



Notes on Bible Lessons

Junior

A four-year course

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this book is to assist you in presenting vital and meaningful lessons that relate to the children's experience. The notes for each lesson are structured to try to assist you in your preparation, so that your lesson will have a clear focus. The children should come to appreciate not only the facts of the lesson but the impact that it can have on their everyday lives.

About the CSSU lesson syllabus

The CSSU has for many years adopted a 4-year syllabus for infant, junior and senior lessons, believing that following such a syllabus can bring real benefits:

- When schools decide to follow their own plan it is often the case that records are mislaid, and the benefits of following a lesson plan are lost
- The CSSU Committee works constantly to improve the resources it offers, giving priority to materials for the coming year - so schools that follow the syllabus gain the benefits of new developments.
- Children can gain from the feeling of community that comes from realising that others all over the world are thinking about the same things
- If schools are teaching the same lessons, it means that a child visiting another Sunday School should be taught the same lesson they would have learned at home
- In each year there is a balance of Old and New Testament material
- When moving from one age group to another, there will be a smooth transition, without repeating things that they might otherwise have learned recently
- If a child moves from one school to another, they will continue with what they have been doing rather than repeating some things and omitting others

This set of notes covers all four years of lessons. When beginning to use the notes, it is not necessary to start at the beginning, with year 1. Instead it is recommended that teachers should begin at the current place in the CSSU syllabus - if in doubt, contact the CSSU secretary for details, or look at the CSSU web site at www.cssu.org.uk.

Aim of Lesson

This is a statement of the reason for teaching the lesson. Before each lesson you should have a clear objective in mind. This will help to avoid stressing irrelevant information, and focus the attention of the children on important points. At the end of the lesson you should be able to gauge whether the objective has been achieved.

Each lesson should set out to form in the minds of the children a deep and lasting impression of those characters whose records have been preserved as pointers to us of behaviour and vision. These cameos should build on each other so that the young will come to appreciate and worship the majesty of God, to understand his word, and to love and honour the Lord Jesus.

Background Study

Sunday School teaching is the Lord's work and should be approached conscientiously and prayerfully. A good teacher is a well-prepared one. You should be thoroughly familiar not only with the particular story, but also with its historical and geographical setting. It is suggested that you should first read the scripture passage, which must be considered in context. The stated verses provide a comprehensive source of the lesson content and will not necessarily be suitable for reading aloud in class, nor are they designed as the children's home readings. You may have to select from them verses for use in the class or at home.

It may be beneficial to compare different translations. In passing it may be worth mentioning that the Revised Standard Version is quoted in these notes (and we have followed its practice in determining

where to use capital letters for pronouns).

Next, cross-references should be studied comparing scripture with scripture. Using whatever books are available, it would be advantageous to seek background information. The meaning of obsolete words must be checked. Because misunderstandings so easily arise, owing to the fact that children have only a limited appreciation of things adults take for granted, it is well to consider what impact some of the words we use may have: the ark of the covenant could be confused with Noah's ark, Michal sounds like a boy's name, and such words as "anoint" and "covenant" may be quite meaningless to the children. You must be prepared to weave into the narrative both description and explanation where necessary. Appropriate maps, pictures and other visual aids should be found. The content and the techniques of the lesson should be planned, making notes as necessary, and taking into account the supporting activity in the worksheets. It will be appreciated that these lesson notes are intended as an aid to preparation and not for use in the classroom.

Few specific suggestions for visual aids have been made. It is hoped that you will be aware of the value of visual stimuli for children and will be imaginative in your choice, providing a variety of effective material. However, visual aids must be used to support rather than dominate the lesson. An inappropriate visual aid is worse than no visual aid at all. With a little ingenuity and forethought, the simplest visual aid is often the most effective and need not be difficult to provide. Everyday items, such as a paper scroll (story of Esther), a packet of seeds (the Sower), stones (David and Goliath), can sometimes focus the attention of the class and make the point memorable. You should anticipate future lessons in the syllabus, and acquire a collection of items in readiness.

You should try to have at your disposal a good set of reference books, partly for your own use in preparation, but also for providing pictures and other background information for showing to the children. If possible you should make use of a good Bible Dictionary, one or more Bible Atlases, and books which can be used to illustrate the Biblical account in other ways. Some good examples, which can be obtained from the Christadelphian Office or (except for The Vital Hour) from a good Christian bookstore, are:

Maps and Atlases

- Bible Mapbook (Lion)
- Oxford Bible Atlas
- MacMillan Bible Atlas

Wall Charts

- Acts Map and Charts
- New Testament Maps and Charts
- Old Testament Maps and Charts

Student Bible Guide Series

- Student Bible Atlas
- Student Bible Guide
- Student Bible Guide to Bible People
- Student Bible Guide to Jerusalem
- Student Bible Timeline

Commentaries and Bible Dictionaries

- The New Bible Commentary (Inter-Varsity Press)
- The New Bible Dictionary (Inter-Varsity Press)
- Illustrated Bible Dictionary (3 volumes) (Inter-Varsity Press)
- The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible (Collins)

History and Archaeology

- The Bible as History (Hodder & Stoughton)

Teacher's Guide

- The Vital Hour (Roy Standeven - The Christadelphian)

Suggested Outline of Lesson

This section does not necessarily paraphrase the story, but is intended to suggest ways of presenting it. The power of the lesson lies in the quality of the response evoked in the hearer. You should aim to feel for yourself the emotions generated by the lesson and then endeavour to convey those feelings to the children. The children will respond to your enthusiasm and conviction, and be able to appreciate more readily the goodness and wonder of God's dealings with his creation. One way in which Bible stories can become dynamic and exciting to the children (and to ourselves) is for you to allow yourself to get "inside the skin" of the characters, share their feelings, suffer their agonies, bubble over with their joys and respond to God with them. You must use your imagination, even a sense of the dramatic, to thrill the children, helping them share the vivid experiences of the characters. Even teachers who are introvert by nature can learn, with practice, to convey to children the impact of the lesson, and will be further encouraged as they succeed in capturing their full attention. All of these lessons will be familiar, but in making them live for young minds you will share with the children the freshness of the story, the excitement of the adventures, the wonder of the miracles and the joy of those to whom the gospel was preached. Children of junior age realize that Bible stories are not simply stories, and are beginning to appreciate simple elements of doctrine, moral lessons and spiritual values.

Relevance to the Children's Lives

Whatever our age, the scriptures are meant not just to be read and learned, but to change us. Sunday School lessons should be made meaningful for today, and this section is an attempt to help you make them so. The aim is to make the central theme of the lesson relevant to the experiences of the children. The words in this section are addressed to the children because it was considered the best way to suggest ways of promoting discussion. You should be realistic in your understanding of the children and the lives they lead. Although this section appears towards the end of each lesson, you should use your discretion regarding its use. It may be more appropriate on some occasions to start with this child-centred approach, or to incorporate the relevance in the storytelling.

Memory Verse

There is life-long value in memorising scripture, whether full understanding is immediate or develops later. The verses selected reflect either an extract from the story taught, or a relevant cross-reference. Care has been taken to suggest a different text for each week of the syllabus. It must be remembered, however, that some children find learning verses by heart beyond their capability, in which case the memory verse can be used as a copying-out exercise.

Worksheets

The worksheets are intended not only to reinforce the facts of the lesson but also to assist in achieving its aim. The intention in providing 'Now Something Harder' is to meet the needs of older or brighter children who may already be familiar with the details of the story, and it is not necessary for all children to complete both activities. The most important part of the lesson is the personal communication between you and the children, and the worksheets should not be allowed to get in the way of this.

In general the worksheets are based on the New International Version, though we have tried to ensure that they can be used equally by children with other versions, in particular the Authorised Version. There