

Evaluation Results from participants of
"Exploring Preschool and Children's Sunday School Literature Options"
A Workshop Sponsored by CBF of North Carolina
February 7, 2006

Literature Publisher: Gospel Light

Age Groups for Which Literature is Produced:

Babies-Ones (Undated)
Twos and Threes
First-Second Grade
Third-Fourth Grade
Fifth-Sixth Grade

Literature Resources:

Teaching Pictures or Packs
Pupil's Leaflet or Book (nestled piece)
Resource Pack for Teacher
CD's of music
CD-Rom
Teacher's (Leader's) Guide
Bible Resource Book (3rd-6th grade)

Strongest Features:

1. Teaching pages fold in half to fit Bible to teach from
2. Easy to follow and prepare lesson—Teacher guides layout and info is clear and strong
3. Seemingly sound Biblical content and principles and age-appropriate activities (except for 4 and 5 year olds)
4. Life application in children's is strong
5. Format has good balance of discovery, study, and application
6. Thematic throughout the session
7. Variety of resources given and extra to be purchased—visually appealing
8. Choice and variety of activities is good---can be modified—some, though, are predictable (skits every week)

Weakest Features:

1. Significant difference between in-class activity book (poor) and take home parent piece (very good)
2. Teacher preparation is minimal as is Bible content for teaching the lesson—lack of Bible background for teachers
3. Nothing for physically or developmentally disabled
4. Use of Bible is minimal in preschool

Gospel Light continued

5. No Babies, Ones, or Kindergarten specific literature or helps—No babies and ones dated literature, only undated
6. Graphics are mixed—realistic with cartoons

General Impression:

1. above average in 2s and 3s preschool—possible option with adaptations
2. Possible option for several in group
3. Looking for “total package”—not worthwhile for overall program if some classes use it and some don’t---very weak in 4s and 5s
4. Doctrinal issues would take more study to determine if appropriate for each church
5. Some would enjoy teaching this literature
6. Children’s literature is better than preschool literature

Extremes from Ranking:

Format and Layout

- nice overview and list of materials
- Pupil guides concentric folding is good-- “nesting”
- Very Cartoonish graphics
- No suggestions for developmentally or physically disabled children
- Few if any suggestions for early arrivers/extending the lesson
- Good quality of materials

Bible Content and Usage

- Consistent thread of Scripture throughout unit
- Scripture references not used in 4 and 5 year olds
- 2 Translations used
- Goal and Focus sometimes unclear

Literature Publisher: Logos Production, Inc.

Name of Series/Literature: Seasons of the Spirit

Age Groups for Which Literature is Produced:

Ages 3-5

Ages 6-8

Ages 9-11

Literature Resources:

Teaching Pictures or Pack

Resource Pack for Teacher (limited)

CD's of music

Teacher's (Leader's) Guide

Online Resources

Strongest Features:

1. Multi-cultural
2. Theologically sound for some churches—follows the liturgical year
3. Congregational Unit may be helpful for pastor and music leader to include in with what the church is teaching---allows connection between lessons and other parts of congregational life
4. Outlines the structure for teacher—Gather, Engage, React, and Bless
5. Reality-based education, less emphasis on cartoon-like resources
6. In the back of the curriculum there are helps for questions of faith that preschoolers/children may have including pieces on utilizing spiritual practices

Weakest Features:

1. No interaction between children and Bible reading/memorization activities
2. Lack of teaching options for learning/developmental/physically disabled children
3. Linear style of teaching as opposed to multiple activities happening at the same time---no choices given—everyone including preschoolers complete an activity before moving to another one
4. Not enough hands on activities for the children
5. Graphics and posters not appealing

General Impression:

1. Would take some adapting especially with preschoolers
2. Work intensive for the teacher
3. All ages study the same passages
4. Heavy focus on the fine arts

Logos Continued

Extremes from Ranking:

Format and Layout

- Literature is too abstract
- Graphics are fine art
- One teaching plan—no choices
- Not appealing to teachers or children

Bible Content and Usage

- Not appropriate for all ages
- Doesn't encourage Bible skill/memorization development
- Follows liturgical year so consistent with church's doctrine

Educational Value

- A real challenge for teachers to prepare
- Aims not clear at all times
- Language abstract
- Appeals to variety of learning styles
- Inclusive of cultures

Literature Publisher: Lifeway

Name of Series/Literature: *Family Bible Study and Bible Foundations* (weaker—small church resource)

Age Groups for Which Literature is Produced:

Babies – Twos	First-Third Grade
Threes- Kindergarten	Fourth-Sixth Grade
First –Second Grade	Sixth Grade Only
Third-Fourth Grade	
Fifth- Sixth Grade	

Literature Resources:

- Teaching Pictures or Packs
- Pupil's Leaflet or Book (nestled piece)
- Resource Pack for Teacher
- CD's of music
- CD-Rom
- Teacher's (Leader's) Guide

Strongest Features:

1. Life application
2. Age-Appropriate —Educationally—methods
3. Emphasis on Bible—using it in teaching

Weakest Features:

1. Doctrinal differences for churches – doctrinal statement on inside cover of each book
2. Gender issues---culture---disabilities
3. Geared toward larger groups
4. Old Pictures—dated vs. fresh, extreme of presentation, inconsistencies

General Impression:

1. Large amount of preparation needed for preschool

Extremes from Ranking:

Format and Layout

- No color in teaching piece
- Moving to cartoonistic
- Preschool more focus and choices---grade-school not so much
- Good resources
- Nothing for developmentally/physically disabled children

Bible Content and Usage

- Good use of the Bible and Bible thoughts
- Good balance between OT and NT

Lifeway continued:

- Very good life application
- Plan of salvation is presented!! --- question age-appropriateness
- Heavy focus on evangelism

Educational Value

- Activities are hands-on
- Encourages critical-thinking
- Symbolic language used with children at times
- Methods do not overpower the message
- Focus on real people/children
- Gives choice of activities

Literature Publisher: Baptist General Convention of Texas

Name of Series/Literature: *BaptistWay Press*

Age Groups for Which Literature is Produced:

Babies
Ones/Twos
Middle Years (ages 2-3)
Older Years (ages 4-5)
1st-2nd Grade (Bible Adventurers)
3rd-4th Grade (Bible Explorers)
5th-6th Grade (Bible Followers)

Literature Resources:

Sample (Preview) Kit on web
Teacher's Guide
Pupil Leaflet can be downloaded and printed

Strongest Features:

1. Flexible, could be emailed, could be downloaded weekly to website—teachers can go online
2. Bible Content
3. Free
4. Age appropriate, variety of activities
5. Strong Bible Background for Teachers
6. After you get through 2 years, easy to redo

Weakest Features:

1. No resource kits, music
2. Plain
3. Training to make teacher friendly
4. Time consuming to get ready

General Impression:

1. Theologically sound overpowers practical issues
2. Material provides unit long project if you keep flipping pages
3. Preschool easy to follow and center-based activities
4. Nodded our heads yes that would consider using

Extremes from Ranking:

Format and Layout

- Children learn at own pace
- Only preschool had suggestions for learning disabled children
- Has preschool extended session worship time
- Clear life applications and teaching aims

BaptistWay continued

- Nothing for developmentally/physically disabled children

Bible Content and Usage

- Use of the Bible is encouraged
- Age appropriate for children with balanced coverage of OT and NT
- Not a real strength for Bible background for teachers
- Application is strong
- Process approach –each children's sessions ends with a nurture statement

Educational Value

- Teacher is challenged to prepare
 - Methods are not over-powering
 - Higher level learning is encouraged
 - Choice of activities are given
 - Concrete language is used
 - Not really inclusive of all cultures and no visuals to show this
- Excellent scope and sequence

Literature Publisher: Cokesbury

Name of Series/Literature: *Exploring Faith*

Age Groups for Which Literature is Produced:

Toddlers-Twos (Separate and not reviewed)

Preschool

K-1

2nd-3rd Grade

4th-5th Grade

Tweens in Transition

Literature Resources:

Teacher's Guide

Pupil Leaflet or Book

Resource Pack for Teacher (Class Pack)

CD of music

Fun Pack

Bible Brain Pack

Strongest Features:

1. Variety/flexibility of options and activities – more materials than you can use
--- sensory
2. Teacher friendly –good layout/organization
3. Bible stories were developmentally appropriate
4. Inclusiveness
5. Liturgical material (Advent, Lent)

Weakest Features:

1. Doctrinal issues (Wesley, infant baptism)
2. Weak on application (sometimes left at end)
3. Lack of hands-on Bible skills (use leaflet instead of Bible)
4. Lack of learning disabled material
5. NO preschool learning centers

General Impression:

1. NRSV translation is used
2. Extra activities can be used in Extended Session---helps on website are available

Literature Publisher: Cokesbury

Name of Series/Literature: *BibleZone Live*

Age Groups for Which Literature is Produced:

Threes- Kindergarten
First-Third Grade
Fourth-Sixth Grade

Literature Resources:

Resource Pack for Teacher
CD's of music
Teacher's (Leader's) Guide
Transparencies
(All items packaged together)

Strongest Features:

1. Cost effective – non-dated –can reuse
2. Easy to Use—layout is different and may be difficult to navigate at first, but each session has consistent components in predictable order so it is easy to follow after the first session
3. Versatile—can be used Sunday PM, Wednesday, Children's Worship, etc.

Weakest Features:

1. Reproducible sheets may sacrifice quality—all black and white
2. Bible material for teachers and children lacks depth
3. Teachers' guide can't be bought apart from kit

General Impression:

1. Preschool material strongest
2. Not a good choice for Sunday School
3. Difficult to use in groups larger than 12
4. No use of Bible by children

Extremes from Ranking:

Format and Layout

- Graphics are cartoon-like
- All do things at same time
- Nothing for developmentally/physically disabled

Bible Content and Usage

- Bible truths not presented at age-appropriate level
- Plan of salvation not appropriately presented
- Not a strong Bible background for teachers
- Balance of OT and NT

BibleZone continued . . .

Educational Value

- Teacher is challenged to prepare
- Preschool activities are generally age-appropriate---the children's activities not challenging enough
- Doesn't appeal to variety of learning styles
- Gender-inclusive
- Symbolic language is used
- Fantasy and cartoon characters are used
- Critical thinking not encouraged
- Choices are not given

Literature Publisher: Standard

Name of Series/Literature: *Heart Shapers*

Age Groups for Which Literature is Produced:

Toddlers– Twos
Preschool
Pre K-K
First –Second Grade
Third-Fourth Grade
Fifth- Sixth Grade

Literature Resources:

Sample Kit
Teaching Pictures or Packs
Pupil's Leaflet or Book (nestled piece)
Resource Pack for Teacher
CD's of music
CD-Rom
Teacher's (Leader's) Guide
Weekly magazine

Strongest Features:

1. Teacher-friendly—overview of lesson and steps given – timed out –tear out sheets – scripted
2. Has scope and sequence ---but balance of OT and NT isn't great
3. Additional resources--- preschool has additional lesson that can be used for Extended Session and Family sheets are given for each age group
4. Bible use--- in depth. . .memorization is encouraged

Weakest Features:

1. Age-Appropriateness --- preschool was too old and children seemed too young – needed to use 5th and 6th grade with 3rd and 4th grade, etc.
2. Low level learning activities—lack of creativity—lots of paper and pencil activities – busy work
3. Seemed “cheap” for cost – paper quality was low and matching games were used over and over
4. Bible background for teachers was weak – only one paragraph

General Impression:

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Group felt that 2 things would need to take place for a church to use this literature well

1. Increase Bible background for teachers
2. Provide additional activities/choices for teachers that were more creative

Standard continued. . . .

Extremes from Ranking:

Format and Layout

- Appeals to teachers, not children as much
- Graphics are more cartoon than realistic
- Teaching plan is easy to follow
- Limited early arrival activities, esp. in middle and older children
- No suggestions for developmentally/physically disabled

Bible Content and Usage

- Bible and Bible thoughts used in all ages
- Memorization and Bible skills are encouraged
- Balance of OT/NT --- spent several months in OT
- Bible Background for teachers weak

Educational Value

- Doesn't appeal to variety of learning styles
- Gender inclusive
- Critical thinking is encouraged
- Choice of activities is limited
- Learning centers for preschoolers difficult to follow

