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**A SUGGESTED UNIT OF GROUP GRADED LESSONS FOR THE
PRIMARY DEPARTMENT OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST
CHURCH OF AMERICA**

**A Thesis
Submitted to
The Department of Christian Education
Asbury Theological Seminary**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Religious Education**

**by
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Approved by: W. T. Dayton

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS	1
The problem	2
Statement of the problem	2
Limitations of the problem	2
Procedures of research	2
Definition of terms	3
Unit	3
Primary	3
Uniform	3
Closely graded	4
Group grading	4
Wesleyan Methodist Church of America	5
II. THE CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF THE PRIMARY	
CHILD	6
Physical characteristics and needs	9
Activity	9
Growth	14
Mental characteristics and needs	15
Reading and writing	15
Concrete rather than symbolic or figurative	
language	16

CHAPTER	PAGE
Not particularly time, space and number	
conscious	20
Curious	21
Retentive memory	21
Social characteristics and needs	22
In a larger world	22
Likes children of own age	23
Sympathetic	23
A ready helper	24
Spiritual characteristics and needs	25
Simplicity of faith	25
Primaries learn about God	28
Primaries learn about Jesus	30
The Bible and primary children	32
Primaries and prayer	33
Primaries and the church	34
Moral Conduct	34
Lack of prejudice and uninhibited sincerity	35
Summary	36
III. A PARTIAL EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON OUTLINES USED FOR PRIMARY CHILDREN IN WESLEYAN METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOLS	38

CHAPTER	PAGE
The National Sunday School Association lesson	
outlines	38
The preparation of materials	38
The guiding principles	39
The beginning of the series	40
Reason for the evaluation	40
Procedure for evaluation	40
The N. S. S. A. lessons examined in the light	
of graded materials	44
A bird's-eye view	44
Quarterly topics under question	44
N. S. S. A. lessons examined in the light of	
the characteristics and needs of the primary	
child	53
Physical requirements	53
Mental characteristics	53
Figurative and symbolical language	55
Time, space, and numbers	56
The social aspect	57
Adaptation to spiritual needs	57
Conclusions from N. S. S. A. evaluation	59
IV. A SUGGESTED THREE-YEAR UNIT OF GROUP GRADED LESSONS FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT	62

CHAPTER	PAGE
Group graded lessons discussed	62
A definition	62
Appropriateness for smaller schools	63
Criticism of group grading	65
What the unit covers	65
The scope	65
The Old Testament	66
The New Testament	68
How does the plan work?	69
The material is not dated	69
Numbering the three-year cycle	71
Application to the primary department	71
A suggested unit	72
Topical schedule and detailed listing	72
A brief summary	86
V. CONCLUSION	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	92

TABLE	PAGE
I. Lesson Schedule--National Sunday School	
Association Lesson Outlines	45
II. N. S. S. A. lesson outlines. Second quarter,	
1956. Height of the kingdom	47
III. N. S. S. A. lesson outlines. Third quarter,	
1956. Divided kingdoms	48
IV. N. S. S. A. lesson outlines. Third quarter,	
1957. Period of exile	49
V. N. S. S. A. lesson outlines. Fourth quarter,	
1957. Little known Bible characters	50
VI. N. S. S. A. lesson outlines. Second quarter,	
1958. Return of exiles	51
VII. N. S. S. A. lesson outlines. Third quarter,	
1958. Prophets of Israel	52
VIII. Three-Year lesson schedule for the primary	
department	73

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Throughout the history of the Sunday school movement in the United States, subject matter for teaching has been a vital problem. Early American Sunday schools experienced several systems of teaching and curriculum. First was the catechetical method of study, which was European in background. This in time gave place to great emphasis on memory work. A period of confusion in the mid-nineteenth century, resulting from a mass of greatly divergent plans in all denominations, was culminated by the authorization of the preparation of the International Uniform Lessons in 1872.

Dissatisfaction with the Uniform series brought to the Sunday school movement the closely graded lessons in 1908, and the group graded series in 1922.

The question of curriculum and proper grading of materials is still a vital issue. Since the evangelical denominations are concerned both with the salvation of souls and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, it is imperative that the most effective curriculum plan be utilized by these bodies.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study is (1) to inquire into the characteristics and requirements of the primary child; (2) to review the present curriculum used for the Primary Department of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, noting particularly the weaknesses of the Uniform Lesson plan which is being followed; and (3) to outline a suggested unit of study for the primary age level, following the group graded plan.

Limitations of the problem. This investigation is limited to the study of the primary child and to the body of knowledge applicable to his age level, especially as it relates to Sunday school literature. Particular attention will be given to the Primary Department of the Sunday School in the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America.

Procedures of research. Books and periodicals in the fields of Christian education, curriculum, organization, administration, method, and child study provide the background material for this investigation.

Special literature for group graded lessons was secured from Baptist Publications of Denver, Colorado, and the Christian Reformed Publishing House of Grand Rapids, Michigan, to supplement curriculum materials of some twenty denominations and publishing houses available in the Asbury

Theological Seminary Library.

The King James Version of the Bible was the main source for the planning of the suggested unit of group graded lessons outlined in Chapter IV.

George E. Failing, Assistant Editor of the Sunday School Department of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, provided material and counsel that was pertinent.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Unit. A unit of work in this study is a three-year cycle of Sunday school lessons.

Primary. Children in the first, second, and third grades of school, and usually six, seven, and eight years of age are considered primary children.

Uniform. The Uniform Series of Sunday school lessons as known to the Sunday school movement in America are lessons having a core curriculum of Bible material which is used as a basis for the lessons of all ages in the Sunday school. There are two well-known uniform series. The oldest and most widely used series is published by The Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ of the United States of America and is known as the International Sunday School Lessons. These lessons first received recognition in 1872, when the plan was accepted

at the Fifth National Sunday School Convention held in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The other uniform series, and the one followed by the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, is known as the National Sunday School Association Uniform Bible Lesson Outlines and is published by the National Sunday School Association. This course was introduced to the public in 1947, sponsored by a group of evangelical leaders who were dissatisfied with the liberal trends of the International Sunday School Lesson Outlines.

Closely Graded. The closely graded Sunday school series has a different lesson for each grade level, advancing by one-year steps as does the public school educational system. The six-year old may be studying about Moses, the seven-year old about Abraham, and the eight-year old about still a different subject. Thus, there is little repetition of subject matter from the time the child enters the kindergarten class until he is of college age. Unification of the entire Sunday school is difficult with this system.

Group Grading. The group graded series, as referred to in Sunday school literature, is prepared for the departmental plan of classification rather than for grading by single years, as in the closely graded system and the public schools. Therefore, progress upward is made by three-year

steps, while the closely graded series advances by single steps.

No matter when a child enters the primary department he will be taught the entire cycle of lessons during his three years in the department. If the class is on Year II of the cycle when a six-year old enters the department, when he is seven he will have the lessons for Year III, and when he is eight the lessons for Year I will be presented. This does not mean he will be getting easier material when he is eight, for there is no gradation of material within the unit. The aim has been to accommodate the three age levels within the group, using the seven-year old as a median.

"Cycle graded" or "departmental graded" lessons are other terms used for this same method.

Wesleyan Methodist Church of America. The Yearbook of American Churches gives the following definition about the Wesleyan Methodist Church:

This body was formed at Utica, New York, in 1843, during the agitation of the slavery question in the Methodist Conferences in New York State. After the Civil War and the passing of the slavery issue, it stressed the doctrine of entire sanctification.

Churches: 1,005. Inclusive Membership: 35,924.
 Sunday or Sabbath Schools: 1,069. Total enrollment:
 120,710.
 Ordained clergy having charges: 1,005.¹

¹Benson Y. Landis (ed.), Yearbook of American Churches, Edition for 1959. Published by the Office of Publications and Distribution of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (New York 10, New York, 1958), p. 89.

CHAPTER II

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF THE PRIMARY CHILD

Primary children, usually six, seven, and eight years of age, and in the first, second, and third grades of school, have interesting and varied characteristics and much has been written concerning them. Some writers, especially those in secular education, have discussed a single age level, for example, the six-year old; and although there are some rather distinct differences in the three ages represented in the primary group, yet general characteristics are also obvious.

Marjorie E. A. Clark, a British writer, lists the outstanding characteristics of children from five to seven (the British kindergarten) as: (1) activity with a purpose, (2) urge to create, (3) imagination, (4) imitation, (5) curiosity, (6) trustfulness, and (7) sympathy.¹

Primary children are (1) able to live in a larger world, (2) learning to read and write, and (3) learning greater self-control, according to Ethel L. Smither. She lists their

¹Marjorie E. A. Clark, Methods of Teaching Religion to Children (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), pp. 85-90.

limitations as reading, writing, and expression, no understanding of symbols, little time or space sense, and physical and emotional immaturity.²

The great Sunday school promoter of the mid-nineteenth century, John H. Vincent, in his book The Modern Sunday-School describes the primary youngster as one who (1) lives in the world of sense, (2) lives in a world of imagination, (3) is always ready for a story, (4) lives in a world of unquestioning faith, and (5) has a retentive memory.³

A pithy description of the characteristics of these children is given by James L. Hymes, Jr., well-known child development specialist: (1) Growers: eager to do more, glad to be big; (2) Learners: excited to find out, thrilled with know-how; (3) Practicers: hard-working, drilling themselves, striving to become skilled.⁴

As has been mentioned, primary children have general characteristics. Yet it may be well to observe the differ-

²Ethel L. Smither, Teaching Primaries in the Church School (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1930), pp. 17-20.

³John H. Vincent, The Modern Sunday-School (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1887), pp. 200, 204.

⁴James L. Hymes, Jr., Understanding Your Child (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 13.

ences set down by a group of authors in a book entitled, Understanding Your Child.

Jenkins, Schacter, and Bauer say that being six has special significance because this is the age when the youngster with pride can say, "Now I am six and I can go to school." During this time progress in physical development is uneven. Activity is one of the outstanding traits. These children rush about in their play, jump up from the table at mealtimes, wriggle in their seats at school, and gesture freely as they talk. Group activities gain in popularity and there are spontaneous and varied interests in play. Eagerness is one of the most endearing traits of the six-year old.

The seven-year old is full of vitality and energy, but tires easily. He is restless. His language develops rapidly, he enjoys songs, rhythms and stories. He stands up for his own rights on the playground. This child enters competitive games, is sensitive, yet with a drive toward independence. He is anxious to do well in his school work, lives in the present, his ethical sense is beginning to develop, and he is concerned about the feelings and attitudes of others.

Eight is an "eager year." The eight-year old is "halfway up the stairs." Although he is not as responsible

as he will be at nine, neither is he a little child. He has better coordination physically, likes organized games, and wants a "best friend." He is interested in others and also in "collections." He is full of energy and the time element means more to him.⁵

For the purpose of further elucidation, this study of the general characteristics and the associated needs of the primary child is divided into four groups and will be presented in the following order: (1) physical, (2) mental, (3) social, and (4) spiritual.

I. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

Activity. There is probably no single word which better describes the primary child from a physical standpoint than the word "activity." A glance from the window shows him busily kicking some leaves along the street while waiting for his mother, playing hop-scotch by himself or with a friend, or engaged in a game of tag. Though a couple of boys are seated on the curb-edge to inspect a bug just taken into captivity, they do not sit for long; they are soon on the march down the street.

⁵Gladys Jenkins, Helen Shacter, William Bauer, These Are Your Children (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1949), Inside front and back covers.

But there is a reason for the boundless activity of the primary child. This is his way of satisfying the need for growth and learning. As he moves about and plays, muscle development and coordination are taking place. Through the activities, which many times are repeated over and over again, there is a learning process going on--and soon these activities become automatic.

Having considered this physical characteristic of activity, it is necessary to notice the associated needs as they pertain to the primary child and his relationships with the Sunday school.

Although John H. Vincent wrote his book on The Modern Sunday-School in 1887, and although the term "infant" was applied to children six, seven, and eight years of age, he had some good advice for directing the boundless energy of primaries in the Sunday school class.

Systematize the "fidgets" once in a while into pleasant gymnastic exercise of some sort. Let the class fold arms, rise and sit, twirl fingers, and turn bodies, march and countermarch, if you please, just as they do in every well-regulated secular infant school. It seems to me I could usually in some way connect the facts of the lesson with these movements, so as to make even the relaxation of the class a medium of instruction in the lesson for the day.⁶

⁶Vincent, op. cit., p. 204.

By following Mr. Vincent's suggestion, a teacher in presenting the lesson of the little boy who gave his five loaves and two fish to Jesus, could have the children hold up their arms to show how many fish there were. They could stand in groups of five, each one pretending to be a loaf, thus illustrating how many loaves were given. One child could hand something to the teacher, signifying the giving of what he had. The children could all sit on the floor and in this way illustrate the words, "And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass. . ."⁷ This type of activity gives the children an opportunity to move about in an orderly and purposeful manner.

The love of activity in the primary child is further cared for by keeping his interest stimulated. Much complaint about children with the "wiggles" is due to an ill-prepared lesson or to a teacher who herself lacks vitality and activity.

Story telling is a natural for these first, second, and third graders. But the story must be well prepared and well told--not read from a book!

Archa O. Dart calls a well-told story the "magic

⁷Matthew 14:19.

key," and he gives the following illustration:

The school at Burk's Hollow was notoriously bad. Teachers who could or would stay over a month were something of a curiosity in that neighborhood. Some of the older boys devoted much of their time and talent to studying up novel and unique ways of defying wisdom's right to intrude on their understanding. This had a tendency to keep the teacher in a state of perplexity. This same group of rustic lads was quick to dub each new teacher as the "soft soap lady" who let them do as they pleased, or the "wildcat fighter" who might bite and scratch if given an opportunity, or the "sorry sister" who was always whining about their naughty deeds.

To this school came Ruth Harris, a vest-pocket edition of charming, American womanhood. With a sincere desire to inspire these children of the hills to nobler ambition and worth-while living, and knowing something of the fate of some of her predecessors, Miss Harris gave a great deal of thought to her method of approach. The first day of school she used the teacher's magic key--the story. This placed the children on a friendly relationship with her immediately, rather than at swords' points, as the reading of rules so often did.

Instead of the usual opening statement, "Children, you have had a long vacation. It is now over. Do not forget that from this day on your first responsibility is to get your lessons." She began something like this:

"I wonder if I have a B. F. Singleton in the room this morning. He was in the first grade with a beard eighteen inches long." Then she told the story of this man who although grown and married had determined to get an education. He finished grammar school, high school, and college, served as editor of a paper for a time, held a political office a few years, and at the time she was in school was the college president.⁸

⁸Archa O. Dart, Tips for Storytellers (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1949), pp. 55-56.

"The story is one of the most powerful teaching aids known,"⁹ and "The Bible is the finest story source book in existence,"¹⁰ Mr. Dart goes on to say.

He verifies the association of interest and attention by saying,

Everyone is interested in a story--the adult, the child, and the young person. Children are a good barometer of interest. A speaker never has to guess if his audience is interested or not if he watches the children. Adults might be greatly bored, yet will sit still and appear interested for courtesy's sake, but not so with the children. If they like it, their eyes will tell. If they are not interested, their hands and feet will show it.¹¹

Every teacher should learn to be a good storyteller. Some may have a more natural gift than others along this line, but with hard work and practice, storytelling can become an art. A teacher can practice on the little folks in her home or on the neighbor children. Children are always ready to listen to a story.

Objects can also be used to good advantage in teaching primaries. In an 1880 setting, Vincent gives some good advice about the use of objects in teaching these active youngsters:

⁹Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹Ibid., p. 10.

In teaching little people we must use objects that appeal to the sight. The eye receives more knowledge, and that more readily, than the ear. Hence eye-teaching is more effective than any other. You may discourse from the pulpit with the eloquence of a Chrysostom, but if the sexton should carry his taper about to light the gas-burners all your oratory will go for nothing. That little tongue of flame will win the attention of your audience in spite of you. Hence in teaching children, who have still less power of self-direction than adults, so far as attention is concerned, you must use objects, or draw word-pictures, or tell stories and parables, that by putting knowledge in concrete forms you may win and retain the attention of your pupils.¹²

It is not necessary to have elaborate objects to teach children, in fact, the more simple and commonplace the article, the more effective it may be. A primary teacher should use objects freely in her class work.

Growth. The physical growth of children during this primary age is uneven. There seems to be spurts of growth and then plateaus of inactivity. Lois LeBar describes this growing process rather well when she says, "The toothless grin of the seven- and eight-year olds is indicative of their uneven and incomplete growth."¹³

During the three years in the primary department weight gains exceed height gains. Physical defects begin

¹²Vincent, op. cit., p. 206.

¹³Lois E. LeBar, Children in the Bible School (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1952), p. 122.

to develop during these years and children's diseases are prevalent.

Finer muscle control is difficult and emphasis is placed upon activities which stress the simpler muscle coordination. This is especially true of the six-year old. Much finer muscle coordination is possible for the child who has reached his eight-year old mark.

Although these children seem to have boundless energy, care needs to be taken, for they tire easily. Energy and vitality fluctuate. They need at least nine or ten hours of rest.

II. MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ASSOCIATED NEEDS

Reading and writing. A little lad, after his first day at school was heard to remark, "I'm not going back to school any more. I was the only one who couldn't read and write!" And so it sometimes was in the little country school where a six-year old might chance to be the only first-grader. But the lad was soon to learn that this is the purpose of school and that it is during the primary years that a certain proficiency in both reading and writing is attained. How proud they are as they write their first words and their first sentences. How eager they are to learn new words so they can read the stories in their

first grade readers.

The matter of vocabulary is an important item to consider when thinking about the mental abilities of primaries. The average vocabulary of children at different ages is tabulated in Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence by Cole and Morgan, and lists a speaking vocabulary of 2,562 words for the six-year old, 3,400 for those of seven years, while the eight-year olds were credited with 4,100 spoken words.¹⁴

In spite of the fact that the speaking vocabulary of these youngsters is in the lower thousands, the matter of words at this age level is a very important one as viewed from the standpoint of the Sunday school. The limited vocabulary of the "early" primary child has to be constantly kept in mind. "To speak to children best, one uses direct speech, simple sentences, and employs nouns and verbs generously."¹⁵

As simple a term as "praise" was found to be understood by only ten percent of Beginners, eight percent of

¹⁴Luella Cole and John J. B. Morgan, Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1947), p. 330.

¹⁵Lewis Joseph Sherrill, Understanding Children (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1939), p. 132.

Primary and thirty-four percent of Juniors when a questionnaire dealing with Biblical language was administered to a group of youngsters.¹⁶

The lack of understanding of many terms, which would appear common to the teacher, is seen in some rather humorous examples of misquotations by primary children:

1. "Surely good Mrs. Murphy shall follow me all the days of my life."
2. "Here our grapey dishens bringing."
3. "Dare to have a purpa's (?) fur and dare to make it known."
4. "Sewing in the morning . . . bringing in the sheets."
5. "I would rather be a dorky bird in the house of my God."
6. "Sweet land of liver tea, of thee I sing."
7. "Naaman was turned into a leopard. In a later retelling of the story, this naturally became 'he was turned into a tiger or something.'"¹⁷

Had these verses been carefully explained to the children when they were mentioned in class, correct understanding of their meaning would probably have resulted.

An opportunity for the children to read and write during the class period gives the teacher an opportunity to notice vocabulary deficiencies. A list of ninety-six words

¹⁶LeBar, op. cit., p. 141.

¹⁷Mary T. Whitley, A Study of the Primary Child (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1922), p. 69.

to be added to the Bible vocabulary of the primary child is provided in flash card form by the Sunday School House in Glendale, California.¹⁸ Lois LeBar suggests words to be added to the Bible vocabulary in each department of the Sunday school.¹⁹

Concrete rather than symbolic or figurative language.

Although the primary age group is known as the "motor" rather than the "sensory" age, still much of their thinking is connected with the senses. It is still a matter of what is seen, felt, heard, smelled, or tasted. They connect the things they are learning with something that is already real to them.

Lewis J. Sherrill says that in giving definitions, children connect the word asked them with the use which is made of the word. A child of six or seven may have said, "A horse is to ride; a village is to buy candy in; a bird is to make meat with; and a mama is to take care of children."²⁰

¹⁸Gospel Light Press, Glendale 6, California. (Bible Word Cards).

¹⁹LeBar, op. cit., p. 142.

²⁰Sherrill, op. cit. p. 133.

Thus it appears that early ideas connected with a word carry a large element of association with doing and action. Accordingly, in dealing with new words and ideas, especially with Beginners and Primaries, it appears wise to put our explanations in a way which will correspond to this habit of thinking in childhood.²¹

There is a tendency to ask why a child is not able to understand symbols and figures of speech when he loves to "pretend" and his imagination is so active. In symbolical language and also in the use of the figurative a person moves from the concrete to the abstract. When a child "pretends" he imagines one concrete to be something else which is concrete.²² Thus he keeps within the realm of that with which he is acquainted. A child converts a flower bed into a beautiful lake--but it is still something concrete. Dad is down on his hands-and-knees and is no longer dad, but now he is a riding horse--and no other than "Black Beauty!"

The fact that highly symbolical language is hard for children to understand should always be remembered by the primary teacher. Some children have been frightened by the term "giving my heart to Jesus." This needs to be

²¹Ibid.

²²LeBar, op. cit., p. 156.

carefully explained. The fact that Jesus would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly would be hard to explain to these children.

It is evident, however, that during this three-year period children come to distinguish between fact and fancy. Children now begin to ask, when a story is told, "Is that a true story?" or "Did that really happen?"

Not particularly time, space and number conscious.
 "Here and now" is the most important thing to these interesting little people. They are not concerned about planning ahead for tomorrow.

Time, like distance, is not a clear concept; their interest is in the present, in what is happening now. Six-year olds cannot plan much for the future, nor should they be expected to accept responsibilities which involve perception of time. "We will do this after recess," is more meaningful to a roomful of first-graders than "in half an hour."²³

Ethel Smither, in writing about these youngsters, said that for a teacher to spend a great deal of time arranging materials in chronological order and planning to bring out rich historical backgrounds contributed more confusion than understanding. A series of Bible stories that had been arranged in the order of appearance in the

²³Jenkins, Shacter, Bauer, op. cit., p. 48.

Bible did not carry a time sequence for the six and seven-year olds. Religion should be practical and linked with familiar things of everyday life.²⁴

Curious. A father was heard to remark that his son was a member of the F. B. I. Primaries could easily belong to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for "what" and "why" are two characteristic words of this age. This is a healthy sign for the child is learning. A parent or teacher should be thankful for this curiosity, because the listless child who never asks a question is cause for concern.

Retentive memory. Child psychologists agree that memorization at this period is mechanical rather than logical. Children learn easily at this age because they do not mind drudgery, and also because their minds are not cluttered with so many other things; but whether a child learns more readily than an adult is still a debated question.

Memory work for primaries can be meaningful. "Be ye kind one to another"²⁵ can be tied up to everyday living with brothers, sisters, and friends. "Honor thy father and thy mother"²⁶ can be illustrated concretely by the children themselves who can give numerous examples of the way they

²⁴Smither, op. cit., p. 19.

²⁵Ephesians 4:32a.

²⁶Exodus 20:12.

can fulfill this verse.

III. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

A larger world. From birth until six the child's world is usually composed of his home and family, the little children next door, and his Sunday school class. But now he has entered into a larger world. School has brought him new social contacts. He is now with his teacher as many of his waking hours as he is with his mother. He is associated with a large number of children in the classroom and on the playground. He is now no longer the center of his universe. As he seeks playmates his own age, his self-centeredness gives way and he has to learn some of the give and take of life. Even though the primary child still thinks in terms of "me" and "mine," it is now on a broader scale--"my teacher," "my school," "my town," and "my country."

During the time the child is being introduced into a larger world there is need for additional understanding on the part of his parents and his Sunday school teacher. He is struggling between the security of the home and the demands made upon him by the outside world. Adult approval is sought, and praise is thrived upon.

Likes children of own age. To children just starting to school, not much thought is given to the difference in sex. They play with boys and girls equally well, although sometimes because of the forms of play there is a separation. Boys usually like more strenuous exercise, while the girls like to play house and to play with dolls.

Sympathetic. Children at this age are especially sympathetic. Margaret Clark mentions sympathy as one of the characteristics of the kindergarten child (ages five to seven in Britain) and gives the following illustrations:

A small boy who was planning the purchase of Easter eggs for his family came to one of his two aunts and said, "I'm afraid I won't have enough money to buy an egg for you and Auntie Margaret, so I thought I'd better get it for her because I think she'd mind most". An hour later an excited little boy with shining eyes dashed back into the room and held out a paper bag. "Here you are, Auntie", he shouted, "I managed it, I managed it after all!"

Another boy of Kindergarten age noticed that a visitor was being neglected by his elder sister and exclaimed, "Oh, poor Miss C----, she's all alone, I must go to her." After clambering over some obstacles that separated them he sat down very close to her, saying, "Now you won't be lonely any more". A little girl was making Easter Cards for her relatives one year, but insisted that she must also buy a proper one for one of them, "Because she's religious."²⁷

²⁷ Clark, op. cit., p. 90.

Miss Clark then went on to point out that this characteristic sympathy is very important because by means of it needs of missions and hospitals can be made very important to children. By it can be laid the foundations for later teaching concerning a personal part in the work of Christ's Kingdom.²⁸

A ready helper. "Let me run the lawnmower all by myself!" "Let me do the dishes all alone!" These are typical expressions from children of primary age. Such adventures, however, usually turn out to be a game and assistance is needed for the completion of the task, but it brings into focus the willing heart of the primary child. In the Sunday school room the children who come early can help the teacher arrange the chairs. They will soon tell their parents they have to go early because they "have to help the teacher get ready for class." They like to assist in taking the offering and passing the papers. To the alert teacher there are many little jobs which can be done by the pupils.

The practical utilization of this "helpful" spirit by the teacher often proves to be the solution to a discipline problem. Desire for attention sometimes causes a

²⁸Ibid., p. 91.

child to be unruly, and this need can be satisfied by employing him with some simple duty during the class period, or before or after Sunday school. Through this means the children are also taught how they can be God's helpers.

IV. SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

Simplicity of faith. When the disciples of Jesus were disputing as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of God, Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst of them, saying, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."²⁹ What was there about a little child to which Jesus could have been referring? It certainly was not the physical characteristics or intellectual abilities. The discussion had been about greatness and Jesus mentions specifically the matter of humility. Humility carries with it the thought of submission and meekness; while pride is the opposite--the idea of self-sufficiency and independence is predominant. In humility there is

²⁹ Matthew 18:3-4.

simplicity and trust. This quality is found in children and is perhaps that about which Jesus was speaking.

Immediately following the occasion when Jesus placed the little child in the midst, is found the example of an adult all entangled with the cares of this life. A young man had come running to Jesus, kneeled before him, and asked what he should do to inherit eternal life. He knew all the answers and had kept all the commandments from his youth up, but "he went away grieved" when Jesus asked him to sell all and follow him with a simple, childlike trustfulness, "for he had great possessions."³⁰

How different this is from a child's implicit faith as seen in the trust he has in his parents. If he needs a pair of shoes he does not embark upon a long discourse as to his worthiness and his need. He just pulls his dad's coat tail and says, "See this hole in my shoe, Dad!" That is sufficient for the father and as soon as possible the need is taken care of. To him all needs are met in his father. Here is an admirable trustfulness and an unworried, unquestioning faith.

A child's trust in his parents provides a natural

³⁰Mark 10:17-22.

avenue for his trust in God. As one little boy told another, "My daddy says it's so, and it is so whether it's so or not."³¹

Another illustration of unquestioning faith is seen in Steve who wanted to climb into bed with Mom for a final morning nap and in so doing accidentally hit his knee on the sideboard of the bed. Holding his knee he exclaimed, "Who gave me this knee anyway?" His mother said, "Why, God did." To which the reply came, "Drilled it right on?" His dad's electric drill was the most powerful thing he could think of at the moment and if mom said God gave him that knee, that was sufficient for him. God had a way of attaching it.

The teacher of primary children has in her hands this wonderful characteristic of simple faith. The opportunity of channeling it is unequalled at any other age level, and each opportunity should be "bought up" for as Lois LeBar asserts,

Early childhood's natural faith and dependency are soon outgrown. Said the prophet of old to his king, "As thy servant was busy here and there, he [my charge] was gone" (I Kings 20:40). Likewise, parents and teachers must often say regretfully to their King,

³¹Eva B. McCallum, *Character Guidance and Occupations for Children* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1929), p. 121.

"As Thy servant was busy here and there, my charge, the child, was gone." Faith is natural to a child, for complete physical dependence is accompanied by absolute emotional confidence.³²

How this faith is to be directed is an important question to the Sunday school. The child must be taught about God, about Jesus, the Bible, prayer, and the church. In this connection there is a two-fold responsibility--that of the Sunday school and that of the teacher. The primary teacher should study the needs of her pupils and beam her lessons to fit these requirements. Also the literature provided by the Sunday school should be graded specifically for the six, seven, and eight-year olds.

Primaries learn about God. In a list of objectives for the Christian education of primary children, the Christian Board of Publications of St. Louis, Missouri, says the primary child's relationship to God should be: "To know that God is good and loving; that he is Creator of the world and still at work in the world; that he is always near and we may talk to him any time and anywhere."³³

³² LeBar, op. cit., p. 23.

³³ Plans and Materials for Work with Primary Children of the Church (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1952), p. 32.

Before a child becomes of school age he understands God as Father, as Friend, that He is good, and that He cares for His children. He is taught that God made this beautiful world. During the primary years these concepts begin to expand. The child understands that God not only created the world but that He is still at work in His world. As he is introduced to some of God's physical laws he comes to feel that God is not only powerful and loving, but that He has a certain system of working; that He is dependable.³⁴

He also begins to realize God is working in the spiritual realm. As he is taught the series of lessons on Joseph, he sees that God is working for Joseph and that it is He who causes all that Joseph does to prosper.

As he studies the miracles of Jesus he learns that the soul can be healed as well as the body.

Paul's missionary journeys arouse in the primary student a realization that God cares for all, and that part of our work as a Christian is to tell others about Him.

Children of six, seven, and eight are also helped to a realization that they are personally included in God's

³⁴Wilbur H. Cramblet, Objectives for the Christian Education of Children (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1955, Pamphlet), pp. 6-10.

love and that they have a responsibility toward God; that sin and wrongdoing are out of harmony with His will, and that if they sincerely come to Him and ask His forgiveness when they have done wrong, He will forgive them and give them strength to please Him in their living.³⁵

It is sometimes difficult to know just how far to go in teaching a child concerning God, but often it is found that his questions are an indication of what he should be taught. "He may ask some things that we think he is not able to understand, or that we are not able to answer. However, 'A child's questions indicate his capacity to receive . . .'"³⁶

Primaryes learn about Jesus. They learn that Jesus is God's Son, the one who tells us more about God, and the one who forgives our sins. He is also the one who performs miracles. Eva B. McCallum says that "from six to eight is sometimes called the wonder age and the miracles of Jesus have special appeal at that time."³⁷

When a child reaches the age of seven or eight he

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶McCallum, op. cit., p. 119.

³⁷Ibid., p. 126.

understands more about the crucifixion of Jesus, and the meaning of His death on the cross.

It is during these years that children who have been reared in Christian homes often make a personal decision for Christ. Some feel that this decision for Christ must be made in later childhood,³⁸ but personal testimony bears out the fact that many children are saved during the primary years. The following testimony is from a teacher who had for years worked with young people, and at first doubted the possibility of the conversion of Primary children.

Our greatest problem in the fall was that of discipline. Right up until Christmas we had behavior of the kind that had this poor superintendent wondering if those boys were demon-possessed. We made it a matter of real prayer and, as usual, God answered in a way that left us speechless with delight.

Four Sundays ago Don told us how he had been saved while at home. The next Sunday Gerald came and described how he had gone home from Sunday School the previous Sunday and, in the afternoon, knelt down by himself and asked God to save him and help him be a good boy. The next week Glenn said that he had been saved quite a while ago, but hadn't told us about it, and wanted to do so. About this time, I was fairly bursting with happiness. When Kenny told us last Sunday that he had been saved and was going to be a different boy, we all said with real meaning, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

³⁸Clarence H. Benson, An Introduction to Child Study (Chicago: Moody Press, 1942), p. 141.

Do all superintendents experience this same joy in working with children? I'm still so very green, and I'm sure I make lots of mistakes, but the Lord has been so gracious. When I think of the years of hard labor with Intermediates and Seniors, I'm more than ever determined that every Primary I have the privilege of teaching will know how to be saved, and I trust many of them will accept Him early in life.³⁹

The Bible and primary children. The Bible is God's holy Word and His message to men. For the primary children it might be compared to a letter which He has written to us telling us that He sent His Son to bring salvation; telling us how He wants us to live, and that we can bring others to know the love of God.

The Sunday school teacher should make use of her Bible in the teaching session. It should be much in evidence--in her hand or on her lap while she tells the Bible story. Snatches of the story should be read directly from the Word, and she should often repeat, "The Bible says" Thus the children will come to have a sense of the importance of the Bible in the Christian's life.

Primary children should learn the proper care for the Bible--that it is to be treated with love and respect because it is God's special book to us. They should early be encouraged to carry their Bibles or Testaments with them

³⁹ LeBar, op. cit., pp. 181-182.

to church. Occasionally the teacher should have them read some of the easier verses.

It is important to give instruction concerning it's history--how it came to us. They should know that it is a "library" of books although consisting of only one volume, for there are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New.

Primaries and prayer. The simple faith of primary children makes prayer natural for them. They feel that God is their Father and is ever near them, and that He can hear them whenever they call on His name. Children reared in a Christian home hear prayer from their earliest moments. As soon as they can speak, they lisp the name of Jesus.

In Sunday school class there is opportunity for prayer. The children are free to tell about prayers Jesus has answered for them and always have on the tips of their tongues some request about which to pray. They know someone who is ill; they have some personal interests about which they want to pray. "Pray for my Dad on the road," is typical. These children often volunteer to pray. Thus, those who are more forward about praying in public are an encouragement to others who are more reticent. Children should be encouraged to pray voluntarily, but they should not be forced to do so if they are at all backward.

Says John H. Vincent when writing about prayer for primary people,

It is important that the prayers of an infant (primary) class be not a playing at prayer. Quiet, thoughtfulness, the closed eyes, should accompany the brief, simple, and direct petition of the teacher. One cannot be too careful how he leads the minds of little children in the formal worship of God.

. . . Every prayer and every song should be preceded by preparatory explanations and reflections and summonings of the children's thought, reverence, and love, as for a holy service. . . ."⁴⁰

Primaries and the church. To primary children the church is God's house; for here His children meet together to worship Him and to have fellowship with one another. The church is not to be thought of solely in terms of the local church and "our church" but as being made up of all those who know Jesus as Saviour both at home and across the ocean.

Moral conduct. "We should never disparage early moral training," says Lois LeBar. "It has been likened to a well-laid fire. Though the careful laying of sticks can in no way produce a flame, yet this kind of preparation causes the fire to burn up more brightly when the spark is kindled from outside."⁴¹

⁴⁰Vincent, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

⁴¹LeBar, op. cit., p. 170.

The primary youngster has been instructed and now, through numerous experiences on the public school playground and elsewhere, discerns between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood. He feels the necessity of obedience not only to his parents, but also to his teachers and to God. He realizes that God has certain rules, which if obeyed, helps one to live a happy life. He learns about the rights of others. He knows he cannot take that which belongs to another without suffering punishment. He is taught that consideration and love for God and others results in peaceful living.

Lack of prejudice and uninhibited sincerity. The first, second, and third graders are eager to be taught and have no walls of prejudice which need to be broken down. They have no ill will toward their teacher or other children. Paul the Apostle, in I Corinthians said, "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."⁴² Children are free from the prejudices of adulthood.

The uninhibited sincerity of children is a winning characteristic. While teaching a primary Sunday school

⁴²I Corinthians 14:20.

class for the duration of the regular teacher's vacation, a supply teacher introduced herself to the class as "Miss Hubbard." One boy responded, "Oh, that's like Old Mother Hubbard." The teacher replied in the affirmative, telling the youngsters that people often remembered her name by associating it with Old Mother Hubbard. "But I don't know whether you have a dog or not," was the lad's concluding remark.

Near the close of a class period the youngsters in a primary class were asked to draw a picture of something or someone for whom they were thankful. While they were busy, the teacher also drew a picture. Hers was of a man. When the children had in turn explained their pictures, the teacher said, "I have drawn a man. I am thankful for my father." "Oh, is he still living?", asked Barbara. When the teacher replied in the affirmative, the child said, "My, he must be awfully old!" This childish uninhibited sincerity and lack of prejudice makes it a pleasure to teach the primaries.

Summary. Now that the primary child has been viewed from the physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects of his life, the next step is to study the present Sunday school literature used by the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Department in the light of these findings. Is the

present material suited to the discovered needs of the six, seven, and eight-year old children? This will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

A PARTIAL EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON OUTLINES USED FOR PRIMARY CHILDREN IN WESLEYAN METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOLS

The Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Department has accepted the National Sunday School Association Uniform Bible Lesson Outlines as the series for their lesson planning. In this chapter certain sections of the National Sunday School Association outlines for the second cycle, 1953 to 1958 inclusive, will be examined. They will be studied with the view to suitability for primary children.

I. THE NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION LESSON OUTLINES

The preparation of materials. The National Sunday School Association Uniform Bible Lesson Outlines are produced and published by the National Sunday School Association with headquarters in Chicago, Illinois. Appointed by the Association is a Central Committee of ten members, a General Committee composed of a representative from each publishing house using the Outline, and a Sunday School Committee of one hundred Sunday school leaders from all the major denominations in America. The final approval of the lesson outlines

comes from the Association's Board of Directors.¹

The guiding principles. The N. S. S. A. has guiding principles and techniques to which it is committed insofar as its curriculum building is concerned. The cycle content during the six-year period consists of selections of Scripture which approximate forty percent from the New Testament, forty percent from the Old Testament, and twenty percent from both Old and New Testaments in a related study. One quarter each year deals with Christian doctrine and Christian living.

The following statement in their guiding principles is of particular note in the present investigation. "The selection of lessons shall be determined by the nature and capacities of childhood with necessary adjustment to adolescent and adult life."²

Another guiding principle is that these lessons be evangelical in nature. They are sponsored and controlled by evangelicals. One of the reasons for the origination of this series was the liberal sponsorship of the International Uniform Lessons

¹National Sunday School Association Uniform Bible Lesson Outlines for 1957 (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, Copyright by N. S. S. A., 1954), p. 2.

²Ibid.

The beginning of the series. The N. S. S. A. Lesson Outlines were first introduced to the evangelical denominations in 1947. The first cycle of six years presented lesson topics for the years 1947 through 1952. The cycle which will be examined in this study began in 1953 and ended in 1958.

Reason for evaluation. The question of the adaptation of the National Sunday School Association uniform lesson outlines to the primary age level in the Sunday school is the topic of discussion. Some of the Sunday school leaders believe the Wesleyan Methodist Church should have group graded lessons for the primary and junior departments; believing the N. S. S. A. outlines to be inappropriate for the younger age levels.

Procedure for evaluation. The material will be evaluated by two standards: (1) in the light of other available curriculum material for this age level, and (2) in view of the study of the characteristics and needs of the primary child.

The Asbury Theological Seminary Library has a curriculum section which contains Christian education materials from denominational and independent publishing houses. Materials from the following denominations and publishing

houses will be investigated:

American Baptist Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Baptist Publications, Denver, Colorado

Church of God, Anderson, Indiana

Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, Missouri

Cook, David C., Elgin, Illinois (International Uniform Sunday School Lessons)

Congregational Christian Churches, Boston, Massachusetts

Disciples of Christ, Indianapolis, Indiana

Evangelical and Reformed Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Evangelical Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Evangelical United Brethren, Dayton, Ohio

Free Methodist Church of North America, Winona Lake, Indiana

International Council of Religious Education, Chicago, Illinois

The Mennonite Church, Scottdale, Pennsylvania

The Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee

Pilgrim Holiness Church, Indianapolis, Indiana

Pilgrim Press, Boston 8, Massachusetts

Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Scripture Press, Wheaton, Illinois

Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tennessee

Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio

The Sunday School House, Glendale, California

The Christian Reformed Publishing House, Grand
Rapids, Michigan

The literature examined will be mainly that of the Sunday school and Vacation Bible School. Stock from other denominations than these mentioned is available, but it is not listed because of duplicated lesson series.

Prospectuses from the following groups, listing either yearly, three-year, five-year, or six-year schedules, will be checked.

Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tennessee

Standard Graded Series, Cincinnati, Ohio

The Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee

The Christian Reformed Publishing House, Grand Rapids,
Michigan

International Council of Religious Education, Chicago,
Illinois

Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, Missouri

Scripture Press, Wheaton, Illinois

It will not be possible to evaluate a complete six-year cycle of the N. S. S. A. outlines, and so six quarters

from the last three years in the second cycle will be chosen. These six quarters are believed to be problem portions. Lessons for these quarters will be laid out in table form so a glance will disclose the lesson topics for a quarter, and comparison can be made with the other primary literature mentioned above.

The method used for this checking will be to chart each quarter's topics, Sunday by Sunday, on separate sheets, then as each piece of literature is examined, the topics found in graded material which are similar to the N. S. S. A. topics will be marked in red. Thus will be discovered the similarity of topics used in the two types of material. It should be noted that complete cycles of lessons were not always available from the aforementioned publishing houses.

If a strong similarity is discovered between the two types of lessons, the tendency will be to accept the National Sunday School Association series as appropriate and suitable for the primaries. If only a few similarities occur, the evidence will be on the side of need for graded materials in the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Department.

First will be presented the entire second cycle of the N. S. S. A. Outline as it appears in their prospectus.

Then, although the bulk of material is rather extensive, it is felt necessary to chart topical schedules for

each quarter.

After this portion of the evaluation is done, the lesson subjects will be checked in the light of the characteristics and needs of the primary child.

II. THE N. S. S. A. LESSONS EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF GRADED MATERIALS

A bird's-eye view. The second cycle of the National Sunday School Association Outlines covers a six-year period, beginning with 1953 and ending with 1958. For the purposes of this study the entire outline appears in Table I, on the following page.

Quarterly topics under question. It is believed that for the purposes of this evaluation it will be sufficient to concentrate upon the last three years of the cycle presented in Table I. It will be noted at once that several of the quarterly topics deal with gospel portions. It is generally conceded that these can quite readily be adapted to the teaching of children. Also the quarter dealing with the topical study "Marks of the Christian" will not be investigated. The subjects which raise the greatest doubts as to their applicability to the primary age level are the following:

1956--Second Quarter.	Height of the Kingdom 1 Kings 1 to 12
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TABLE I

LESSON SCHEDULE--N. S. S. A. LESSON OUTLINES*

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
1953	Gospel of Matthew	Acts 1-12	Patriarchs Gen. 24-25	Patriarchs Gen. 1-24
1954	Gospel of Mark	The Exodus Ex. 1-32; Numbers 12	Wilderness-- Conquest Num. 13 to Joshua 24	The Bible-- What Is It? (Topical)
1955	Gospel of Luke	Rise of the Kingdom 1 Sam. 1 to 24	Kingdom Established 1 Sam. 30 to 2 Sam. 24	Paul's Jour- neys Acts 15-28
1956	Gospel of John	Height of Kingdom 1 Kings 1	Divided Kingdoms 1 Kings 13	Marks of The Christian (Topical)
1957	Life of Christ (Synoptics)	Early Church Leaders (Studies in Acts)	Period of (Daniel, Esther)	Little Known Bible Characters
1958	Teachings of Christ (Four Gospels)	Return of Exiles (Ezra, Nehemiah)	The Prophets of Israel	Christian Service (Topical)

*N. S. S. A. Lesson Outlines, op. cit., p. 32.

Third Quarter.	Divided Kingdoms 1 Kings 13 to 2 Kings 22
1957--Third Quarter.	Period of Exile Daniel, Esther
Fourth Quarter.	Little Known Bible Characters
1958--Second Quarter.	Return of Exiles Ezra, Nehemiah
Third Quarter.	The Prophets of Israel

In order to study these topics further and to aid in checking against graded materials, a breakdown by quarters (thirteen lessons to a quarter) is given on the following pages. The date, topic for each Sunday, printed scripture portion for that lesson, and an identifying statement of the lesson content is given. As the checking proceeds, portions in red will indicate similarities discovered between uniform and graded materials.

TABLE II

N. S. S. A. LESSON OUTLINES. SECOND QUARTER, 1956.
HEIGHT OF THE KINGDOM

Date	Topic	Scripture	Identification
# April 8	The Struggle for Throne	1 Kings 1:24-35	Adonijah and Solomon
15	David's Charge to Solomon	1 Kings 2:1-4 1 Chron. 22:7-12	Solomon
22	Solomon's Wise Choice	1 Kings 3:5-14	Understanding Heart
29	The Wisdom of Solomon	1 Kings 3:16-28	Two Women--one child
May 6	Solomon Builds the Temple	1 Kings 5:1,2, 11-15 20-22, 37, 38	
13	God's Promise to Solomon	2 Chron. 7:12-20	Establishment of Throne
20	The Temple Dedicated	2 Chron. 5:1-6, 7:1-3	
27	The Queen of Sheba	1 Kings 10:1-9	
June 3	The Glory and Shame of Solomon	1 Kings 10:23-27; 11:1-4, 6	Wives turned heart away
10	Rise of Jeroboam	1 Kings 11:28-33, 37, 39	Symbolic rending of garment
17	Folly of Rehoboam	1 Kings 12:3-15	Follows advice of young
24	Kingdom Divided	2 Chron. 10:12-19	
31	A King Who Refused to do Right	1 Kings 13:1-10	Jeroboam's withered hand

#Red: Similar topic found in graded material.

TABLE III

N. S. S. A. LESSON OUTLINES. THIRD QUARTER, 1956.
DIVIDED KINGDOMS

Date	Topic	Scripture	Identification
July 8	A King Who Lived Foolishly	2 Chron. 11:1-5 12:1-8, 14	Rehoboam
15	A King Who Tried To Do Right	2 Chron. 15:8-15	Asa
22	A King Who Trusted God	2 Chron. 20:3, 4, 14-18, 21, 22	Jehoshophat
29	A King Who Displeased God	1 Kings 16:28-33 18:17-21	Ahab
Aug. 5	A King With a Zealous Spirit	2 Kings 9:16-22; 10:15-17	Joram
12	A King Who Could Stand Alone	2 Chron. 24:1, 2, 4 13-18, 22	Joash
19	The King Who Was Ambitious	2 Chron. 25:1, 2 17-24	Amaziah
26	The King Who Made a Mistake	2 Chron. 26:1-5,	Uzziah
Sept. 2	The King Who Forsook God	2 Chron. 28:1, 2, 5, 8-11, 14, 15, 19	Ahaz
9	The King Who Lost His Kingdom	2 Kings 17:1-8, 23	Hoshea
16	The King Who Knew How to Pray	2 Kings 19:1-4, 14-19, 35	Hezekiah
23	The King Who Returned to God	2 Chron. 33:1-6; 11-13	Manasseh
30	The King Who Lived for God	2 Chron. 34:1-5, 18- 21, 26-28	Josiah

TABLE IV

N. S. S. A. LESSON OUTLINES. THIRD QUARTER, 1957.
PERIOD OF EXILE

Date	Topic	Scripture	Identification
July 7	Last Days of a Nation	2 Chron. 36:1-23	
14	The First Captivity	2 Kings 24:8-15	Jehoiachin
21	A Message to Captives	Jer. 29:1, 4:14	After 70 Years
28	Jerusalem Destroyed	2 Chron. 36:11-21	
Aug. 4	Troubles of Remnant	Jer. 40:13-16; 41:1, 2, 11-14	Gedaliah
11	Jeremiah Taken to Egypt	Jer. 42:1-3, 9-16; 43:1, 2, 7	
18	Daniel's Wise Choice	Daniel 1:1-21	Purpose
25	A King's Vision of Empires	Daniel 2:28-35, 44, 45	
Sept. 1	Freed From Fiery Furnace	Daniel 3:14-28	
8	A Proud King Humbled	Daniel 4:24-34	
15	Handwriting of Doom	Daniel 5:17-30	
22	Daniel Delivered from Lions	Daniel 6:10, 13, 16-24	
29	A Vision of the Future	Daniel 7:9-14	

TABLE V

N. S. S. A. LESSON OUTLINES. FOURTH QUARTER, 1957.
LITTLE KNOWN BIBLE CHARACTERS

Date	Topic	Scripture	Identification
Oct. 6	Melchizedek	Heb. 7:1-3, Genesis 14:17-24	
13	Jephthah	Judges 11:1-11	
20	Caleb	Joshua 14:6-14	
27	Mephibosheth	2 Samuel 9:1-13	
Nov. 3	Obadiah	1 Kings 18:7-16	
10	Mark	Acts 12:12-25	
17	Andrew	John 1:35-42, 6:8-14	
24	Aquila and Priscilla	Acts 18:1-4, 18-26	
Dec. 1	Demetrius	3 John 9-14	
8	Agrippa and Bernice	Acts 25:13, 14; 26:19-29	
15	Zacharias and Elizabeth	Luke 1:5-17	
22	God's Great Miracle	Luke 2:7-20	
29	Simeon and Anna	Luke 2:25-40	

TABLE VI

N. S. S. A. LESSON OUTLINES. SECOND QUARTER, 1968.
RETURN OF EXILES

Date	Topic	Scripture	Identification
Apr. 6	Resurrection of Christ	Mark 16:1-6 I Cor. 15:3-8,14-17	
13	Return from Captivity	Ezra 1:1-6	
20	Worship Re-established	Ezra 3:1-10	
27	God's Work Opposed	Ezra 4:1-5, 24; 5:1-5	Enemies from Without
May 4	The Temple Completed	Ezra 6:14-22	
11	Ezra's Mission to Jerusalem	Ezra 7:6-11; 27, 28; 8:21-23	
18	A Revival of Holiness	Ezra 9:1-6, 10:1-2	
25	Working together With God	Neh. 1:1-6; 2:17-20	Building of Wall
June 1	Enemies Outside Jerusalem	Neh. 4:1-6; 14, 15	Sanballot and Tobiah
8	Enemies Inside Jerusalem	Neh. 5:1-7; 6:10-13	Sehmaliah
15	Reading the Word of God	Neh. 8:1-3, 5-12	
22	Obedying the Word of God	Neh. 9:1-3, 32-38	
29	Cleansing the Temple	Neh. 13:1-12	

TABLE VII

N. S. S. A. LESSON OUTLINES, THIRD QUARTER, 1958.
 PROPHETS OF ISRAEL

Date	Topic	Scripture	Identification
July 6	Ezekiel	Ezekiel 3:14-21	
13	Hosea	Hosea 2:14-23	
20	Joel	Joel 2:21-32	
27	Amos	Amos 5:3-15	
Aug. 3	Obadiah	Obadiah 10-18	
10	Jonah	Jonah 1:3-15	
17	Micah	Micah 4:1-7; 5:1,2	
24	Nahum	Nahum 1:1-15	
31	Habakkuk	Hab. 2:1-14	
Sept. 7	Zephaniah	Zeph. 2:1-3; 3:8-13	
14	Haggai	Haggai 1:1-12	
21	Zechariah	Zech. 8:1-12	
28	Malachi	Mal. 3:1-10	

III. N. S. S. A. LESSONS EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF THE PRIMARY CHILD

In Chapter II of this study the characteristics and needs of the primary child are considered from the standpoint of the physical, mental, social, and spiritual requirements. These shall now be considered in the light of our present examination of N. S. S. A. lesson outlines.

Physical requirements. Physical requirements are treated mainly in the aspects of activity and growth in a physical sense and so are irrelevant to an examination of the material under discussion.

Mental characteristics. In consideration of the mental characteristics and associated needs, the matter of learning to read and write is presented. In this connection, vocabulary limitations are discussed. In examining the printed scripture portions listed in Tables II through VII, only a few of the words which almost of necessity would have to be used, and which in pronunciation alone would cause trouble, are given herewith. They have been broken down into three categories--persons, places, and terms:

<u>Persons</u>	<u>Places</u>	<u>Terms</u>
Adonijah	Gihon	anoint
Jeroboam	Shilonite	charge
Rehoboam	Mizpah	judgments
Jehoshophat	Gibeon	testimonies
Jehoiachin	Assyria	discern
Gedaliah	Ophel	harlots
Melchizedek	Zidon	oracle
Jephthah	Lebanon	pestilence
Mephibosheth		sanctified
Demetrius		perpetually
Habakkuk		covenanted
Zephaniah		proverb
Zechariah		glory
Sanballot		concubines
Sehmaiah		abominations

Children need to learn new words and to thus increase their vocabulary. It is suggested that this be done systematically; but the printed portions examined have more difficult words than could be understood or mastered by primary children. Some of the words listed, even if explained, would for them have no association with things already known and therefore would be practically meaningless.

Figurative and symbolical language. A number of the lessons examined use language which is highly figurative. When studying the rise of Jeroboam as king of Israel, in 1 Kings we have an example:

29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field:

30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:

31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee³

Rehoboam's folly is described figuratively: ". . . my father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."⁴

The scripture portion for June 31, 1956, found in 1 Kings and used with the subject, "A King Who Refused To Do Right," has much symbolic and figurative language. The first four verses are quoted:

And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the

³1 Kings 11:29-31.

⁴1 Kings 12:14.

Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

3. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

4 And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.⁵

Concrete and practical teaching from these passages would be difficult for primaries.

Time, space, and numbers. In studying God's dealings with the children of Israel, background is very important and the incidents which took place have to be dated in order to be meaningful. When the "Kingdom" lessons are studied by adults, the first step is usually to review the history of Israel. To children who are limited as to time, space, and number consciousness, these items are more confusing than helpful.

The lesson for July 8, 1956, taken from 2 Chronicles 12 is an illustration in point:

⁵1 Kings 13:1-4.

And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.

2 And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the Lord.

3 With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen; and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, and Sukkims, and the Ethiopians.⁶

The study of Solomon's temple is an example of the extensive use of numbers. We quote just one verse:

And the house which king Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.⁷

The social aspect. Social needs will not be discussed here because of the lack of appropriate application.

Adaptation to spiritual needs. Five of the seven N. S. S. A. lessons taken from the book of Daniel are well chosen and are loved by children. Daniel's example of moral courage and spiritual fortitude can challenge the primaries. Also God's care of Daniel and the three Hebrew children will strengthen a child's belief in a God who will care for him also.

The Christmas and Easter stories as presented in this series give opportunity for objective instruction. This is true of a number of other lessons.

⁶2 Chron. 12:1-3.

⁷1 Kings 6:2.

On the other side of the ledger we have the story of "The Glory and Shame of Solomon," a lesson dealing with Solomon's departure from God because of his seven hundred wives and princesses and his three hundred concubines.

Also Solomon's wise method of calling for a sword with which to divide the living child claimed by two women would indeed be a "dark saying" to a primary child who would not be able to understand the wisdom of the act.

A lesson or two spent on outstanding kings of Israel would be acceptable, and teaching about the church could have as a basis the building of Solomon's Temple, but to spend several quarters on such lessons is questionable for the child of six, seven, and eight.

Instruction in moral conduct is of importance to the teacher of primaries, but to use Manasseh, who is remembered chiefly for his cruelty to God's prophets, as an example of "The King Who Returned to God," is not good.

In the August 4, 1957, lesson on "Troubles of the Remnant," the suggested application for the primary department in one source book was listed as "Disobedience Leads to Trouble."⁸ The printed text is from Jeremiah 40

⁸N. S. S. A. Outlines, op. cit., p. 20.

and 41. Only verses 11-14 of the suggested portion are omitted here. One can soon realize what a hard lesson this would be for the basis of teaching about disobedience.

13 Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,

14 And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not.

15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know it: wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?

16 But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.

41:1 Now it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah.

2 Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.⁹

IV. CONCLUSIONS FROM N. S. S. A. EVALUATION

After checking the National Sunday School Association Lesson Outlines against material currently produced on

⁹Jeremiah 40:13-16; 41:1, 2.

the graded level by other denominations, some interesting facts are revealed.

Topics for seventy-eight Sundays were listed from the N. S. S. A. outlines. The graded literature was checked against these seventy-eight topics and it was found that only twenty of the lessons were duplicated in the graded primary materials examined. It can readily be seen that most of the twenty are in areas where it would be expected. For example, the lessons in Daniel account for five of these duplications.

Thus, only about twenty-five percent of the Uniform lessons studied are adapted to primary use and application, judging from practices currently in use among those publishing primary literature that has been graded.

Further, when these lessons were measured by the characteristics and needs of our primaries, objections were discovered. Vocabulary difficulties, symbolical and figurative language frequency, as well as the importance of time, number, and space sequence in this particular type of study, are some of the weaknesses.

It is felt that the simple faith found in the six, seven, and eight-year old child would find itself stymied by these lessons. The necessary bases for teaching the group about God, prayer, the Bible, and moral conduct

appears to be lacking to a marked degree.

Henry H. Meyer appropriately says, in speaking of the uniform series,

The difficulty is not that some valuable kernel of truth cannot be culled from every one of these lessons, and clothed by skillful teachers in language suitable to the needs of boys of the ages indicated. But boys pass through this particular and important period of life only once, and in the natural order and development of their whole religious and moral nature there are other things more essential for their consideration and study, and which if not mastered now can never again be acquired under such favorable conditions. The philosophical mysticism of John's Gospel, moreover, was never intended for children.¹⁰

Although Mr. Meyer is speaking about a different portion of the Holy Scriptures than that which we have investigated, the comment is still appropriate.

¹⁰Henry H. Meyer, The Graded Sunday School in Principle and Practice (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1910), p. 76.

CHAPTER IV

A SUGGESTED THREE-YEAR UNIT OF GROUP GRADED LESSONS FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

In this chapter a three-year schedule of group graded lessons for primary children is presented. A definition of this type of lesson is given and its merits suggested. The next part explains the scope of the lesson materials and gives a brief summary of the lesson content for each quarter. The way the plan works is then discussed in paragraphs considering the undated material, the numbering plan, and the practical application of the lessons to the primary department. Finally appears the suggested unit of study, a three-year schedule of group-graded lessons for primary children.

I. GROUP GRADED LESSONS DISCUSSED

For the sake of clarifying further the study of the group graded lessons, the definition given in the introductory chapter of this investigation is repeated.

A definition. The group graded series, as referred to in Sunday school literature, is prepared for the departmental plan of classification rather than for grading by single years, as in the closely graded system and the public

schools. Therefore progress upward is made by three-year steps, while the closely graded series advances by single steps.

No matter when a child enters the primary department he will be taught the entire cycle of lessons during his three years in the department. If the class is on Year II of the cycle when a six-year old enters the department, when he is seven he will have the lessons for Year III, and when he is eight the lessons for Year I will be presented. This does not mean he will be getting easier material when he is eight, for there is no gradation of material within the unit. The aim has been to accommodate the three age levels within the group, using the seven-year old as a median.

"Cycle graded" or "departmental graded" lessons are other terms used for this same method.

Appropriateness for smaller schools. It is believed that the group graded plan is especially appropriate for the small or moderate-sized Sunday schools. George Betts says this plan "enables the smaller school to place in the same class children three years apart in ages, while at the same time giving them materials which, even if rather

coarsely graded, are in some degree adapted to their own age."¹

According to Paul Vieth, a well-known Sunday school expert, this fact is further substantiated in the light of a recent survey.

It is assumed by some that rural churches, because they are often smaller, can use uniform lessons more successfully than other types. Experience does not bear this out. A recent survey of rural churches situated in all parts of the country revealed that less than 25 percent are using uniform, 50 percent group graded, and over 25 percent closely graded lessons. Small schools can use group graded and graded materials, and their pupils are just as deserving of the best as those in larger schools.²

This survey was made in connection with rural churches, but Mr. Vieth in the closing sentence of the paragraph connects it up with the smaller schools generally.

Group graded lessons, Mr. Vieth goes on to say, have the following advantages:

. . . (1) they are reasonably well graded to pupil needs, without presenting the complex problem of close grading; (2) they make it possible to relate department worship closely to the class teaching; (3) they enable the workers in a department to share in planning their work; (4) departmental meetings for parents can be related to the teaching programs; (5) observance of

¹George Herbert Betts, The Curriculum of Religious Education (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1924), pp. 360-61.

²Paul H. Vieth, The Church School (Philadelphia: Christian Education Press, 1957), pp. 78-79.

special days, missionary projects, and other departmental interests can be built right into the lesson materials; (6) visual aids can more easily be related to the curriculum by departments than if this has to be done for each class.³

Criticism of group grading. This plan, however, is not without criticism. Two authors writing on the organization and administration of the Sunday school, and favoring the closely graded system, advance the following theory:

But departmental grouping is not sufficient to meet the full need of the developing person. Each year of growth marks a distinct advance, and this advance is marked and promoted by the grades of the public school. It is necessary, therefore, for the Sunday school to group its pupils not only in departments but within the several departments by grades corresponding in general to the several years included. This more minute grading is important not only for the sake of effective instruction but also for the more intimate and effective cultivation of worship and formation of right habits.⁴

II. WHAT THE UNIT COVERS

The scope. In scope the lesson cycle covers the major portion of the Bible. The lessons for the first two quarters of each year are taken from the Old Testament; while the lessons for the last two quarters are based on

³Ibid., p. 77.

⁴Jesse L. Cuninggim and Eric M. North, Organization and Administration (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1919), p. 27.

New Testament Scripture. The Old Testament lessons begin with the creation and end with the captivity. The New Testament portions cover the life of Christ, his teachings and miracles, a quarter from the Acts of the Apostles, and one quarter of teaching on Christian conduct.

The Old Testament. Some portions of the Old Testament have received much more attention than others. This does not mean that that which has been omitted could not be used. There are large portions where this is true, but the thought has been to give treatment to those portions which especially lend themselves to the study of six, seven, and eight-year olds. It is considered better to cover a few portions thoroughly than to try to give too wide a spread for this age level.

This three-year schedule of lessons begins with the first book of the Bible. Numerous primary publications present lessons on the creation. Primary children should know that God created the world. This fact could well be taught to every age group every year in order to properly ground children in this fundamental truth. Even before reaching high school many have to face teachings on evolution in their science classes. Why not start to prepare them now so that these facts will be accepted from their earliest years? Then as they reach the junior age, more

detailed explanations can be given.

The first quarter in this cycle (PI-1) also presents for study Noah, Abraham, Esau and Jacob.

A study of the life of Moses occupies the second quarter (PI-2) of this series. The story of Moses hidden among the flags is one of the first stories taught in nursery and kindergarten classes. But now the primaries follow Moses from the little bulrush basket to the king's palace, to the back side of the desert, again into Egypt, and finally to the breath-taking trip through the Red Sea.

In another quarter of study (PII-1) the primary child sees Joseph in his coat of many colors. Next he sees him shorn of his coat and placed in a well; he sees him in Egypt in a prison garb, and finally in the robes of a prince. When the child has followed Joseph through thirty years of his life he will feel he has met a new friend. Joseph will live in his heart always.

The kings and prophets are next in line. One quarter (PII-2) is occupied largely with Saul and David, the other (PIII-1) with the prophets. Elijah and Elisha travel across seven of the thirteen lessons.

Again in the final quarter of Old Testament study (PIII-2), "God's People In Captivity," individuals have a predominant place. Jonah and Daniel are always favorites with primary children.

The New Testament. In the New Testament schedule, a twenty-six week survey of the life of Christ is presented (PI-3, PI-4). Jesus does not remain the baby about whom the young children learned, but He grows, becomes a man, and fulfills His Father's will. John the Baptist, girded with a leather girdle, eating grasshoppers and wild honey in the wilderness of Judea, is introduced. The lessons follow through not only to Calvary and to the empty tomb, but to heaven where Jesus is sitting on the right hand of God.

The two New Testament quarters for the second year of the cycle, (PII-3, PII-4), have to do with the teachings and miracles of Jesus.

It has been stated elsewhere in this study that highly symbolical and figurative language is not understood by primaries. The parables of Jesus come into question here. In reviewing primary literature, numbers of Jesus' parables are effectively used to teach children. What makes the difference? The parables of Jesus are stories, and He has, in many of these, used objects with which even children are familiar. Children can understand about one house being built on the rock and another house built on the sand, because they have played in the sand. How well they know that a little bucket of water can completely demolish

a beautiful sand mansion built on the seashore! So one quarter is given to the "Stories Jesus Told."

Since the primary age is sometimes called "the wonder age,"⁵ children delight in hearing about the miracles of Jesus. Causing a blind man to see this beautiful world for the first time, or healing a sick man so he can carry his own bed instead of four of his friends carrying him, is no stumbling block to their faith. Children know about sick people, blind people, and storms. They are especially sympathetic to people in trouble.

The journeys of Paul, used as a basis for study during the third quarter of the third year (PIII-3), present an opportunity for instruction about the man Paul, and also about Christian missions. Although the subjects presented singly do not deal with missions specifically, most of the lessons have to do with incidents encountered on Paul's missionary trips. Perhaps every week stories of modern missions could be presented in conjunction with Paul's life.

III. HOW DOES THE PLAN WORK?

The material is not dated. The suggested three-year

⁵McCallum, op. cit., p. 126.

cycle of lessons presented in this study is not dated. There are twelve quarters, each having within it thirteen individual lessons--thus making a total of one hundred and fifty-six separate presentations. These lessons will follow consecutively. The series can be started with any quarter, but it seems preferable to begin in the fall since this parallels the public school year. Most dated series begin at that time.

One of the chief advantages of undated material is that of economy. Extra quarterlies for a given period can be carefully stored and used when the same cycle returns; thus there will not be the reluctance in buying a generous supply. If a newcomer finds you have literature for him, he will at once feel a part of the group. If you immediately hand him a quarterly he will believe you expected him to come and that you want him. There will be no embarrassing scramble to make provision for him. Also, there will not be the forever tantalizing question, "But will we have a lot of quarterlies left over?"

The publishing house would also share in the financial saving. More quarterlies could be run at one time without the fear of having a large over-run. It would save in the year-by-year preparation of lessons. A three-year cycle, well prepared, would perhaps serve at least six, and possibly

nine years without revision.

Numbering the three-year cycle. Since the material is not dated, it is essential that each portion of the unit is carefully numbered. The three years in the schedule shall be designated by Roman numerals, I, II, and III, respectively. To distinguish the four quarters within a year, Arabic numbers appear. I-3 refers to the third quarter in the first year.

Also, to guard against confusion in the future, should a series of group graded lessons be prepared for the Juniors, the letter P is prefixed to designate the Primary Department. The numbering for the three-year schedule is as follows:

PI-1, PI-2, PI-3, PI-4

PII-1, PII-2, PII-3, PII-4

PIII-1, PIII-2, PIII-3, PIII-4

Application to the primary department. As was mentioned in the definition of group graded materials, no matter when a child enters the primary department, he will be taught the entire cycle of lessons during his three years in the department. If the primary department is large enough to have separate classes for each age level, the same material will be used for each class, rotating by year as for a single class. This would make for unity

within the department and would also give opportunity for a single aim in the departmental opening exercises.

IV. A SUGGESTED UNIT

Topical schedule and detailed listing. Herewith is presented in table form a topical schedule of the lessons for a three-year period, followed by a more detailed Sunday-by-Sunday listing of subject, scripture portion, and aim.

Topics for thirteen Sundays each quarter are presented. Sections PI-1, PII-1, PIII-1, each contain a Christmas lesson to be used on the designated Sunday. The first lesson in PI-3, PII-3, and PIII-3, is prepared for Easter application.

TABLE VIII
THREE-YEAR LESSON SCHEDULE FOR THE
PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Year I	PI-1 Stories from Genesis Genesis 1-28	PI-2 The Life of Joseph Genesis 37-47	PI-3 The Life of Christ Synoptics	PI-4 The Life of Christ Synoptics
Year II	PII-1 Moses Leads God's People Exodus 1-14	PII-2 The Kings and the Prophets Joshua, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings	PII-3 Lessons Jesus Taught Gospels	PII-4 People Jesus Helped Gospels
Year III	PIII-1 The Kings and The Prophets 1 and 2 Kings	PIII-2 God's People In Captivity Ezra, Daniel Jonah	PIII-3 Paul, A Great Missionary Book of Acts	PIII-4 Living As God's Children Mark, Luke, John, Acts Corinthians

LESSONS FOR THE FIRST QUARTER--YEAR I (PI-1)

STORIES FROM GENESIS:

1. GOD MADE THE WORLD. Genesis 1:1-19.
Aim: God the Father as Creator. God prepares a home for His creatures.
2. GOD MAKES LIVING THINGS. Genesis 1:20-25.
Aim: God makes the animals, fish, and birds to beautify His world.
3. GOD MADE ADAM AND EVE. Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15-25.
Aim: God made man to love and worship Him.
4. GOD'S DAY OF REST. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11.
Aim: God made Sunday for a day of rest and worship.
5. ADAM AND EVE DISOBEY GOD. Genesis 3:1-24.
Aim: God wants us to obey Him.
6. NOAH BUILDS THE ARK. Genesis 6:13-22.
Aim: Noah prepares for the flood.
7. NOAH SAFE IN THE ARK. Genesis 7:7-16.
Aim: God cares for Noah during the flood.
8. GOD SENDS A RAINBOW. Genesis 7:15-22; 9:13-15.
Aim: God's promise in the sky.
9. ABRAHAM IS GOD'S FRIEND. Genesis 12:1-5; James 2:23.
Aim: We too can be a friend of God if we love and obey Him.
10. LOT IS SELFISH. Genesis 13:1-18.
Aim: God is pleased when we are unselfish.
11. ABRAHAM GIVES ISAAC TO GOD. Genesis 21:1-8.
Aim: God provides a sacrifice.
12. JACOB CHEATS HIS TWIN. Genesis 25:24-34.
Aim: Jacob is selfish; Esau is unwise.
13. THE FIRST CHRISTMAS. Luke 2:1-20 . (For Christmas Sunday).
Aim: God announces the birth of His Son. Why Jesus was born.

LESSONS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER--YEAR I (PI-2)

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH:

1. THE COAT OF MANY COLORS. Genesis 37:1-11.
Aim: Joseph is loved by his father.
2. JOSEPH GOES ON AN ERRAND. Genesis 37:12-22.
Aim: Joseph helps his father.
3. JOSEPH AND HIS JEALOUS BROTHERS. Genesis 37:23-36.
Aim: Joseph is cast into a pit and sold to traders.
4. JOSEPH LIVES AWAY FROM HOME. Genesis 39:1-20.
Aim: Joseph is bought by an Egyptian officer.
5. JOSEPH IN JAIL. Genesis 39:21-24, 40:1-4.
Aim: Joseph is liked by the jail keeper.
6. THE BUTLER AND THE BAKER. Genesis 40:9-23.
Aim: Joseph helps the butler and the baker.
7. THE KING HAS A DREAM. Genesis 41:14-36.
Aim: The king calls for Joseph.
8. JOSEPH BECOMES A GREAT MAN. Genesis 41:38-49.
Aim: Joseph becomes a leader.
9. JOSEPH'S BROTHERS COME FOR FOOD. Genesis 42:1-20.
Aim: Jacob sends his ten sons to Egypt.
10. JOSEPH SENDS FOR BENJAMIN. Genesis 43.
Aim: Joseph wants to see his youngest brother again.
11. JOSEPH IS KIND TO HIS BROTHERS. Genesis 45:1-11.
Aim: Joseph still loves his brothers.
12. JOSEPH SEES HIS FATHER AGAIN. Genesis 46:28-34.
Aim: Jacob comes to Egypt.
13. JOSEPH CARES FOR HIS FATHER. Genesis 47:1-12.
Aim: A new home for Joseph's family.

LESSONS FOR THE THIRD QUARTER--YEAR I (PI-3)

THE LIFE OF CHRIST:

1. THE FIRST EASTER. John 20:1-18. (Easter Lesson).
Aim: The Tomb is empty.
2. THE BIRTH OF JESUS. Luke 2:1-7.
Aim: What the birth of Jesus means to us.
3. MARY AND JOSEPH. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:27-56.
Aim: Learning about Jesus' parents.
4. VISITING JESUS. Luke 2:8-18; Matthew 2:1-12.
Aim: The shepherds and wisemen visit Jesus.
5. JESUS IS TAKEN TO CHURCH. Luke 2:21-38.
Aim: Simeon and Anna love Jesus.
6. JESUS GOES TO EGYPT. Matthew 2:13-18.
Aim: Jesus protected from a wicked king.
7. JESUS' HOME TOWN. Matthew 2:19-23.
Aim: The town where Jesus lived.
8. JESUS HELPS AT HOME. Luke 2:39-40.
Aim: Jesus helps at home.
9. JESUS VISITS THE TEMPLE. Matthew 2:41-52.
Aim: Jesus goes to God's house.
10. JOHN THE BAPTIST. Luke 1.
Aim: John the Baptist is born.
11. JOHN PREACHES BY THE RIVER. Mark 1:1-8.
Aim: John preaches by the river.
12. JOHN TELLS ABOUT JESUS. John 1
Aim: John tells others about Jesus.
13. JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS. Matthew 3:13-17.
Aim: Jesus is baptized by John.

LESSONS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER--YEAR I (PI-4)

THE LIFE OF CHRIST: (continued)

1. JESUS CALLS SOME FISHERMEN. Matthew 4:17-22.
Aim: Jesus says, "Follow me."
2. JESUS GOES TO A WEDDING. John 2:1-11.
Aim: Jesus helps at a wedding feast.
3. JESUS PREACHES FROM A SHIP. Luke 5:1-3; Matthew 13:1-3.
Aim: Jesus preaches everywhere.
4. JESUS PREACHES IN A CHURCH. Luke 4:14-22.
Aim: Jesus tells what His work will be.
5. JESUS NEEDS HELPERS. Matthew 10:1-15.
Aim: Jesus needs people to help him.
6. JESUS HEALS PEOPLE. Matthew 4:23-25.
Aim: Jesus helps sick people.
7. JESUS VISITS HIS FRIENDS. John 12:1-9.
Aim: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus share their home with Jesus.
8. JESUS RIDES INTO JERUSALEM. Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11.
Aim: The people sing praises to Jesus.
9. JESUS EATS SUPPER WITH HIS DISCIPLES. Matthew 26:17-30.
Aim: The last supper together.
10. JESUS IN THE GARDEN. Matthew 26:36-46.
Aim: Jesus prays to his Father.
11. JESUS DIES FOR US. Matthew 27:29-38.
Aim: Jesus dies for us.
12. JESUS LIVES AGAIN. Mark 16:1-8.
Aim: Easter, a happy day.
13. JESUS GOES TO HEAVEN. Luke 24:49-53.
Aim: Jesus returns to His home.

LESSONS FOR THE FIRST QUARTER--YEAR II (PII-1)

MOSES LEADS GOD'S PEOPLE:

1. MOSES HID IN A BASKET. Exodus 2:1-9.
Aim: Moses is taken care of by his mother.
2. MOSES LIVES IN A PALACE. Exodus 2:10-14.
Aim: Moses becomes the son of a princess.
3. MOSES WATCHES THE SHEEP. Exodus 2:15-3:1.
Aim: Moses is a shepherd.
4. GOD CALLS MOSES. Exodus 3:1-10.
Aim: God tells Moses what He wants him to do.
5. GOD GIVES MOSES A HELPER. Exodus 3:10-14; 27-31.
Aim: Moses' brother becomes his helper.
6. MOSES AND AARON VISIT THE KING. Exodus 5:1-9.
Aim: Moses and Aaron talk to the king.
7. HARD TIMES FOR THE JEWS. Exodus 5:10-23.
Aim: The Jew's work made harder.
8. GOD PUNISHES EGYPT. Exodus 8:14-12:31.
Aim: God punishes Egypt with ten plagues.
9. GOD HELPS HIS PEOPLE. Exodus 12:31-36.
Aim: The Jews escape from Egypt.
10. THE CLOUD AND THE FIRE. Exodus 13:17-22.
Aim: God leads his people in a strange way.
11. MARCHING THROUGH THE RED SEA. Exodus 14:10-22.
Aim: God makes a path through the sea.
12. A WHOLE ARMY IS DROWNED. Exodus 14:23-31.
Aim: Pharaoh and his army are drowned.
13. THE SAVIOR IS BORN. Matthew 2:1-15.
Aim: The wise men follow the star.

LESSONS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER--YEAR II (PII-2)

THE KINGS AND THE PROPHETS:

1. LIVING IN A NEW COUNTRY. Joshua 3:14-17.
Aim: The Jews have a new home.
2. HOW GOD TALKED TO A LITTLE BOY. 1 Samuel 3:1-18.
Aim: Samuel hears God's voice.
Samuel answers God's call.
3. SAUL BECOMES KING. 1 Samuel 10:17-27.
Aim: God gives the people a king.
4. DAVID WATCHES HIS SHEEP. 1 Samuel 16:11-13; 17:34-37.
Aim: David is a good shepherd.
5. DAVID VISITS HIS BROTHERS. 1 Samuel 17:12-20.
Aim: David goes on an errand.
6. DAVID PLAYS A HARP. 1 Samuel 16:14-23.
Aim: David plays for the king.
7. DAVID LIKES TO SING. Psalm 23.
Aim: The singing shepherd boy.
8. DAVID FIGHTS A GIANT. 1 Samuel 17:38-51.
Aim: David kills Goliath.
9. SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID. 1 Samuel 18.
Aim: God protects David.
David is good to king Saul.
10. DAVID'S BEST FRIEND. 1 Samuel 19:1-7.
Aim: David loves Jonathan.
11. DAVID BECOMES KING. 2 Samuel 5:1-10.
Aim: David becomes king.
12. SOLOMON IS WISE. 1 Kings 3:5-15.
Aim: Solomon makes a good choice.
13. SOLOMON BUILDS GOD'S HOUSE. 1 Kings 5:1-18.
Aim: Solomon builds a house for God.

LESSONS FOR THE THIRD QUARTER--YEAR II (PII-3)

STORIES JESUS TOLD:

1. THE WALK TO EMMAUS. Luke 24:13-35. (Easter Lesson).
Aim: Jesus walks with His disciples to comfort them.
2. THE FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR. Luke 10:30-37.
Aim: Helping others.
3. THE BOY WHO RAN AWAY. Luke 15:11-32.
Aim: A boy asks his father to forgive him.
A boy who said, "I'm sorry."
4. THE TWO HOUSES. Matthew 7:24-29.
Aim: The wise man and the foolish man.
5. THE SHEEP THAT WAS LOST. Luke 15:3-7.
Aim: Jesus is seeking the lost.
6. PLANTING IN GOOD GROUND. Luke 8:5-15.
Aim: Hiding the Word of God in our heart.
7. THE HIDDEN TREASURE. Matthew 13:44-46.
Aim: Jesus, the greatest treasure.
8. THE LAMPS THAT WENT OUT. Matthew 25:1-13.
Aim: Living for Jesus every day.
9. LEARNING TO PRAY. Luke 18:10-14.
Aim: Learning to pray.
10. THE GOOD SHEPHERD. John 10:1-18.
Aim: Jesus is our shepherd.
11. THE UNKIND SERVANT. Matthew 18:23-35.
Aim: Being fair to others.
12. A CITY ON A HILL. Matthew 5:14-16.
Aim: Telling others about Jesus.
13. A WEDDING SUPPER. Luke 14:7-25.
Aim: We should be ready when Jesus calls us.

LESSONS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER--YEAR II (PII-4)

PEOPLE JESUS HELPED:

1. JESUS HEALS A SICK MAN. Mark 1:40-45.
Aim: Jesus likes to help people in trouble.
2. PETER CATCHES A LOT OF FISH. Luke 5:1-11.
Aim: Jesus tells Peter He will make him a "fisher of men."
3. A BOY WHO LIVED AGAIN. Luke 7:11-15.
Aim: Jesus helps a mother who was sad.
4. JESUS FEEDS A BIG CROWD. Matthew 15:32-39.
Aim: Jesus gives food to 4,000 people.
5. A BOY GETS WELL. John 4:46-54.
Aim: Jesus loves little children.
6. JESUS HAS A NIGHT-TIME VISITOR. John 3:1-16.
Aim: Jesus tells Nicodemus how to be saved.
Jesus tells Nicodemus of God's love.
7. FOUR MEN HELP A FRIEND. Mark 2:1-13.
Aim: How four men brought someone to Jesus.
8. JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER. Matthew 14:22-33.
Aim: Jesus tells His disciples not to be afraid.
9. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL. John 4.
Aim: Jesus loves everybody.
10. A GIRL LIVES AGAIN. Luke 8:41-56.
Aim: Jesus brings a little girl back to life.
11. A LITTLE MAN CLIMBS A TREE. Luke 19:1-9.
Aim: Zaccheus is anxious to see Jesus.
12. JESUS STOPS THE BIG STORM. Mark 4:35-41.
Aim: Jesus stops the big storm and helps His disciples.
13. JESUS HELPS A BLIND MAN. Mark 10:46-52.
Aim: Bartimaeus receives his sight.

LESSONS FOR THE FIRST QUARTER--YEAR III (PIII-1)

THE KINGS AND THE PROPHETS: (continued)

1. ELIJAH'S FOOD FROM HEAVEN. 1 Kings 17:1-7.
Aim: How God took care of Elijah.
2. ELIJAH HELPS A POOR WOMAN. 1 Kings 17:8-16.
Aim: God takes care of Elijah and his friends.
3. ELIJAH HELPS A LITTLE BOY. 1 Kings 17:17-24.
Aim: A little boy is healed.
4. GOD ANSWERS ELIJAH'S PRAYER. 1 Kings 18:22-39.
Aim: God answers the prayer of Elijah.
5. ELIJAH CHOOSES A HELPER. 1 Kings 19:19-21.
Aim: Elijah calls Elisha to follow God.
6. ELIJAH GOES TO HEAVEN. 2 Kings 2:1-15.
Aim: Elijah goes to heaven in a chariot.
7. TWO BOYS HELP ELISHA. 2 Kings 4:1-7.
Aim: Elisha helps a family in need.
8. ELISHA HELPS A KIND WOMAN. 2 Kings 4:8-27.
Aim: Elisha returns a good favor.
9. A LITTLE GIRL HELPS NAAMAN. 2 Kings 5:1-14.
Aim: Naaman is healed.
10. A KING PRAYS TO GOD. 2 Kings 19:14-19.
Aim: God answers king Hezekiah's prayer.
11. A BOY BECOMES A KING. 2 Kings 22:1-11.
Aim: Josiah loves God's law.
12. GOD'S PEOPLE IN A STRANGE LAND. 2 Kings 25:1-3, 8-11.
Aim: God punishes His people.
13. THE GREATEST BIRTHDAY. Matthew 2:1-11. (Christmas Lesson).
Aim: Whose birthday is it?

LESSONS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER--YEAR III (PIII-2)

GOD'S PEOPLE IN CAPTIVITY:

1. GOD GIVES JONAH A JOB. Jonah 1:1-10.
Aim: God sends Jonah to a bad city.
2. JONAH RUNS AWAY FROM GOD. Jonah 1:11-17.
Aim: Jonah disobeys God.
3. JONAH IS SORRY. Chapter 2.
Aim: Jonah prays to God.
4. JONAH OBEYS GOD. Jonah 3.
Aim: Jonah is ready to preach.
5. DANIEL SAYS "NO" TO THE KING. Daniel 1:1-16.
Aim: Daniel does the right thing.
6. THE KING HAS A DREAM. Daniel 2:1-23.
Aim: Daniel explains the king's dream.
7. DANIEL PRAYS. Daniel 6:10-17.
Aim: Daniel prays.
8. DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN. Daniel 6:18-23.
Aim: God protects Daniel.
Daniel trusts in God.
9. DANIEL, THE KING'S HELPER. Daniel 6:1-9.
Aim: Daniel helps the king.
10. THREE MEN WHO WOULD NOT KNEEL. Daniel 3:1-18.
Aim: The Hebrew children obey God.
11. THE HOT FURNACE. Daniel 3:19-30.
Aim: God is with the three Hebrew children.
12. GOD'S PEOPLE GO BACK HOME. Ezra 1:1-7; 9:16.
Aim: God's people return to Palestine.
13. BUILDING THE WALLS. Nehemiah 4.
Aim: God's people work together.

LESSONS FOR THE THIRD QUARTER--YEAR III (PIII-3)

PAUL A GREAT MISSIONARY:

1. JESUS FINISHES HIS WORK ON EARTH. Mark 16:14-15, 19-20.
Aim: Jesus wants us to be missionaries.
(Easter Lesson).
2. STEPHEN IS BRAVE. Acts 7:54-60.
Aim: Saul sees Stephen, God's man, stoned.
3. SAUL, THE TROUBLEMAKER. Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-2.
Aim: Saul makes trouble for the Christians.
4. SAUL MEETS JESUS. Acts 9:3-9.
Aim: The conversion of Saul.
5. ANANIAS, THE KIND FRIEND. Acts 9:10-22.
Aim: Ananias goes to see Saul.
Ananias encourages Saul.
6. SAUL TELLS ABOUT JESUS. Acts 13:1-5.
Aim: Saul becomes a missionary.
7. SAUL GETS A NEW NAME. Acts 13:6-13.
Aim: Saul's name is changed to Paul.
8. SINGING IN JAIL. Acts 16:19-34.
Aim: God delivers Paul and Silas.
9. PAUL KEPT IN A CASTLE. Acts 21:30-40.
Aim: God keeps Paul in a time of trouble.
10. A BOY HELPS HIS UNCLE. Acts 23:12-35.
Aim: A boy helps his uncle.
11. A STORM ON THE SEA. Acts 27.
Aim: God protects Paul and others.
12. PAUL REACHES ROME. Acts 28:1-28.
Aim: Paul sees the Christians at Rome.
13. PAUL WRITES LETTERS TO HIS FRIENDS. Acts 28:30-31,
Colossians 4:16-18, Ephesians 6:20-24.
Aim: Paul tells his friends that he loves them and
prays for them.

LESSONS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER--YEAR III (PIII-4)

LIVING AS GOD'S CHILDREN:

1. JESUS LOVES US. Mark 10:13-16.
Aim: Jesus loves us.
2. JESUS WANTS US TO FOLLOW HIM. John 1:35-45.
Aim: Jesus wants us to love Him.
3. LEARNING TO OBEY. Luke 2:51-52; Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-2.
Aim: Learning to obey.
4. LEARNING TO SAY "THANK YOU." Luke 17:11-19.
Aim: Jesus wants us to be thankful.
5. LEARNING TO BE KIND. Acts 9:36-43; Ephesians 4:32.
Aim: Learning to be kind.
6. HELPING AT HOME. John 19:25-27.
Aim: Helping at home.
7. HELPING OTHERS. 1 Corinthians 16.
Aim: Helping others.
8. HELPING IN OUR CHURCH. Acts 6:1-8.
Aim: Helping in our church.
9. LEARNING TO SHARE. John 6:5-14.
Aim: Learning to share.
10. JESUS CARES FOR US. Matthew 6:24-34.
Aim: Jesus wants us to trust Him.
11. TALKING TO JESUS. Acts 12:5-17; Matthew 6:9-15.
Aim: Jesus wants us to pray.
12. TELLING THE TRUTH. Acts 5:1-11.
Aim: Telling the truth.
13. GIVING TO JESUS. Mark 12:41-44.
Aim: Jesus wants us to give.

A brief summary. We have herewith presented a brief survey of the group graded lesson plan, and also a suggested three-year unit of lesson topics for the six, seven, and eight-year old in the primary department of the Sunday school.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Throughout the history of the Sunday school movement the subject of curriculum has been a major concern, and rightly so, for a true school cannot exist without a teacher, a pupil, and a book. What should be taught, and the method of teaching are matters of utmost importance to the church of God.

As far as Sunday school literature was concerned, the mid-nineteenth century (1824-1872) was known as the "Babel" period because of the diversity of methods and materials which were used. Some are wondering if the Sunday school world is not now in a second such period.¹

The reason for the current "Babel" condition may be the result of conflict between progressive and conservative educational philosophies. Progressive education, or "developmentalism," as it is called by Ralph D. Heim,² insists that too much has been made of transmissive teaching and that undue emphasis has been placed upon the Bible.

¹Philip Henry Lotz (ed.), Orientation in Religious Education (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950), p. 110.

²Ralph D. Heim, Leading a Sunday Church School (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1950), pp. 25-41.

Progressive educationalists say that experience and activity are the essential elements of learning.

The more conservative group in religious circles, although willing to include some extra-biblical material in their lesson plans; and although they are willing to go along with the idea of activities with an aim to aid in the learning process, they still hold to the supremacy of the Bible and its authority as "the power of God unto salvation,"³ even for children.

However, though the above mentioned emphasis is placed upon the Holy Scriptures, and there is a firm belief in transmissive teaching, as Henry Meyer says,

. . . it should be borne in mind that no part of the Bible was written specially for children. This emphasizes the necessity for making selections from the Bible for the study by immature minds with much care, and on some other basis than that of a mechanical division of its total contents . . . to ask teachers in the Primary and Beginners Departments to teach a consecutive series of lessons from the Gospel of John, or from the Acts and the Epistles, is pedagogically absurd.⁴

In the previous chapter, Chapter IV, the comparison was made between certain selected topics of the National

³Romans 1:16.

⁴Henry H. Meyer, The Graded Sunday School in Principle and Practice (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1910), p. 76.

Sunday School Association Lesson Outlines and available graded materials for primary children from several denominations and publishing houses. As a result of this investigation it was found that only twenty of the lesson topics for seventy-eight Sundays were duplicated by the denominational or other graded literature examined--only about twenty-five percent. Fifty eight of the lesson topics did not appear in graded literature. This reveals that of some twenty committees who prepared graded material for primary people only twenty of the seventy-eight topics used by the N. S. S. A. for their uniform series were thought appropriate for six, seven, and eight-year olds.

When the National Sunday School Association lesson topics were examined, with their associated Scripture portions, in the light of the characteristics and needs of primary children, a marked deficiency was reported.

It was concluded that (1) the interest of the class subjected to these lessons would be at a minimum because of improper age level adaptation; (2) that spiritual stimulation would be slow because of the lack of application to the needs of the primaries in their realm of spiritual and moral problems; and (3) that the children would not be enthusiastic about inviting others to come to their class

because of their own lack of interest.

It was further concluded that the teacher, in presenting these lessons, would be at a definite disadvantage (1) because of difficulty in preparation and application of the lessons; (2) because it would be difficult to capture and hold the attention of the children, with the resulting discipline problems; and (3) because a lack of spiritual and moral progress would be apparent.

Henry H. Meyer, who wrote an entire book on the graded Sunday school, sums up the situation regarding uniform lesson plans in these potent words:

. . .The principle of uniformity itself is wrong. Valuable as has been the system in preparing the way for something better, it no longer meets the needs of the situation. With the transfer of emphasis to the educational aim and work of the Sunday school a change from uniform to graded lessons became imperative.

If the Sunday school is to be a school in fact as well as in name, the course of Bible instruction which it offers must be based upon recognized pedagogical principles, and not on any logical scheme of mechanical uniformity, however cleverly adapted to lessen its own inherent defects.⁵

The following definite values therefore accrue to lesson plans graded particularly for the primary department:

First, the values for the child are (1) increased

⁵Ibid., p. 78.

interest and attention; (2) greater mental grasp and challenge; (3) expansion of social outreach; and (4) a greater moral and spiritual development.

Next the values for the teacher are observed. Graded lessons (1) increase teaching enthusiasm; (2) produce a better quality of teaching; (3) minimize discipline problems because of a high tide of interest and attention; and (4) help improve the spiritual tone of the class, thus providing an atmosphere for spiritual decision and growth.

In conclusion should be mentioned the values accruing to the church, the parent institution. The church (1) will observe an increase of interest in the entire primary department; (2) it will welcome an enrollment increase in the Sunday school; (3) it will appreciate the economic implications, and (4) it will rejoice in the resulting advancement of the Kingdom of Christ.

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