

Growing Up in God's Word

Bible Curriculum

“... from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures...”
(II Timothy 3:15, NKJV)

LIFE OF CHRIST

Part 2

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Cover illustration: Jesus Returns to the Father

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Introduction

Why teach children the Bible using only the Bible? Can they understand it? Yes! Is it too boring? No! I have taught a children's Bible class on Sunday mornings for over twenty years and have home-schooled my three children, teaching them the Bible in our home. Guess what? Children are a lot smarter than we give them credit for! There are just a few key things to remember in teaching the Bible to children. First, we need to be enthusiastic about the Bible ourselves. If children see that we think the Bible is boring, they will most likely adopt the same opinion. Be excited about opening the word of God together! Second, don't be afraid to tell them you don't know an answer to their question. There are many things in the Bible that we have questions about; some things we are able to study and find an answer for, others will have to wait until we get to heaven and can ask God. It's okay to let them know you're stumped too, but encourage them to search for the answer with you. Third, set the bar high for them. Please, please, please don't "dumb" the Bible down to "their level." Children can understand a lot through patient explanation and teaching. For example, if you read a hard word in the Bible that they may not be familiar with, stop and ask them what they think it means, then give them a correct definition. Now they have learned a new word and understand the passage you've just read at the same time. Children like to be challenged and to meet our expectations for them.

The method in this curriculum works because it has been tried among many children of different ages, abilities and levels. Here is the best proof I can offer to you: One of my regular Sunday morning students brought a friend to our class one day. She answered a few questions but mostly sat very quietly, absorbing everything that was going on. Later on, the woman that brought her to church said that the little girl told her on the way home that she wanted to come to our Sunday school class every week because we *actually teach from the Bible*. This little girl is not "unchurched" by any means; in fact, she regularly attends a denominational mega-church every Sunday. As the scripture says, "Out of the mouths of babes!"

May your children be like Timothy in the Bible who, "*from childhood has known the holy Scriptures*" (II Timothy 3:15) and may God bless you as you study His word together.

How to Use this Curriculum

Life began in a garden, so we will be using garden references and symbols throughout this curriculum to designate the different activities. Luke 8:11 says that *“the seed is the word of God”*. Our hearts are the soil that the seed needs to be planted in. We should desire to cultivate the soil of our hearts and the hearts of our children to receive the word so that it will grow and produce good fruit for our Lord.



“Growing In The Word”: Lesson Text And Discussion

This is the most important part of the curriculum – the teaching of God's Word. The lesson text is broken down into manageable sections to be read aloud and then discussed. If children are old enough to read, let them read out loud. If there are several verses to be read as a section, you could take turns reading a couple of verses per person. If it helps your child, let them jot down notes or write down definitions to new words as you discuss the passage. Encourage them to ask questions and ask them leading questions to get them thinking. The discussion section is basically a paraphrasing of what was just read to make sure there is comprehension of the material. Frequently there are questions to be answered during the discussion phase as well. The section of verses often leave off at a “cliffhanger” moment which helps keep the children engaged. You read and discuss and then you're ready to read on to see what happens next. At the end of this section of the curriculum there are review questions. These can be used in several ways: You may ask them at the end of the lesson, at the end of the week for a review, or if you want to have a graded assignment, you can use them as an oral or written quiz.

*A word about translations. It is important to use a reliable and accurate translation. Some dependable ones are KJV, NKJV, and ASV (American Standard). Many modern translations have compromised the integrity of the Scriptures in trying to put it in “easier to understand” language. All references in this curriculum are taken from the New King James Version.



“Putting Down Roots”: Memory Work

Memory work should be practiced every day for the entire week. Use whatever method works the best according to your child's learning style. Here is a link with a list of aids for memorizing scripture: <http://pryorconvictions.com/memorizing-scripture/> The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:11, *“Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.”* I cannot stress enough how important it is to memorize Scripture. In addition to Scripture, there are other items included in the Memory Work. A challenge to parents: memorize it with your children!



“Farther Afield”: Map Work

There are blank maps provided in Appendix A in the back of the book. These may be

photocopied for home use with this curriculum. Most lessons have mapping activities to serve as a visual aid of the places you read about in scripture. To be consistent, you may want to follow a system such as: cities – red, countries – green, bodies of water – blue, wilderness or desert areas – brown, lands or regions – yellow. The map work will indicate different places to be located on the map. Locate and label each item.



"Harvest Fun": Games And Activities

There are games and activities for each lesson to help review and reinforce the material that was covered. It is best to read through these at the beginning of the week to see if any planning ahead needs to be done.



"Digging Deeper": Research

This is primarily for the older students who are able to work independently. If your younger children wish to do these assignments with your help, then by all means, let them! It is a good idea to keep a notebook for these written assignments. These assignments are meant to encourage students of the Bible to learn how to study a topic deeper by using other resources to shed light on the subject. Primarily, books and the Internet will be your sources of information so it's important to do two things: 1) Check the reliability of your source, and 2) Check multiple sources; you might find two or more very different theories or opinions. Some good resources to use are Bible commentaries, concordances (such as Strong's), Bible dictionaries, Bible atlases and Bible software. There are many things we run across in the Bible that we would like to know more about. Have fun exploring!



"Food For Thought": Puzzles

There are at least two puzzles with each lesson to, again, provide review and reinforcement or plain just to have fun! The puzzles may be worked in the book or photocopied. All puzzle answers are provided in the Answer Key in the back of the book.



"Fruits Of Our Labor": Crafts

There are at least two crafts to do with each lesson. They vary in level of difficulty, but are another means of reinforcement of material covered. Crafts are a good activity for the kinesthetic (hands-on) learner as well as a tangible reminder for the visual learner. Please read ahead early in the week to see what materials you may need to gather in advance.

Suggested Schedule

This curriculum is designed to be used five days a week, 30 minutes to 1 hour per day. It is designed to be used with multiple ages with some activities geared toward older children and others geared toward younger. You may use as much or as little of the activities listed as you choose. Please feel free to alter the suggested schedule to fit the time constraints and needs of your family. However, the lesson and memory work portions should be used for all ages.

Begin or end each day's activities with prayer.

- Day 1 – Read “Growing in the Word”: Lesson Text and Discussion. Begin “Putting Down Roots”: Memory Work assignments.
- Day 2 – Continue memory work, do “Farther Afield”: Map Work activities, and “Harvest Fun”: Games and Activities.
- Day 3 – Continue memory work, do “Digging Deeper”: Research activities, and/or “Food for Thought”: Puzzles.
- Day 4 – Continue memory work, do “Fruits of Our Labor”: Crafts, or continue working on previous activities.
- Day 5 – Recite memory work, do lesson Review Questions and finish any assignments or activities from the week that time didn't permit.

A Word About the Gospels

In studying the life of Christ, we will be looking at passages from all four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is important to understand why each of these gospels was written. They were addressed to different people for different purposes.

Matthew was written to the Jews by a Jew and about a Jew. This is why he begins his book with genealogies – something the Jews had great interest in. Mark addresses his gospel to Gentile readers (all non-Jews) who would not be very familiar with Old Testament law. He focuses on the servanthood of Christ. Luke was a physician who wrote his account to Theophilus who was possibly a government official or member of nobility. Luke writes from a historical perspective and may have been trying to make the case that Christianity was not a threat to the Roman empire. The gospel of John was written by the apostle John in the Greek language and emphasizes the deity of Jesus.

Taken all together, the gospels paint a complete picture of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

There is also a *Harmony of the Gospels* reference chart in Appendix C located in the back of the book. This is a handy study tool to see all of the events of the gospels in chronological order as well as which of the gospels reference each event.

Lesson 1: The Transfiguration

Text: Matthew 17:1-13



"Growing In The Word": Lesson Text & Discussion

Read Matthew 17:1-2. This event takes place six days after the conversation in the last chapter (Matthew 16) where three important things are mentioned: 1) Peter makes his good confession that Jesus is the Christ, 2) Jesus foretells the establishment of the church, and 3) Jesus foretells his death. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with him up on a high mountain. These three men were disciples of Jesus and seemed to be very close to him as he often had them with him. Why did they go up on a high mountain? (To be alone) Jesus was often surrounded by huge crowds of people who wanted to hear him teach or wanted to be healed. Many times he removed himself from the crowds and went up on a mountain or out in the wilderness in order to be alone to pray. What happened to Jesus on the mountain? (He was transfigured.) What does transfigured mean? It simply means a change of form or appearance. Jesus suddenly looked different in appearance to the three disciples. Describe what he looked like to them. (Face shone like the sun, clothes white as the light)

Read Matthew 17:3. Who appeared with Jesus? (Moses and Elijah) Who were these men? (Moses was a leader of God's people in the Old Testament. He led them out of slavery in Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. Elijah was a prophet in the Old Testament.) Both Moses and Elijah were very important to the Jews. Moses was the lawgiver who received the ten commandments from the Lord on Mt. Sinai and Elijah was one of the greatest prophets of God. They had both been dead for hundreds of years and now Peter, James, and John see them standing there with Jesus, talking to him!

Read Matthew 17:4. Peter was known for being impetuous which means he was always saying and doing things before he thought them through first. What does Peter say he wants to do? (Build three tabernacles: one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus) These tabernacles wouldn't be like the tabernacle in the Old Testament where the Jews worshiped, but would be like small huts, or shelters. The word "tabernacle" means a tent, or a temporary habitation. So Peter wants to build little temporary shelters for these three great men he sees before him.

Read Matthew 17:5. What happens while Peter is still speaking? (A voice spoke from heaven.) God speaks from heaven while a bright cloud appeared. What did God say? ("This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!") God has said this once before. What occasion was it? (The baptism of Jesus – Matthew 3:17) Remembering that Moses and Elijah were held in very high regard by the Jews, what message do you think God is trying to get through to the disciples? Moses represented the Law and Elijah represented the prophets, and God had given the Law and the prophets to the Jews to listen to, but now God wants people to listen to His Son, Jesus the Christ.

Read Matthew 17:6-8. What did the disciples do when they saw the brilliant cloud and heard the voice from heaven speak? (They fell on their faces.) The Bible says they were

greatly afraid. Would you be afraid if you had been there and seen and heard the things they did? What does Jesus say to them? (“Arise, and do not be afraid.”) We see over and over again in the Scriptures that we don't need to be afraid when Jesus is with us. When the disciples looked up, who did they see? (Only Jesus)

Read Matthew 17:9. As they start to come down from the mountain, Jesus has some instructions for them. They are not to tell anyone what they've seen until when? (He is risen from the dead.) This may seem like a strange request. Why do you think Jesus wants them to wait to talk about the transfiguration? The glory of Jesus might not be believed in for long as people would hear this story and then see Jesus crucified just a short time later. However, after He is resurrected, there could be no doubt that Jesus is the Christ and is worthy of honor and glory.

Read Matthew 17:10-13. The disciples and Jesus now start talking about Elijah. The disciples were questioning Jesus concerning a prophecy in Malachi 4:6 about Elijah coming. At the time of the prophecy, Elijah had already died. Now the disciples have just seen Elijah on the mountain with Jesus. They wonder if this is the prophecy being fulfilled and Elijah has come again. Jesus explains that Elijah has already come to prepare the way. Who was he referring to? (John the Baptist) John the Baptist was like Elijah in many ways and he was the one prophesied about in Malachi. The disciples realized that this is who Jesus was talking about.

Review Questions: (Answers are provided in the Answer Key.)

1. Whom did Jesus take with him on a high mountain?
2. What happened to Jesus on the mountain?
3. Describe what he looked like.
4. Who appeared with Jesus?
5. What did Peter want to build for the three men?
6. What did the voice from heaven say?
7. Who said this?
8. How did the disciples react to hearing the voice and seeing these things?
9. What did Jesus say to them?
10. When the disciples looked up, whom did they see?
11. Whom did the disciples ask Jesus about?
12. What book of prophecy did Jesus refer to?
13. Whom did the disciples understand that Jesus was actually speaking of?



"Putting Down Roots": Memory Work

- Memorize Mark 9:7
- Memorize II Peter 1:17-18



"Farther Afield": Map Work

Map 1

The exact location of the Mt. of Transfiguration is unknown since the Bible doesn't specify. Some scholars believe it was Mt. Tabor in the region of Galilee and others believe it was Mt. Hermon just north of Caesarea Philippi.

- Locate Mt. Hermon
- Locate the city of Caesarea Philippi
- Locate Mt. Tabor
- Locate the region of Galilee



"Harvest Fun": Games & Activities

- Act it Out - Act out the scene of the transfiguration. Jesus' clothes were bright white like light and his face "shone like the sun". God's voice spoke from heaven. Portray the reaction of the disciples to all of this. Video this scene if you'd like.
- Moses or Elijah? - For this game, each player needs two index cards. On one card write "Moses" and on the other card write "Elijah." As the following clues are read aloud, players will hold up the card with the correct answer. Be careful - some of the clues might be tricky!
 1. I was a hairy man and wore a leather belt around my waist. (Elijah)
 2. I was a shepherd in the land of Midian. (Moses)

3. I was a prophet of God. (Both)
4. I was given the ten commandments from the Lord on Mt. Sinai. (Moses)
5. The ruler of the country wanted to have me killed. (Both)
6. My wife's name was Zipporah. (Moses)
7. I challenged the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. (Elijah)
8. I became discouraged and asked the Lord to take my life. (Both)
9. Ravens brought me bread and meat by the Brook Cherith. (Elijah)
10. My oldest son was named Gershom. (Moses)
11. I raised a child from the dead. (Elijah)
12. Through the power of God, I performed miracles. (Both)
13. I had a brother named Aaron. (Moses)
14. God gave me the pattern for building the tabernacle. (Moses)
15. My mother's name was Jochebed. (Moses)
16. I was a Tishbite. (Elijah)
17. I was a faithful servant of the Lord. (Both)
18. God covered me with his hand in the cleft of the rock. (Moses)
19. I had a sister named Miriam. (Moses)
20. I outran Ahab's chariot. (Elijah)



"Digging Deeper": Research

- Moses and Elijah - Learn more about these two great men of God. When did they live? What was their purpose or job given to them by the Lord? What were some of the memorable miracles and events in their lives? How did they die? (Careful, this might be a trick question!)
- Elijah and John the Baptist - Read the following scriptures and make a list of similarities between these two men. II Kings 1:8/Matthew 3:4; I Kings 17:1/

Matthew 3:7-10; I Kings 21:19/Matthew 14:4; I Kings 19:4, 10/Matthew 11:2-3; I Kings 19:19/Matthew 3:11.

- Use the *Harmony of the Gospels* chart in Appendix C located in the back of this book to answer the following questions: What other gospels record the transfiguration event? After reading the passages, identify which one says "no launderer on earth can whiten" in referring to the whiteness of Jesus' garments.



"Food for Thought": Puzzles

- Matching - Fill in the blank with the letter of the correct answer. Answers are provided in the Answer Key.
 - ___ 1. tabernacle a. messenger of God
 - ___ 2. transfigured b. Jesus
 - ___ 3. disciple c. tent, temporary dwelling
 - ___ 4. scribe d. the state of one risen from the dead
 - ___ 5. prophet e. student or follower
 - ___ 6. Son of Man f. something seen in a dream, or supernatural event
 - ___ 7. resurrection g. change in form or appearance
 - ___ 8. vision h. one who copies out documents
- Who Am I? Answer the following clues with the correct name of the person. Answers are provided in the Answer Key in the back of the book.
 1. I was prophesied about in the book of Malachi and compared to Elijah. _____
 2. I appeared with Jesus on the mountain and represented the Law. _____
 3. I am the brother of James. _____
 4. I wanted to build three tabernacles. _____
 5. I spoke from heaven about my son. _____
 6. I appeared with Jesus and represented the prophets. _____
 7. My face "shone like the sun". _____

8. I am one of the disciples in Jesus' inner circle and my brother was with me on the mountain. _____
9. I'm the author of the gospel that was studied in this lesson. _____
10. The disciples were told that I would suffer at the hands of the Jews.



"Fruits Of Our Labor": Crafts

- Transfiguration Picture - Draw or paint a picture of the transfiguration scene on the mountain. After drawing or painting Jesus, you may want to paint a thin layer of clear glue over Jesus' face and body, then sprinkle with clear glitter to produce a shiny effect.
- Build a Tabernacle - Peter wanted to build three tabernacles, one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. This would have been a booth-like shelter using branches and any material that grew from the ground like corn stalks, for example. Try constructing a small booth or tabernacle in your back yard using materials from nature.