

Salvation

Introduction to the syllabus

Unit	Lesson	PDF file name (for individual lessons)
Unit 1: Paul	1. The first believers	S_unit1_lesson1.pdf
	2. Stephen and Saul	S_unit1_lesson2.pdf
	3. Something special happens to Saul	S_unit1_lesson3.pdf
	4. Saul the believer	S_unit1_lesson4.pdf
	5. Paul and Barnabas in Lystra	S_unit1_lesson5.pdf
	6. What happened next at Lystra	S_unit1_lesson6.pdf
Unit 2: Easter—God’s Salvation	1. Jesus heals the paralysed man	S_unit2_lesson1.pdf
	2. Jesus is going to die	S_unit2_lesson2.pdf
	3. Jesus’ death and resurrection	S_unit2_lesson3.pdf
	4. Jesus is alive!	S_unit2_lesson4.pdf
Unit 3: Elijah	1. King Ahab	S_unit3_lesson1.pdf
	2. Elijah and the drought	S_unit3_lesson2.pdf
	3. Elijah, the widow and her son	S_unit3_lesson3.pdf
	4. Elijah and the prophets of Baal	S_unit3_lesson4.pdf
	5. Rain comes	S_unit3_lesson5.pdf
	6. Elijah—revision	S_unit3_lesson6.pdf
Unit 4: Jonah	1. Jonah chapter 1	S_unit4_lesson1.pdf
	2. Jonah chapter 2	S_unit4_lesson2.pdf
	3. Jonah chapter 3	S_unit4_lesson3.pdf
	4. Jonah chapter 4	S_unit4_lesson4.pdf
Unit 5: God saves	1. God saved Noah and his family	S_unit5_lesson1.pdf
	2. God saved the Israelites	S_unit5_lesson2.pdf
Unit 6: Living God’s way	1. God made	S_unit6_lesson1.pdf
	2. God knows	S_unit6_lesson2.pdf
	3. People disobey	S_unit6_lesson3.pdf
	4. God loves	S_unit6_lesson4.pdf
	5. God forgives	S_unit6_lesson5.pdf
	6. Jesus is alive	S_unit6_lesson6.pdf
	7. Two men go two different ways	S_unit6_lesson7.pdf
	8. Living God’s way	S_unit6_lesson8.pdf
Unit 7: Living as a Christian	1. God’s book, the Bible	S_unit7_lesson1.pdf
	2. Living to please God	S_unit7_lesson2.pdf
	3. Who we are	S_unit7_lesson3.pdf
	4. Serving in love	S_unit7_lesson4.pdf
	5. Praying	S_unit7_lesson5.pdf
	6. Praying for missionaries	S_unit7_lesson6.pdf
Unit 8: Learning from Psalm 100	1. Sing to the LORD	S_unit8_lesson1.pdf
	2. Thanking God for who he is	S_unit8_lesson2.pdf
Unit 9: Christmas—The Saviour	1. The Saviour is born	S_unit9_lesson1.pdf
	2. Shepherds see the Saviour	S_unit9_lesson2.pdf

Why Teaching Little Ones?

What better time to start teaching children than when they are young? Paul reminds Timothy that he had the privilege of knowing the holy Scriptures “from infancy” (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

So what is the goal of this syllabus? We want to help young children learn about God so that they can develop a relationship with him at their level. We are not wanting just to increase their head knowledge, but focus on a relationship with their Creator.

Salvation—where it fits

In the first three *Teaching Little Ones* CD-ROMs there is a syllabus of lessons for pre-schoolers—*First Steps*, *Learning about God* and *Introducing the Bible*. For more information on these, see: www.matthiasmedia.com.au/tlo. How you use them depends on what age children begin attending Sunday School in your church.

The *First Steps* syllabus is written with a particular group of children in mind—namely, the 2-3 year olds who are too young to join the traditional Sunday School, but are ready for a bit more Christian input than they would normally get in a typical crèche. (I sometimes refer to this age group as ‘transition crèche’.) The aim of *First Steps* is to teach these children simple concepts: helping them learn about God and develop a relationship with him at their level, learning that God is great, that he made the world around them, and that he loves them. They are also introduced to Jesus in the Christmas story.

The *Learning about God* syllabus is intended for pre-school children, aged 3-5 years. It is a syllabus that begins with foundational truths about God—God made, God loves and God knows—and introduces the Bible, prayer, and God’s Son, Jesus.

The *Introducing the Bible* syllabus is also intended for pre-school children. It is a syllabus that begins with Jesus as God’s Son (leading up to Easter) and then moves from Genesis (creation, Noah, Abraham, Joseph) to Moses, Samuel and David in the Old Testament. In the New Testament we are introduced to Peter and Paul and then we learn more about God’s Son, Jesus, at Christmas.

What follows the pre-school syllabus? There are three year’s worth of lessons for 5-8 year olds: *Promises*, *Kingship* and *Salvation*.

If one class is systematically working their way through each syllabus, then the place to begin would be the *Promises* syllabus, followed by the *Kingship* syllabus, and finally the *Salvation* syllabus. However, each syllabus is self-contained so that they can be used in a cycle and children can join in whichever year the cycle is up to.

The *Promises* syllabus explores the biblical themes of ‘promise’ and ‘fulfilment’. It includes lessons about Abraham, the Israelites and the Promised Land from the Old

Testament. From the New Testament it includes lessons on Jesus, God's promised Son, and how Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises.

The *Kingship* syllabus explores the biblical theme of 'kingship' with lessons on King Saul, King David and King Solomon, as well as other kings in the Old Testament. These lead into lessons about Jesus—the King of kings.

The *Salvation* syllabus includes lessons from the Old and New Testament about God's salvation. This salvation is ultimately found in Jesus, and is one to which we must respond. Therefore, included in this syllabus is a unit of lessons which gives an overview of the gospel, helping the children understand God's message of salvation. From the Old Testament there are lessons on Elijah and Jonah. From the New Testament there are lessons on Paul and how Jesus is our Saviour.

Salvation—what it is (and isn't)

The lesson notes for *Salvation* do not do all the work for you—you will still need to set aside some preparation time. The visual aids will not all be made for you, and there is no activity book to be handed out each week for the children to fill in. The lessons are varied and include as much craft as possible. In order for the children to learn, we want them to understand and remember what we teach them. Therefore, the main message is important and the take-home activities try to reinforce this.

What follows are notes for the teaching component of your Sunday School class. If your Sunday School includes a singing time or a time for activities when children arrive, you will find suggestions in my book, *Their God is so BIG* (Matthias Media). Also, if you would like to understand more about the age group you are teaching or about how to manage a class or tell a story or pray then, again, the fuller picture is explained in my book.

The lesson notes follow roughly the same order in each lesson. However, you may need to make adaptations, where appropriate, to suit your class. If the children in your class are unable to concentrate well without frequent concentration breaks, then factor these into each lesson—for instance, do an action rhyme more than once in the lesson and use it as a means of giving the children a 'controlled' chance to have a little wriggle. On the other hand, if I have positioned an action rhyme in the lesson (e.g. after the 'Conclusion', but before the 'What about us') to provide a concentration break and you think that for your class it would be preferable to keep the momentum and do it at the end of the lesson, then do so.

Although the lessons in the *Salvation* syllabus are aimed at 5-8 year olds, I realize that in many Sunday Schools there will be a wider age range than specifically 5-8 year olds. These lessons can be used for a wider age range, though you may have to make a few adjustments. If you have younger children in your group, provide concentration breaks throughout the lesson as their ability to sit and listen will probably be shorter than the others. If you have older children in your group, you could spend more time on the 'What about us' section of the lesson (even while other children commence one of the

activities). Many of the activities suggested in these lessons will suit older children. One activity in every lesson is specifically suitable for younger children, though you will find other activities are suitable as well.

An explanation of the lesson notes

Bible reference...

You will find two types of Bible references. Some lessons are based on one Bible passage (which may be as small as one or two verses). Other lessons are based on a number of Bible passages and verses. These Bible references are listed so that you can read them in your preparation—they will not all be read to the children. Many of the lessons are a simplified form of a Bible passage, so it is important to understand the Bible before you attempt to tell the simplified version to children. When preparing these stories, always begin your preparation with the Bible passage rather than my version of the Bible passage.

The Bible references themselves are for the teacher's benefit and, as such, they can be read in whatever version of the Bible you personally read. I base the lessons on the Good News Version text, because of its simplicity.

For use in the Sunday School class itself, I recommend that you have a class Bible in the Good News Version. At the beginning of the stories it is helpful to show the Bible and mention that what they are learning comes from the Bible.

When Bible references are written on take-home activities, there is often a Bible symbol. This is to reinforce the fact that the story comes from a part of the Bible, and it is a symbol that the children will be able to recognize. (Remember that many of the children can't read the Bible reference themselves, but they will learn to recognize the picture as a Bible.) However, there are some Bible references without this symbol, for example, where the caption needs to be small.

Bible references on the take-home activities are written with the name of the book and the chapter number, without the word 'chapter' included. The reason for this is that the word 'chapter' is only meaningful for readers who can appreciate what a chapter is. As the chapter numbers appear in large, bold type in the Bible, the children could easily spot these on a page. We do include the word 'verse', to distinguish the 'big' numbers from the 'little' numbers. I have not included this explanation in the lesson notes, as it is a difficult concept for children to grasp when some of them may not even know what a sentence is. I leave it to your discretion to explain, if and when you consider it is appropriate or necessary to do so.

Lesson aim...

The lesson aim is a brief expression of what you are trying to teach the children in a given lesson and hence what you want them to learn. It is an explanation for the teacher—it is *not* expressed in terms the children could necessarily understand.

Main message...

The main message is a simple statement of the main learning point in the lesson—what you want the children to go away remembering. It is expressed as simply as possible in terms the children should understand. The main message is what we want to focus on and reinforce in a lesson, and it is also what we want the children to take home on their activity. In some lessons, however, the main message is longer than I would ideally choose to write. In such cases it needs to be that length to adequately summarize the main point of the lesson.

Remember that the main message will not summarize every aspect of the theme or passage being studied—just the main message that we want the children to hear, understand, learn and remember.

Please note...

Some (not all) lessons have a ‘please note’ added. It will refer to some other matter which is important to draw your attention to.

Memory verse...

The lessons in this syllabus include memory verses. There are two memory verses learnt in every ten-week term. Sometimes the memory verses are for exactly five weeks each, but there are times when, due to the units studied, the memory verses may be for four or six weeks. Where possible the memory verses relate to the unit being studied, but there are some memory verses which have been included simply because they are valuable for the children to learn.

All the memory verses have been taken from the Good News Version. If in the Good News text there is the word ‘he’ instead of ‘God’ or ‘Jesus’, the children learn the verse as it appears in the Good News Bible and the teachers need to make sure that the children understand who the ‘he’ is referring to. We want the children to learn to be faithful to the biblical text and not learn verses with ‘different’ words in them. If they see us changing a little word they may think in the future that it doesn’t matter if they change ‘bigger’ words in Bible verses.

For each memory verse there are actions or suggestions recommended for use in learning and remembering the verse. These are simply suggestions and you may have other ideas which would work better for your group of children.

There is a printed copy of the memory verse in each lesson. This is mainly for the teachers, as many children will not be able to read it. If you do have readers in your group and you are encouraging the children to memorize the verse, then I would suggest that the printed copy of the memory verse is not on display (in the memory verse segment of the lesson) where the children can see it, giving readers an advantage over non-readers.

It is up to individual groups as to where in the lesson the memory verse is learnt. For this reason the memory verse appears at the end of the lesson notes. However, where action rhymes are included in lessons, they are usually placed within the lesson notes at a time when it would be most appropriate to learn the rhyme.

Vocabulary...

In many lessons there are particular words listed at the beginning of the lesson notes. These are words, phrases or concepts which appear in the Bible text or lesson and which might be difficult for the children to understand. As simple as possible a definition has been given. Please understand that there are times when it is very difficult to find 'simple' words to adequately describe the meaning of a word or concept. Sometimes a very basic definition is given with the intention that this basic definition would be further expanded on as the children get older.

Sometimes the simplified definition will appear in the story text and other times it is left to the teacher's discretion as to whether the simplified definition needs to be given (for instance, a particular word may have appeared in a recent story and the definition is not repeated within the story text).

Generally the definition is suitable for the children. However, sometimes there are notes just for the teacher.

Story preparation...

This describes the visual aid for helping you tell the story, and how it needs to be prepared. This will vary from week to week. I try to use a variety of methods, including picture cards, puppets and 3D visual aids.

When picture cards are mentioned, I'm not expecting you to use the picture cards in the same way each time they feature in a story. I'd encourage you to be creative and varied in your use of them. There are more ideas in *Their God is so BIG*.

With regard to the pictures of people from the Bible, you might want to explain to the children that people dressed differently back then (i.e. the men are wearing long robes, not dresses!). Also, the King of Egypt will look different because he lives in Egypt.

There may be some lessons where there are no visual aids suggested, but rather the children are encouraged to listen to text read directly from the Bible. We want to begin to

train the children to listen to the Bible being read to them without always having visual aids to look at.

Some lessons have the story text written in text boxes which can be attached to picture cards or in a scrapbook, so that you can read text which might be difficult to remember. If you are going to read the story text, it is important that you maintain regular eye contact with the children. Hold or place the pictures and text to one side of you so you can look around as you read, rather than burying your head to read something in your lap. Another option is to attach the text behind the picture cards in such a way that the children can look at a picture card (in front of you, e.g. on your lap) while you can see (on the back of the picture cards) the text. If you do this, make sure that you hold the picture cards so that you are reading the right text (i.e. don't read the wrong text for the picture you are showing).

In lessons where the text is not written in text boxes, you can still print the text and cut it into cards if that would be helpful to you. I would discourage you from 'reading' the text every week, particularly if you are using puppets. When telling the story regular eye contact is important to help the children concentrate and listen. When the story is based on reading excerpts from the class Bible, the story is written in such a way that there are frequent breaks from reading when you can speak directly to the children and maintain good eye contact.

Introduction...

The introductions have been written with the intention of preparing the children for hearing and understanding the story. The introductions are quite varied, but the intention is always to prepare children for better understanding the message of the story.

A word about puppets

I sometimes use puppets in the introduction. 'Puppets' can be almost anything, from a soft toy to a cardboard roll. Even a tennis racquet with a face on the strings can be a puppet. Puppets can be a wonderful help when teaching children. They can be 'incorrect' without being offended by correction. They can be 'slow to learn' and can ask questions which will help you emphasize important truths. They can behave 'badly' or behave 'well'— whichever is going to help you the most! They are very good at being attentive, never rudely interrupt, and set a wonderful example at sitting and listening. They are loved by children (often adored) and build a rapport with children which you or I can only dream of.

My puppets have one thing in common—they can't speak! They all whisper in my ear and I have to repeat what they 'say' to the children. This means that you don't have to be a puppeteer or a ventriloquist to use the puppets suggested in this syllabus.

I would encourage you to look out for a soft toy or two, or a hand puppet, which can make appearances in your lessons. I have found some great soft toys in second-hand shops.

They have been given a new lease of life as one of my friends. If you use a puppet (soft toy or whatever) more than once, keep the same name. Children will correct you if 'Sam' appears four weeks later as 'Jeremy'.

I will share with you some of my precious 'puppet' friends to give you an idea of how varied puppets can be, and how I have used them. 'Minty' monkey is a real puppet, about 10 years old, and is a favourite with children, particularly 5-8 year olds. He has arms (which can go around my neck) and legs. My hand goes up through his body and inside his head and I can give him some facial expressions; as I said, he's a real 'puppet'. He lives in a bag and only comes out when it's quiet. Sometimes he has treasures (which may help in introducing the story) in his bag—sometimes we have a bit of fun together and he has dirty socks or half-eaten apples in his bag! 'Naomi' is a doll from my childhood—I won't tell you how old she is. I can dress her and treat her like a child, so she can have experiences just like the children in your class. 'Jasper' is a puppet who lives on the end of a stick. Jasper himself can disappear inside a cone. His ability to disappear can be helpful when you want children to be quiet. I have been intrigued by the reaction of older children to Jasper. Jasper has been a hit with 7-8 year olds, and I have been surprised by how captivated children of this age can be by a puppet on the end of a stick! My most unusual, yet versatile, puppet was a square 'sticky note' with a face drawn on by children in the class. He was great because he would stay wherever I put him. He could get up close to a caption and help me reinforce the main message, or he could stick on a picture card and look very closely at something.

Story...

The stories have been carefully phrased so as to try to use the vocabulary, where possible, of 5-8 year olds. Please understand that my simplification of Bible passages will never be perfect. My aim is to be faithful to the Bible, meaningful to the children and prayerful in my task of simplifying a passage and communicating the main idea in a straightforward, concise way. I have often found simplification daunting as I certainly don't want to be misrepresenting the Bible at any point. Please begin your preparation with the Bible passage and then read the simplified version.

At the beginning of stories it is helpful to show the Bible and mention the fact that what they are learning comes from the Bible.

The stories do range in length. This can't be helped as it is impossible to make every story the same length. I don't want to add to a story just for the sake of making it the same length as others, nor do I want to shorten a story to such an extent that the children can't understand it.

Vocabulary

It is impossible to have a year's syllabus without coming across words which are challenging to simplify or explain. I have included the vocabulary section (referred to earlier) so that you can be alerted to words which appear in any given lesson and may need simplification. Please understand that it is impossible for me to know which words would be familiar to every child using this material. Always be on the lookout for words which your particular group of children might not know. If you see a word which you don't think your children will know, please either substitute another word or explain the meaning of the word.

As adults we tend to forget how limited the experience of young children can be. For instance, if a child does not live near a beach, has never visited a beach, or has never looked at a book with a beach in it, they may not know what a beach is. Yes, it might have been on the television screen, but unless someone is sitting beside them saying "that is a beach", they will be none the wiser.

I'm also aware that I may use some expressions which are at times colloquial and which may be used widely in my part of the world, but may be used less elsewhere. At times you might need to substitute a different word or expression for the one that I have used.

Use of the Bible

When referring to books of the Bible in the pre-school syllabus, I call them "a part of the Bible called ... (Mark)". In the *Salvation* syllabus I refer to them as "a book of the Bible called ...".

In some of the lessons in this syllabus there will be quotes to read directly from the Bible. This may be as little as a phrase or a single sentence. You might think that it's a lot of effort to get a Bible out and find the right place just to read a few words. However, it does serve more than one significant purpose. It is a reminder to the children that what we are teaching them is from the Bible. If we read something from the Bible, even if it is only a few words, the children will know that it came from the Bible—they have seen us reading the Bible. It's also reinforcing the fact that the Bible is important and the Bible is where the Sunday School stories come from. We also want the children to appreciate the fact that the Bible is readable and that it isn't a book just for adults. Simple quotes have been chosen for this reason.

If there is a quote to read from the Bible, you need to have a bookmark in the class Bible before the lesson so that you can easily find the correct place. If the children have to watch you fumbling through half the Bible looking for a verse then their attention will wander. You will also need to have the Bible beside you so that you can easily access it when you need it.

Conclusion...

The conclusion is a brief summary of the main point of the story. This aims to restate and reinforce the main message.

What about us...

This section is an attempt to draw from the story a truth that is particularly applicable to the children. One reason it has been written separately to the story is so that we are not trying to add to a Bible passage in order to bring out an application point. Not every story will have a direct application to 'us', but it may be learning an important truth about God. So the 'What about us' section is not necessarily all about us, but about what we can learn, be encouraged by or be challenged by from a given story. The 'What about us' sections are varied in their content and their length—you can add more if you have time, and personalize it more if you know the group of children you are teaching.

Pray...

I have tried to write simple prayer ideas that could be either said by the teacher, or you could have one or more children praying one thing each (this would need to be organized appropriately). It is intended that the prayers be prayed after the story. Therefore, the prayer ideas focus on subjects raised in the story, and are trying to show the children how they can respond to God's word in prayer. I would also encourage you to pray either straight after the story or at another time in the lesson, for other prayer matters relevant to your class.

Please make sure that when you pray with the children you are always modelling prayers that the children can pray themselves. If we pray using big words in long sentences, then children may think that they can't pray because they will have to wait until they are a grown-up. But the wonderful thing is that our loving Father wants and delights in prayer from the youngest to the oldest. And for the child who can't read yet, prayer is something that they can do. They might not be able to read the Bible themselves, but they can pray. There are many things a young child can't do, but prayer is not one of them.

Action rhymes...

Action rhymes appear in many lessons. The reason for action rhymes is that children remember far more if actions accompany words. An action rhyme is an enjoyable and age-appropriate way of helping children in this age bracket learn precious truths about God.

You might find that you can think of your own action rhymes that are appropriate to the world in which your children live. So if snow or banana plantations or beaches (to name a few) are a central part of the world in which you live, you might be able to think of a

special rhyme that incorporates those elements and is more relevant to the children in your group. So I'd encourage you to think of your own from time to time. Just remember, action rhymes don't have to rhyme!

The words for most action rhymes (except the very short ones) are written in a large font size on a page which could be pinned up. This is essentially for the benefit of teachers, who are likely to have more difficulty remembering the words than the children! Most children will not be able to read the words of the action rhymes, so if you do pin up the words of an action rhyme don't give the children the impression that it is for the children to read. Another way of using these pages is to place them on the floor in front of the teacher so that he/she can be reminded of the words (in the case of a memory lapse) when teaching the action rhyme.

Clapping rhymes...

Some rhymes are accompanied by a clapping rhythm instead of actions. These are just simply a variation on a theme!

'People in the Bible'...

The 'People in the Bible' chart is a pictorial version of a timeline. It's a way of helping the children see where Bible characters and events fit into the Bible. Children in the 5-8 age group do not have a well-developed sense of time and chronology—so this is to assist them in understanding when people from the Bible lived, to get a concept of the order of some Bible events and characters, and grasp the fact that part of the Bible is before Jesus, part of it is while Jesus was here on earth, and part of it is after Jesus went back to heaven.

The 'People in the Bible' chart was introduced in the *Introducing the Bible* syllabus. Those who have done that syllabus will be familiar with it.

When the children are introduced to a person from the Bible, they can see on the chart where they fit in the bigger picture. The story in Genesis about God making everything is in the very beginning of the Bible, and so it is placed on the far left of the chart. Jesus is a long way over to the right. And Peter and then Paul are placed to the right of Jesus.

One weakness of the chart is that we can't possibly include all the people mentioned in the Bible, nor can we accurately represent how many years there are between them. In reality, the people from the Bible on our chart are not right next to each other in time—they may be years apart, even hundreds of years. Our main aim is to help the children see the order they come in (e.g. Adam is before Moses) and also for them to see where people are in relation to Jesus (before him, or after him).

We have included a picture which relates to their life, beside each person. As some children won't be able to read the names, the pictures will help them remember who is

who. Sometimes I suggest to cover one part of the picture until they have heard the story that relates to that part of the picture.

You will need to give thought as to how and where you attach the pictures. If your Sunday School class meets in a permanent cubicle or room where you can display pictures on the wall, then you may be able to add the pictures with blu-tack and leave them there throughout the year. If your Sunday School class has to pack up everything at the end of each lesson so that someone else can use the space, then you will need to think of how the chart can be made so that it is portable. One option is to use strips of cardboard which are joined by tape and can be folded concertina style to store between lessons. Another option is to use thin cardboard which can be rolled, but you might need to store it rolled so the pictures are facing outwards in order for the cardboard to lay flat when unrolled. A third option is to attach each picture onto calico (cheap fabric). Yet another option is to laminate each individual picture, back the laminated pictures with blu-tack and quickly place them on the wall before the beginning of the lesson each week. If you choose this option, it will be easy to store and the pictures won't deteriorate through constant handling. Remove the pictures each week in the correct order so that they are easy to put up the following week.

Concentration breaks...

Some lessons in this syllabus are longer than others. With the combination of the 'Introduction', the 'Story', 'What about us' and then perhaps 'People in the Bible', some lessons can involve a fair bit of listening for the children. I would suggest you have a few ideas in mind for concentration breaks, so that you can use them if necessary. Concentration breaks need only take a very short time, but they provide the children with a legitimate opportunity to wriggle and release some energy. You, the teacher, need to keep control and give very specific directions. Gradually slow the actions and quieten your voice so that you calm the children and prepare them for listening again. Don't have them wildly shaking their hands in the air and then immediately expect them to sit still and listen. You do the actions as you tell the children what to do, so that they follow you. Here are two examples:

Hands: The children could shake their hands, then stop, then shake some more, then stop. Shake hands up high. Then stop. Shake hands fast. Then stop. Shake them slowly. Then stop. Shake them even more slowly. Then place your hands on your lap

Claps: The children could do a clapping rhythm that you demonstrate and then they repeat, e.g. two hand claps followed by both hands clapping on knees twice, then both hands clapping on shoulders twice, then back to two hand claps. Alternatively, you could do a rhythm of hand claps including slow and fast claps (e.g. slow clap, slow clap, three fast claps, slow clap) which the children imitate. You then give them a longer rhythm followed by a shorter one, followed by a slower one.

Another suggestion for concentration breaks is to do an action rhyme in a lesson at a time when a concentration break is needed.

Activity suggestions...

The activity part of a lesson has a few functions. It is an opportunity for the children to be reminded of what they have just heard. But it is also an opportunity to create something on which the main message can be taken home. For the children to learn, they need to *understand* and *remember* what we teach them. Taking the main message home on a craft activity helps with the 'remembering' part. Whilst the children may not be able to read, their parents usually can; besides, you may be surprised at how a child may recall a message they have learnt just by looking at their activity. The activity part of the lesson is also fun and provides an opportunity for the children and teachers to interact and talk in an informal way.

Please consider the children in your class when choosing and preparing activities. If you have a child with a physical disability, please make allowances in the lesson, and try to bring as little attention to the child's disability as possible. Similarly, if you have a child whose skills are less developed than others, think about how best to assist them without drawing attention to their difficulties. The age group between 5 and 8 years encompasses a large range of reading, writing, drawing, and craft skill levels. For this reason the majority of activities do not require writing skills and the teacher is encouraged to read any text to the children. Some children in this age group are beginning to have feelings of inadequacy because they are aware of being behind their peers in reading or writing (or other) skills. We want these children to feel loved and accepted by God and us. And so we want them to feel a sense of belonging and worth in God's sight that is not based on their ability to achieve. That is why there is an emphasis on craft and drawing, as opposed to reading and writing, in the activity suggestions. You will find that there are some activities which are best for readers, but I try to alert you to this. Think of the children in your class and what is most appropriate for them when you choose activities from those suggested.

As there is a range of skills within the 5-8 year age group, there are a variety of activities for you to choose from in each lesson. Some will be more difficult than others; some will require finer motor skills than others; some will require more teacher preparation; some will take longer for the children to complete; others can be finished quite quickly!

In each lesson I have aimed to include at least one activity which is suitable for younger children. I realize that in many Sunday Schools there will be a wider age range than specially 5-8 year olds in one class. If this is the case in your situation I hope that you find activities suitable for the younger ones. If you have children older than 8 years in your group then you will find that many of the general activities are suitable for them. You could also add extra challenges for older children by adding a second task or writing task to what they are doing, or ask them to do something else on the back of an activity page once they have finished.

It is not necessarily intended that you choose only one activity. I suggest a range of activity suggestions so that you can choose to do two rather than just one if you wish. Below are some comments on various aspects of the activities.

Drawing and colouring-in

There will be a variety of skills in the 5-8 year age bracket, and their drawing and colouring skills will vary. Be prepared to accept a range of abilities and end products.

The challenge in this syllabus is to have activities that are related to the Bible passage being studied and yet are at the appropriate skill level for the children. Some may be too advanced for your group, in which case either select a different activity, or simplify the activity. As I write activities I often think of different variations, but there are only so many which can be included in the lesson notes.

The children's pride in their work will vary. Some children will be very keen to show it to mum and dad, while others won't be all that interested. The latter isn't your fault.

Just one word of warning: if you have younger children in your group, dark crayons and pencils, especially dark blue and black, are unhelpful because they have a habit of covering up important things (like text).

Pasting

Glue sticks are a good form of glue if you can afford them. If you have younger children in your class, the teachers may need to apply the glue when the correct placement of glue is important.

Stickers

You can buy quite cheap round stickers and star stickers from supermarkets and department stores. Alternatively, you can make stickers using computer address labels which the children themselves can draw patterns on or colour.

Other equipment and materials

I do not have the children using scissors in the activities. Where things need to be cut out, I regard this as part of the preparation for the teacher.

I do not use traditional paints, as they require a fair amount of setting up, cleaning up and special equipment, and paint has a habit of going where it shouldn't. Having said that, there are a few activities suggesting the use of water-based paints. This is an option for those of you who want to diversify in artistic mediums.

I try to use as many materials as possible that you can collect easily (e.g. cardboard rolls, egg cartons, etc.). I have tried to keep purchasing costs to a minimum. I know I mention some craft items that need to be purchased, for instance paper plates and patty cases. But these can be purchased cheaply from a supermarket, or you can simply cut out a cardboard circle to replace paper plates, and coloured circles to replace patty cases (paper cases for making cup cakes).

Another thing to keep in mind is that most craft items mentioned in this syllabus can be purchased from an educational supplier.

Recyclable junk

I refer to a number of items which are things that would normally end up in the garbage bin. The advantages are that they are free and they add variety. One problem with this is that the 'junk' I refer to in these lessons is to some extent specific to a time and place. What I mean is that some items will become obsolete in years to come and be replaced by something else. Other items might be used abundantly in my part of the world, but are unheard of in your part of the world. So some flexibility and creativity is needed. I'm also aware that some objects are given different names in different regions. To help overcome this you will find a file, 'Activity materials.pdf', on this CD-ROM with pictures of the objects and what I call them.

So, my suggestions are:

- Make a habit of collecting recyclable 'junk' that could be used in craft. Have a junk box or bag in which these items are placed. You might want to have a collection box at Sunday School where parents can contribute items as well.
- Junk items have been limited by what's available at the time and place of publishing this syllabus. Keep looking around for new recyclable junk and adapt activities accordingly.
- Look ahead to lessons in the coming weeks and make the necessary preparation to collect items required (you might need to specifically ask parents to collect an item like soft-drink bottles or egg cartons).
- If an item is unavailable, take spare moments in the day (waiting in queues or sitting on buses) to think creatively of alternatives. You might come up with a different method of doing a craft activity or think of using a different item.

Playdough

Some activities make use of playdough. Playdough is something that you can make yourself. You should be able to find a recipe easily (for instance on the internet).

Use of envelopes

In the activity suggestions, I sometimes mention placing items in an envelope for each child. Let me explain why. If you want every child to have some shapes or captions that you have cut out, by placing them in an envelope for each child, the children will have what you want them to have with a minimum of fuss

Time

There will be variations in the time activities will take to complete. Some will take longer than others. Some activities can be lengthened or shortened. I often give suggestions for extra options you can choose to add. Also, as you get to know your children, you will know how and when to lengthen or shorten an activity.

Child's name

Ensure each child's name is on the work they do before they begin.

Safety

Always be mindful of safety during the activity time. Keep all scissors, staplers and split pins out of the children's reach. Whenever using split pins for younger children, stick masking tape over the points of the split pin to avoid injury, because the ends can be quite sharp. For younger children you might want to place tape over staples too—we don't want exploring, little fingers to find sharp staples.

Also, on the issue of safety, ensure that the class area is safe. Never leave children without a teacher present—they must always be in your sight.

While talking about child safety, you also need to be aware of and follow the child protection policies of your church and the laws in your state or country (especially if you are the Sunday School co-ordinator).

Paper size

We are limited in this lesson format to A4 paper (which is 210mm wide by 297mm high). An advantage of this is that many Sunday School classes have smallish tables that would not cope with large pieces of paper anyway. However, you have the option of using larger paper, and at times this is suggested, and there is an extra caption provided to paste onto larger paper if you wish. For all those activities which are drawn on A4 paper and you would rather they were larger, you could enlarge the pages on a photocopier, or some could be enlarged by hand.

When you print the lessons, ensure that you print them at full size. Adobe Acrobat (PDF) has a 'page scaling' option and if this is set to anything other than 'none' then the pages will not be printed at full size. This can cause problems with some activities, particularly the booklets.

Some countries do not use A4 as the standard paper size (i.e. United States and Canada). While A4 paper (210mm x 297mm, 11-3/4" x 8-1/4") is not often advertised, it is available from many office/stationery supply companies in those countries and will fit in almost all modern printers. If you have trouble finding it locally, you will be able to find it via an online store. If you have to print on US letter size, make sure the size adjustment will not cause problems for the activity.

I also often refer to A3 paper. This is twice the size of A4 (297mm x 420mm). This should also be readily available.

Your class

Just as every child is different, so is every class. As the teacher, you will come to know your group of children and understand their skills and limitations. Therefore, you might read some activities and think, “How could she possibly think that my children could do that!” You will need to make an assessment of what is likely to work in your situation with your group of children, taking into account the number of helpers/teachers you have.

Repetition of activities

There is a choice in each lesson so that you can choose the most appropriate activity for your class. You might notice that some activities appear a few times throughout the year. This is intentional. You might choose the activity in one lesson and not another lesson.

Looking forward to Christmas...

For those who did the *Learning about God* and/or *Introducing the Bible* syllabus there was a lesson called ‘Looking forward to Christmas’. This was a lesson where we looked forward and planned how we could make something to give to people in need at Christmas.

I would encourage you to continue the tradition of the children making something that they can give to someone in need before Christmas. This could come out of the lesson in Unit 7 (lesson 6) where we talk about praying for a specific missionary. The children could each draw a picture (you could also make cardboard frames to put the pictures in) to be given to someone at Christmas. For instance they could be sent to the missionary (talked about in the lesson) to distribute to the people where they live, or they could be given to a local nursing home to distribute to the people there, given to a ward in a local children’s hospital, or be sent further afield through a missionary or aid organization. There are a variety of other ways that children can help other children at Christmas (or indeed other times of the year). You could contact your church or denomination, missionary organization, Bible society or aid organization.

A little about each unit

Introduction to Unit 1

This unit tells the children about a wonderful and true salvation story—the conversion of Paul. Here we see someone who actively opposed Jesus and those who believed in him, yet God ‘saved’ him and changed him. Paul radically turned from persecuting Christians to encouraging them; from not believing Jesus is God’s Son, to proclaiming and preaching that Jesus is God’s Son. An action rhyme, which grows over the term, reinforces these truths. It would be great if in lesson 6 you talk about a missionary the children could pray for throughout the year.

The terms ‘salvation’ and ‘saved’ are not introduced in this unit—we do so in later units. There is an explanation about the Bible and the ‘People in the Bible’ chart in lesson 1, particularly relevant for any new children.

Introduction to Unit 2

In my local context, Easter is at the end of the first term of the school year. If you’re doing this syllabus on a different calendar, you might want to move the whole unit to coincide with the lead-up to Easter.

The first lesson in this unit is about Jesus healing the paralysed man, because it introduces the concept of forgiveness of sins and reinforces that Jesus is God’s Son. In the other stories in this unit we tell the children about Jesus’ death and resurrection from Luke 23 and 24. In the ‘What about us?’ section we try to help the children understand how Jesus’ death and resurrection relates to them—that they can have their sins forgiven and be friends with God.

Introduction to Unit 3

The stories that we will be reading in this unit help the children learn important truths about God—namely that there is only one God, the true and living God, and he is in charge of life, death and the world. The stories in this unit are wonderful for children because they are ‘concrete’—we learn about God through things that he does (feeding Elijah and the widow, bringing the widow’s son back to life, making a fire start despite drenched sticks ...). In fact, we see that God can do things which defy the so-called ‘laws of nature’—because God is God and he is the only God there is.

Introduction to Unit 4

Jonah—a real adventure story. A storm at sea, a man overboard, a fish swallowing the man and then ‘vomiting’ him up three days later ... drama, suspense, action. Yet the seemingly less spectacular parts of Jonah make this a great book for learning about God’s salvation—the salvation of the Ninevites teaches us lots about God. Sin does matter, God cares how we live, God loves the Ninevites, God did something about the Ninevites’ predicament. This is a fitting prelude to hearing about what God did so that we could be saved—sin does matter, God loves us and did something about sin by sending Jesus.

Introduction to Unit 5

This is a very short unit of only two lessons, with the intention of helping the children understand that God saves people. We help the children understand the terms ‘save’ and ‘rescue’, and revisit two great salvation stories from the Old Testament. Yes, many children will have already heard these stories, probably more than once, but we are looking at these stories here to see what they teach us about God being a saving God—so we’re looking at the bigger picture rather than smaller details. In the Old Testament God actually encourages the Israelites to keep remembering the Exodus and that God saved them.

In this unit we also introduce something which will feature in Unit 5—the ‘Bible bit’ verse—which is a bit of the Bible that we focus on in a given lesson, or in this case, two lessons. So the ‘Bible bit’ verse is central to the teaching of this unit, namely that God is a God who saves. This isn’t intended as a memory verse—it’s simply a verse from the Bible which will be a focal point in the lessons in Unit 5.

Introduction to Unit 6

This Unit is somewhat ambitious, but in some ways it is the high point of the whole *Teaching Little Ones* syllabus. Here we present the gospel to the children as simply and clearly as possible. That doesn’t mean to say that the lessons are short, because in trying to be simple we sometimes need to take longer so that the children understand the vocabulary and concepts we are trying to teach.

Within this unit are some new additions, which appear in each lesson of the unit. One is the ‘Bible bit’ verse, which was introduced in Unit 5. Each week there is a ‘Bible bit’ verse which is a bit of the Bible that we focus on in a given lesson. There are two copies of the verse—one is for showing to the class and is in larger type the other has smaller type but more decoration around it for the children to colour and keep for themselves.

Another special feature in this unit is the ‘book’—this is a little book summarizing the gospel in a very simple form. Each page of the book comes out of the lessons in the unit, so that each page is read within each lesson. For the purposes of revision and understanding, we read the pages that have been covered thus far each week—so it’s a very short book in lesson 1 (one page) and an eight-page book in lesson 8! Make sure that you remember to keep the pages each week. You could paste them into a scrapbook each week, or insert them into a plastic sleeved folder (as long as this won’t be too glary for the children to see—with light reflecting on the plastic). At the end of the unit the children will be given a more pocket-sized copy of the book to take home.

An earlier version of the *Salvation* syllabus included lessons based on the Matthias Media booklet, *Who Will be King?*. There are a few reasons why there is a different version of a simple gospel in this syllabus:

- this new unit of lessons still keeps the format of the other lessons in the syllabus and isn’t too different from them;
- this new unit has more concrete and less abstract terms, particularly for the younger children in the 5-8 year age bracket;
- this gospel outline flows more naturally out of all that the children have previously learnt at Sunday School (whereas the *Who Will be King?* series can be used as stand-alone lessons).

So that leaves you with a choice—you can either do the unit ‘Living God’s way’ or you can substitute it with the *Who Will be King?* lessons which I have written previously. This unit of lessons is still available for you to use if you choose. They can be downloaded for free from www.matthiasmedia.com.au/tlo/salvation.php, and used under the same license provided to you through this CD-ROM.

Introduction to Unit 7

This unit is aimed at helping the children understand what it means to live as a Christian. It gets down to some practicalities of living as a Christian. Being a Christian is wanting to please God and wanting to serve others in love. So it's not a selfish, self-centred life. As Christians we have the wonderful privilege of God calling us his people, his children and his friends. We want the children to delight in the special relationship that God welcomes us into.

In this unit we talk about the Bible and prayer. We want the children to know that the Bible is an important book for Christians to read and listen to, and prayer is something that all of God's people can do. We can pray at all times, both for ourselves, but also, importantly, for others. We also focus on praying for missionaries and the people they are talking to about Jesus.

Introduction to Unit 8

Psalms 100 is a good introduction to the Psalms. It's a short Psalm and it says important things about God's character and his relationship with us. It's also valuable in getting children thinking about singing and thanksgiving.

However, being a psalm, it means that the lesson is quite literary-based. It has a series of statements rather than a story. So this makes it more difficult to teach. Children might find it a bit more 'dry'. I have tried to think of activity ideas which combine the literary nature of the Psalm with craft.

This psalm encourages us to respect God, thank him and praise him for who he is, so the focus is on God, not on us. The psalm reminds us of how great God is—he is worthy of thanks and praise. This is an important truth to be reminding the children of.

Introduction to Unit 9

Unit 9 brings our year to a close with some lessons on Jesus' birth. The positioning of these lessons in the syllabus has been based on our local school year which ends just before Christmas. If you're doing this syllabus on a different calendar then you may need to move Unit 9 to coincide with the lead-up to Christmas.

In these Christmas lessons we talk about Jesus' birth and learn that before he was even born an angel promised he would save his people from their sins. We also talk about the shepherds who went to find Christ the Lord and Saviour. And so we finish the year focussing on the means of our salvation—Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. What a blessing it is to be able to remember and rejoice in our Saviour's birth—born to save us from our sins.

For more help

For more tips, safety hints, explanations of the ages and stages of children, and ideas for teaching young children, see my book, *Their God is so BIG*.

Final thoughts

Salvation has been both a challenging and an encouraging theme to write lessons on. Our God is a great and loving God who has chosen to send his own dear Son as our Saviour. What a wonderful ministry we have in being able to tell children about our loving God and his Son, our Saviour.

Finally, let me confess yet again to my ongoing problem of trying to pronounce a year's syllabus 'finished'. I have been continually thinking of more to add, more to change ... but alas, at a point in time, with the encouragement and support of my family and their ever willingness to help me finish it, I have had to pronounce it finished ... well, almost. The thing is, it will never be fully complete—God has so much to teach us and we have so much to learn that we can't say we've finished. And children make our teaching filled with variables far beyond our control (and imagination). I hope you will provide feedback (through Matthias Media), so that I can continue to make improvements in the future. And I hope I have left room for you to think of your own ideas to complement those printed.

Many thanks to Kathy Manchester for all the time she has spent poring over drawings and covering her dining table with paper and ink on our behalf. I would also like to thank Marianne Campbell and Maureen Seldon for providing other illustrations for this material. Many thanks, too, to Vanessa Stuckings for all her help. And my special thanks to my family who have helped in ways too many to mention.

I pray that you will be able to continue to grow in your understanding of God's gift of salvation, as you teach the precious children in your class. I pray that God will give you wisdom and help in the ministry of teaching children. And I pray that God will make us all teachable so that we can all keep learning about our great God and his Son, our Saviour.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Stephanie Carmichael
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