, place, historical setting, and historical details, which younger minds in the primary grades cannot grasp. These children will be able to coordinate their newly found skills in geography and history with Biblical history. Far more important, however, is that the pupil at this age begins to see Scripture, not as "Bible stories," but as a historical chronology, a real geography, and a record of the continuous development of God's plan with His people in history.. The emphasis in both grades will be a thorough knowledge of the *facts* of Scripture as they fit into the whole, with fourth grade studying the Old Testament and fifth grade the New Testament.
2. Grades 6 and 7 will also study sacred history with a

thematic approach. As the pupils' insights and abilities grow, they will learn to see the line of the development of God's covenant, which is always the line of conflict and the antithesis. At this age children should no more view Scripture as a series of Bible stories, but they will learn to see its *organic* unity, the beauty of the unfolding of God's counsel in history. The sixth grade will see the Old Testament as the story of the one people, with all the signs and prophecies pointing to the coming of the new dispensation; and the seventh grade will see the New Testament in its relationship to the Old, as the fulfilment of prophecy.

3. Grades 8 and 9 will look into Scripture in more depth and with more perception, along the lines of isagogics, the contents of each book of Scripture and its canonical significance. The pupils will study, not necessarily in its order in the canon, the introduction to each book, the time of its writing, its human author, place in the canon, and an outline of its contents. This knowledge should furnish the grade-school graduate with a thorough overall understanding of Scripture, so that he looks not only *at* Scripture, not only *into* Scripture, but knows how to look at life *from* Scripture.

The projected work in these grades will take different formats from those in the primary grades, with emphasis on discussion, interpretation, and workbook assignments for the students. Although the work in preparing a Bible curriculum such as this proceeds slowly, with much preparation and study, if it may, in the providence of the Lord, be finished, it would furnish our covenant children with a solid Biblical foundation for later life in the church.

SUPPLEMENT

At the suggestion of the editorial committee of *Perspectives*. I have reproduced, and reduced for placement, a lesson and a worksheet as a sample. I have chosen Lesson 66 of Book 2, which is taught near the end of grade two, and I included the accompanying worksheet, parts 1 and 2, which covers Lessons 65 to 68.

Gertrude Hoeksema

LESSON 66

Scripture passage:

II Kings 22, 23:1-20; II Chronicles 34

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

When Amon died at a young age for a father--24 years--he left an eight-year-old son named Josiah. This boy, as old as we are, was not brought up in a home where Jehovah was worshipped. He lived in days of deepest evil, when all the people, especially the leaders of the land, tried to be worse than the heathen. His father and grandfather had tried to kill God's prophets; Jerusalem was filled with idols, the temple service was turned into the most filthy worship of the worst idols; and no one knew anything anymore about God's law. Yet this young king was a bright light in the land of Judah, for he served the Lord with eagerness, and with all his heart. We know why. It was because the Lord, by His grace and mercy, had called Josiah to be His child, and to lead His people back to Him in one last great revival.

LESSON MATERIAL

In this lesson about the reign of Josiah, we treat the reforms of the early part of his rule.

1. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

- a. Picture a bewildered young child, surrounded by the wickedness of heathen men, with a palace full of idol-worshippers. Because he was God's child, he had to find God's people. God saw to it that His priests and prophets were there to help and teach the child-king. One was Hilkiah, the high priest, two were prophets, Jeremiah and Zephaniah, each of whom wrote a book of the Bible, and one was a prophetess, Huldah.
- b. After he had ruled eight years, and was sixteen years old, Josiah was big enough to act as king by himself. He began to take away the idols from Jerusalem. He crushed them to fine dust and threw them over the graves of those who had worshipped them. He broke down heathen idols and altars not only in Jerusalem and in all the land of Judah, but he even went north (use map here) to the land of Israel. Most of the Israelites had been taken captive to faraway lands. But in a few of the tribes, some Israelites were left, and they began to join with the people of Judah, under the rule of Josiah. Josiah went to them, too, to break down the idol worship and bring the people back to the worship of Jehovah.

2. THE REPAIR OF THE TEMPLE

- a. After ten years of this, Josiah sent his men to Hilkiah, the high priest, with money he had collected in Israel. The Levites had a box for money at the door of the temple, and the people gave what they could. Now it was time to use the money to repair God's house. The carpenters, stone masons, builders of musical instruments, and the workers who carried the materials worked faithfully.
- b. When he was cleaning God's house, Hilkiah found a book of the law of God. He gave it to Shaphan, the scribe (the king's writer) who read it to Josiah. The king had never heard God's law before. Neither had the people. Imagine trying to worship Jehovah without His Word, with people who knew how to worship idols only. In His Word, the Lord told of the punishments that would come on Judah, ch. 34:21. Josiah was so sad and upset he tore his clothes.
- c. Hilkiah went to the prophetess, Huldah, who they knew would speak the word of the Lord. (Pause here to remind of the last prophetess they

studied: Deborah, the prophetess in Barak's time. See Lesson 93, Book One.) They asked whether Jehovah would really bring all those judgments on the people of Judah. She told how it would come true, vss. 23-25; but Josiah, whose heart was tender, humble, sad, and sorry would not see it come true. Note: have the pupils see the beautiful portrait of this spiritual king.

- d. Then the king called together the people of Judah and also from Israel (just as Hezekiah had done) and read the book of the law to them. The king promised (made a covenant) to keep Jehovah's commandments and teachings, and made the people promise, too.

3. THE FORCEFUL REFORMATION

- a. The idols had been thrown out of the temple, but the dishes made for them were still there. Josiah ordered them burned. He took away the idol priests, and those who served the sun, moon, and stars. The horses and chariots which the kings of Judah had given to the worship of the sun, and the altars for the worship of the sun on the roof of the palace of his grandfather, Amon, he burned, and threw the dust and ashes in the brook Kidron. Some of the idols which Solomon had made still stood on the mountain sides, ch. 23:13, and Josiah destroyed them and filled the places with the bones of dead men--to show his hatred for all the evil he was destroying.
- b. After Josiah had read the law, he understood much better how wrong it had been for Jeroboam and the ten tribes to go away from the worship of the temple, for God lived there in the days of the Old Testament. Jeroboam had gone away from God, and had made an altar at Bethel, with the golden calves.
- c. Review the story of I Kings 13:1-5 (Lesson 29). At last the prophet's words were coming true. Josiah went to Bethel, found the altar still there, took the bones of the wicked priests out of their graves, and burned them on the altar (as the prophet had said he would); but when Josiah read on one grave that the bones of God's prophet were there, he ordered his men to leave those bones alone. In Israel, too, he ground up the idols and altars to powder and burned them.
- d. All this was not very happy work for King Josiah. Yet it was the Lord's work and he did it with all his heart.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. We have noticed so often before that a God-fearing king had only a small number of God's people working with him in the service of God. In Josiah's time the number was very, very small. Most of the people went along with their king only on the outside, and did not really want to help him destroy the idols. That is why Josiah's work was so hard. He had to do much of it alone.
2. Imagine what it would be like to live among people who call themselves God's people, and never even hear God's Word. Would we be as shocked as Josiah was if we heard it for the first time? Will this story make us love God's Word and read it much more often, with much more thanks?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

The prophets tell us how bad the people of Judah really were. Ask your teacher to read Zeph. 3:1-4, or Jer. 3:6-14, or Jer. 15:5-7.

MEMORY WORK

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion," Jer. 3:14.

RESOURCE MATERIALS: Edersheim, pp. 177-189, Smith, pp. 583-586.

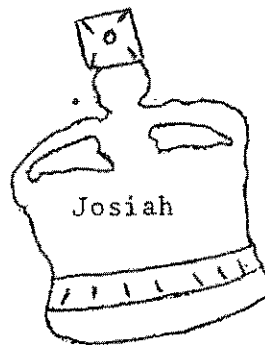
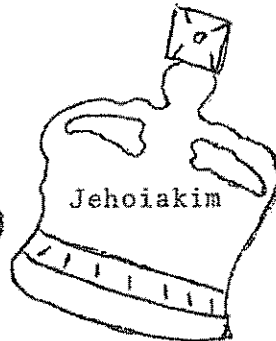
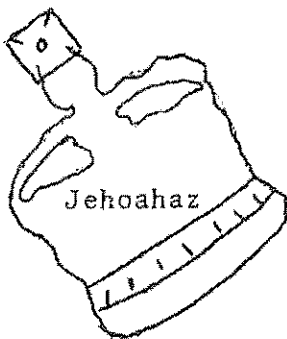
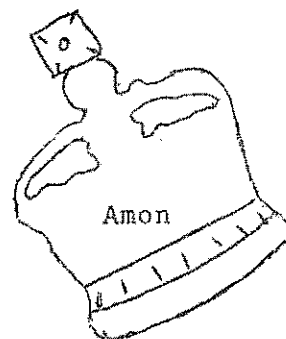
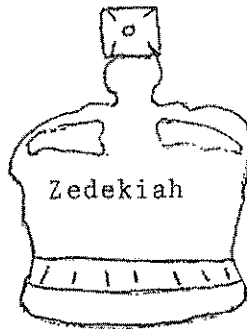
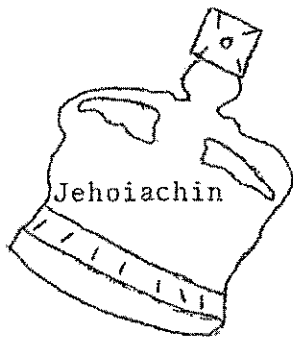
WORKSHEET 17

Lessons 65 to 68

Part 1. Match the numbers of the questions with the correct answers.
There is a space in front of each answer to write your number.

- | | | |
|-------|------------------|---|
| _____ | Passover | 1. Who was the son of Hezekiah who filled the land of Judah with idols? |
| _____ | Jeremiah | 2. What did Manasseh worship, besides idols? |
| _____ | Manasseh | 3. What did Manasseh do in prison? |
| _____ | Repented | 4. Who was his son, who was killed after he ruled two years? |
| _____ | Megiddo | 5. What did Josiah's high priest find in the temple, when he cleaned it? |
| _____ | Sun, moon, stars | 6. What did Judah and Israel celebrate in Josiah's time? |
| _____ | Amon | 7. Where was Josiah killed? |
| _____ | Jehoiachin | 8. What son of Josiah ruled next, for three months? |
| _____ | Jehoahaz | 9. What king of Babylon took Jehoiakim captive? |
| _____ | Zedekiah | 10. Who was the last king of Judah? |
| _____ | Book of the law | 11. Who was prophet at this time? |
| _____ | Nebuchadnezzar | 12. What king of Judah did the king of Babylon take out of prison in captivity? |

Part 2. After each question is the name of a color. Color the correct king's crown with that color.



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1. What king was important because he was in the line of Jesus? (purple)
 2. What king destroyed the idols in Judah and Israel? (blue)
 3. What king had his eyes put out by the Babylonians? (orange)
 4. What king ruled for eleven years in a rich palace while his poor people suffered? (green)
 5. What king was Manasseh's son? (black)
 6. What wicked king filled Jerusalem with innocent blood? (red)
 7. What king was Josiah's son, who was captured by the king of Egypt, after ruling three months? (yellow)