

Understand and Teach



**The GraceLink Curriculum
For Sabbath School Teachers**



The North England Conference: Children's Ministries Department
Director: Pastor Patricia Douglas

The GraceLink Bible Study Guides are an important resource in one of our most urgent and vital tasks: leading our children to Christ. The Gracelink curriculum offers our children a balanced emphasis, featuring Grace (Jesus loves me), Community (We love each other), Worship (I love Jesus), and Service (We love you, too).

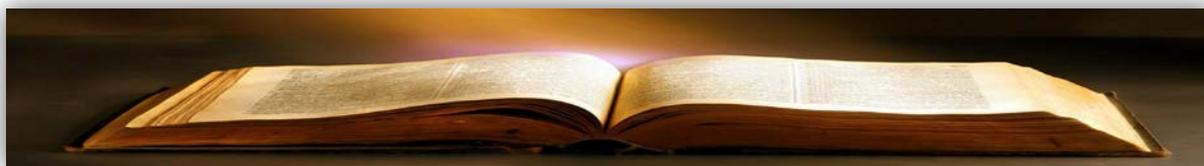


Developed by the General Conference, GraceLink is a biblically based 12 year curriculum comprising of 624 lessons. Most lessons are story-based, some on scriptural references that teach a specific doctrine. Each story has been selected to develop one of the four dynamics of the GraceLink series: grace, worship, community, and service.

To get the latest GraceLink Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, teacher resources, animations and puzzles visit the [GraceLink Official Website](#) or Download the [Gracelink App](#).



Feel free to download any of the resources that have been developed by the General Conference or South Pacific Division complement the Gracelink Curriculum.



Biblically Based

GraceLink is a 12-year curriculum comprising 624 lessons, all of which are firmly grounded in Scripture. Most lessons are story-based, some on scriptural references that teach a specific doctrine. Each story has been selected to develop one of the four dynamics of the GraceLink series: grace, worship, community, and service.

Because each lesson centres on a single message, each telling of a Bible story is focused—not simply “watered-down.” Often a story is revisited elsewhere in the curriculum with another point of focus. This is a thematic curriculum; only one teaching point is made at a time from a specific Bible story.

Spirit of Prophecy Supported

Every lesson is supported by the writings of Ellen G. White. The *Conflict of the Ages* series is referred to most often. Other references include *Steps to Christ*, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, and *Christ’s Object Lessons*. In some instances quotations are included within the story; however, in most cases references are included in the Teacher Enrichment section of the teaching guide.



SDA[®] Bible Commentary Use

Writers regularly referred to *The Seventh-day Adventist[®] Bible Commentary* series to grasp understanding of the message being taught. Editors always referred to those references during the editing process. Quotations from the *Commentaries* are often used in the Teacher Enrichment section of the teaching guide.

Biblical Research Institute Involvement

During the editorial process, all GraceLink manuscripts were reviewed for theological soundness by the director or associates of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference. Dr. Angel Rodriguez and his associates gave close attention to all lessons and teaching guides.

Doctrines and Principles Taught

Virtually every Adventist doctrine is taught at some point during the 12-year curriculum. Even very young children learn of baptism by immersion, the state of the dead, the Sabbath, and other essential doctrines. These and others are taught through stories in coherent thematic clusters and reinforced through activities during the Sabbath School hour. The bedrock Adventist message is taught at every level with the most effective methods of instruction.

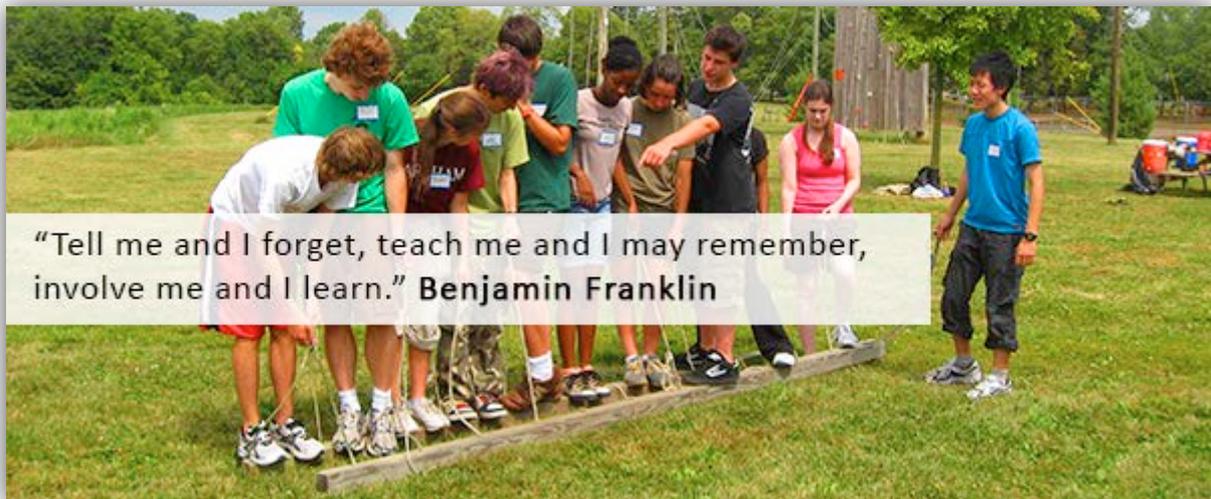
Educationally Sound

For the first time in the history of Adventism, Sabbath School lessons for children have been formulated with the use of current educational theory and methods. Curriculum consultants directed the production of the original curriculum plan and outlined the teaching methods to be used. Writers from every world division followed these plans as they participated in the development of lessons. Same message—new methods.

International Participation

During the early planning stage, Sabbath School and Children's Ministries directors from every world division met together with General Conference personnel and the curriculum consultants in England for a week to discuss and provide direction as the work moved forward. This group provided the focus for those who later developed and wrote the lessons. A few months later, more than sixty people—representing every world division—met at Andrews University to begin the writing stage. As the work progressed, over a two-year span, small groups of writers met at the General Conference to produce additional lessons for each level of the curriculum. Again, these writers came from around the world.

Active Programs



Today we know that we must approach learning activities through a variety of methods. We know that children remember about 30 to 35 percent of what they hear, about 40 to 50 percent of what they see, and about 90 percent of what they do. The emphasis in GraceLink is placed on all three. Children are often guided through activities that incorporate hearing, seeing, and doing—and require activity. Thus today's Sabbath School classes often nurture an exuberant atmosphere in which children actively pursue learning under the direction of a leader or teacher.

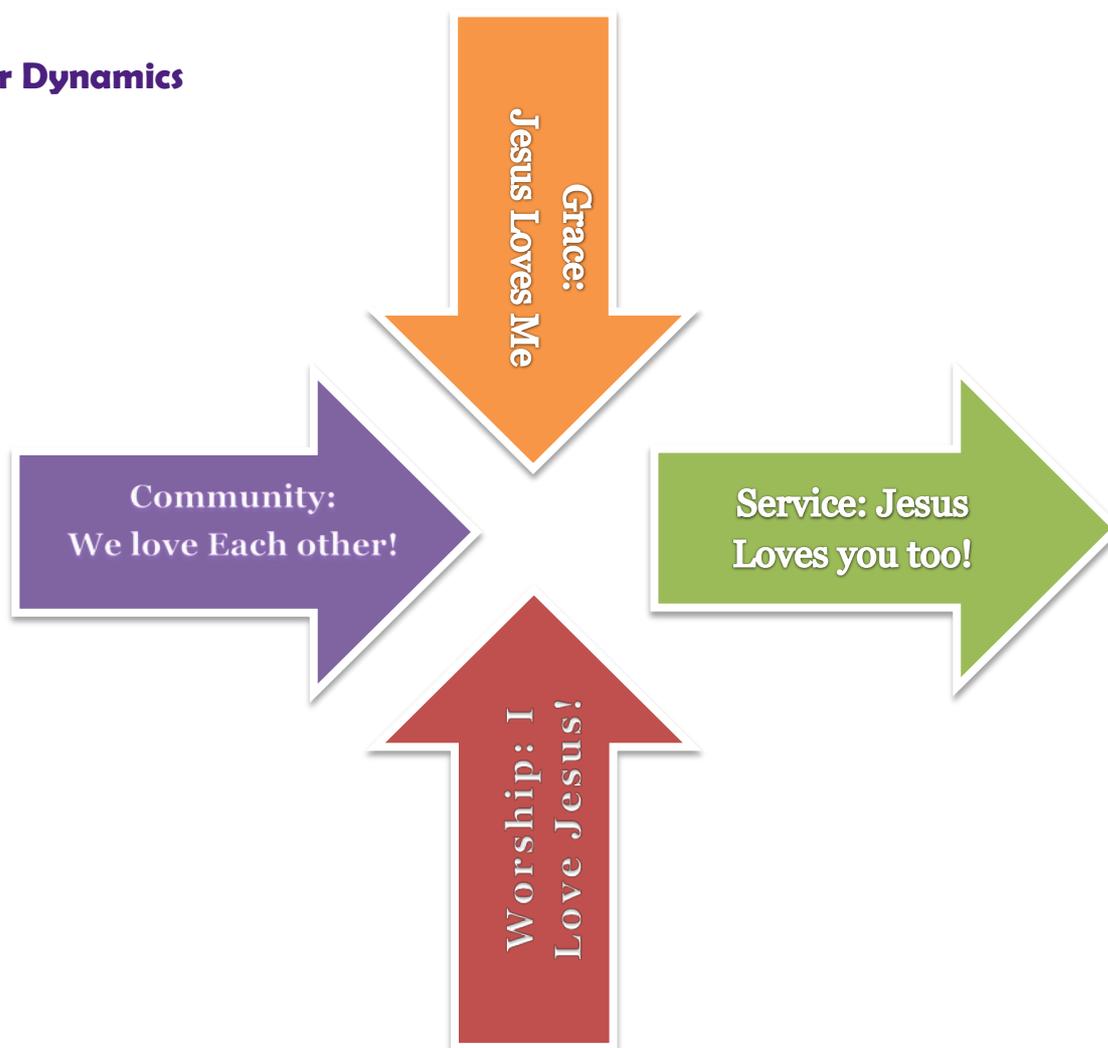
These activities are reinforced through the debriefing process in which children are led to consider "What did you learn?" "How do you feel about it?" "What are you going to do about it?" This process deals with knowledge, emotion, and application. Educational research tells us that people remember more when they are emotionally involved and that pleasant

emotions enhance positive learning. Debriefing is essential to active learning. It is the means by which children (and adults) understand and apply what they have learned.

How Children Remember What They Do

Spoken or written communication	Audio Visual Media	Role - Play	Real life Experiences
5 – 10%	25%	40 – 60%	80 – 90%

Four Dynamics



The four dynamics incorporated in the GraceLink curriculum provide a balanced program and form the core of the curriculum. These are:

- **Grace** (Jesus loves me.)
- **Community** (We love each other.)
- **Worship** (I love Jesus.)
- **Service** (We love you too.)



Grace is the demonstration of God's love for us. He sent His Son to die in our place, to redeem us, and to accept us unto Himself that we might live with Him forevermore.



Worship is our response to God's love. Because He first loved us, we love Him. Because He gave His Son to die in our place, we worship Him. We worship Him through praise, through our lifestyle, and through our stewardship of all that He has provided for us.

Community involves our relationship with those around us, with our immediate family, our church family, our friends, and with other Christians who know God's love.

Service is our outreach to others, to those who may not know and love the Jesus we serve. It is to them that we give the invitation to become a part of the family of God. It is to them that we take a message of hope for the future.

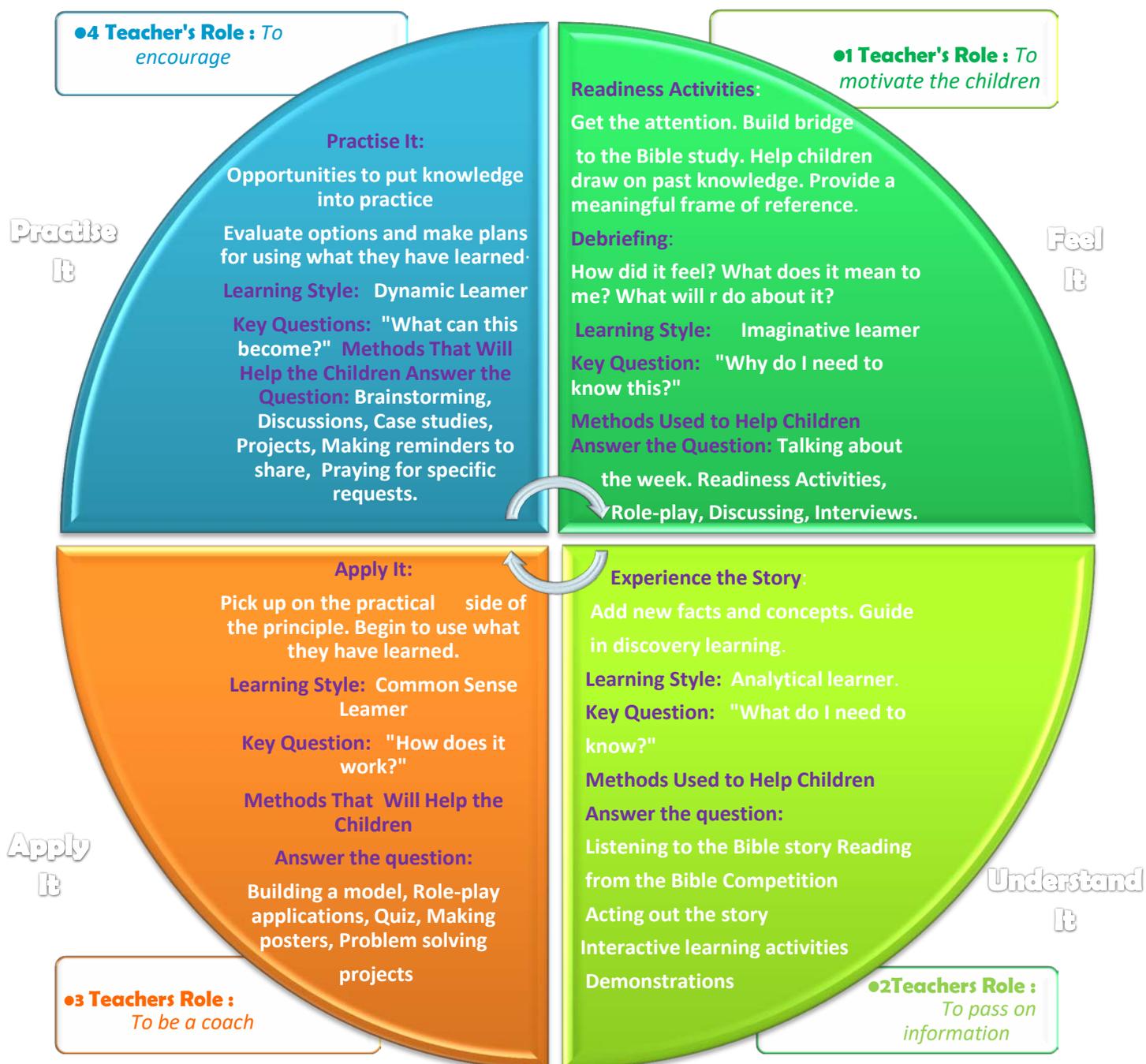


Total-Hour Teaching

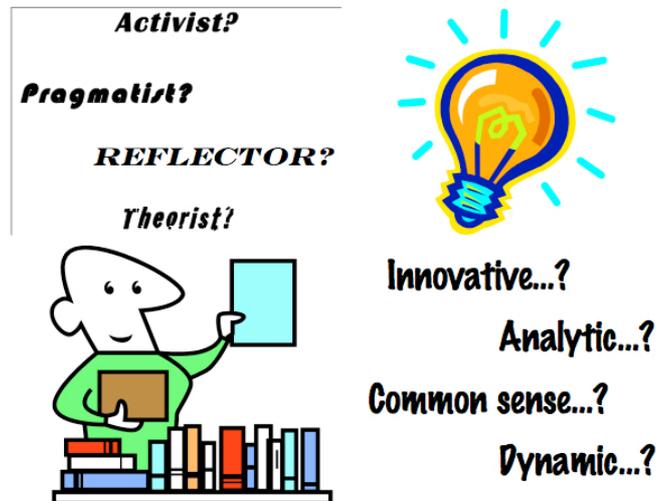


Past programming for children's Sabbath School was rarely designed to complement the topic of the lesson for the day. About 40 minutes was spent on material unrelated to the lesson topic. At the most, younger children spent 15 to 20 minutes sitting in their chairs, listening to a teacher tell the lesson story as she or he placed felts on a felt board. The GraceLink curriculum provides total-hour teaching, in which every activity focuses on the central message of the Sabbath School lesson for that day. Objectives are clearly stated in the teaching guides. Activities are carefully outlined to teach to the stated point of the lesson. The entire lesson focuses on one carefully determined objective for the day.

The Natural Learning Circle and the Learning Styles



Learning Styles



Educational research has determined that individuals learn best through a particular style or way of learning. Although each person may use all four of the identified styles or ways of learning at one time or another, most of us depend on one major application. These four learning styles are incorporated into *every* GraceLink lesson. This makes it possible for every child to grasp the point of the lesson and to understand it in her or his own way.

The four learning styles are:

- **Imaginative.** The imaginative learner asks, “Why should I learn this?” The “Readiness Activity” in each lesson appeals to this type of learner.
- **Analytical.** The analytical learner asks, “What do I need to learn?” The “Bible Lesson” section deals with the content of the lesson, the memory verse, and small group Bible study—it offers the facts, the knowledge, that the analytical learner seeks.
- **Common-sense.** The common-sense learner wants to know, “How does this work in my life?” The “Applying the Lesson” section offers the opportunity to explore how the lesson can be applied in practical ways.
- **Dynamic.** The dynamic learner wants to know “What can I do with this? How can I share this idea with others?” Opportunity to explore this option is given in the “Sharing the Lesson” section of each lesson.

Preferred Learning Style Inventory

Instructions: Each statement is followed by four possible responses- On a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being most you and 1 being least like you., rank the responses. Don't use any number more than once per line.

No.	Imaginative	Analytical	Common Sense	Dynamic
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> As a person I am... A) Responsive	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Thinker	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Practical	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Risk Taker
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> When I tackle a new task... A) I consider every	<input type="checkbox"/> B) I study up on it	<input type="checkbox"/> C) I seek advice from someone who has done it	<input type="checkbox"/> D) I start right in and do it my way
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> When I learn... A) I want a reason	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Facts	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Involvement	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Results
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> I tend to be... A) Too soft hearted	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Too dependent on facts and figures	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Too hasty	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Too impulsive
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> I tend to rely on... A) My feelings	<input type="checkbox"/> B) My judgment	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Common Sense	<input type="checkbox"/> D) My Intuition
6.	<input type="checkbox"/> I most enjoy in a learning situation... A) Small group discussions	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Accuracy and orderliness	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Exploring possible solutions	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Self - Reliance
7.	<input type="checkbox"/> When faced with problems... A) seek input from peers	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Seek logical solution	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Seek practical solution	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Act on hunches
8.	<input type="checkbox"/> In choosing solutions I look for ... A) Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Accuracy	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Predicted results
9.	<input type="checkbox"/> When I make a purchase, I'm most influenced by... A) The sales person	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Consumer reports	<input type="checkbox"/> C) The test drive plus warranty	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Impulse
10.	<input type="checkbox"/> I identify with... A) Caring people	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Knowledgeable People	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Sensible people, problem	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Enterprising people
11.	<input type="checkbox"/> When dealing with new information, I like to... A) File it for future use	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Logical Person	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Practical person	<input type="checkbox"/> D) An enthusiastic person
12.	<input type="checkbox"/> When dealing with new information, I like to... A) File it for future use	<input type="checkbox"/> B) Analyse it	<input type="checkbox"/> C) Apply it to new situations	<input type="checkbox"/> D) Put it to practical use
	<input type="checkbox"/> Total Column 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Total Column 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Total Column 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Total Column 4



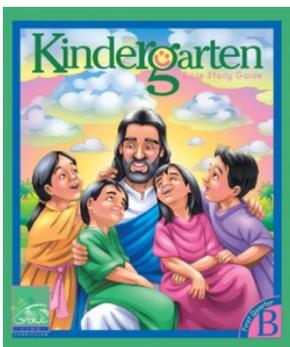
Outreach—a Lifestyle

Every lesson plan includes a section that calls for sharing what the child has learned with someone else—a friend, teacher, parent, relative, neighbour, or other person with whom the child frequently comes in contact. The child is often asked to make something in Sabbath School to give that person, and while giving it tell the person something about the story or lesson they have studied that day. The goal is to help children become so comfortable with sharing what they have learned that they will continue doing so throughout their lifetime.

Bible Study Emphasis

Every lesson in every level of this 12-year program includes Bible study appropriate to the age of the child. Even children in Beginner Sabbath School learn that the Bible is God’s Word. Teachers at that level are asked to open their Bibles when teaching the memory verse and show that verse to the children, to identify the Bible as God’s Word as they use the Bible to teach the memory verse. In addition the teacher is directed to show the children the verses on which that day’s Bible story is based and to read those verses aloud, pointing to each word or phrase as she or he reads. Kindergarten children also learn that their stories come from the Bible. Primary children learn how to find and read texts that provide a background for the lesson of the day and/or lead to more discussion of the lesson objective. Juniors are directed to individual daily Bible study to learn more of the story or to apply concepts taught.

Inclusive Art



The goal of the art in GraceLink, provided expressly for children by illustrators who specialize in art for children, is to provide a bias-free visual commentary integral to the text. People are depicted in a way that captures attitudes, personality, and ideas—to be symbolic of the points the lesson is trying to make. More “realistic” representations of people, which usually depict one culture or ethnic group to the exclusion of others, are avoided. Realistic, full-colour detail is used, however, in depicting cultural details of life in the Middle East during Bible times, such as the kinds of ovens used in the baking of bread.

Calls for Decisions

Throughout each lesson children are invited to make decisions—how would they apply concepts studied in their own life? How could they use what they have learned to help themselves, their families, their friends? Questions such as “What could you do to . . . “ or “How important is this to you and/or your family?” are frequently asked throughout the entire teaching/learning experience each week.

Summary

GraceLink Mission & Teachers' Goals

Make church attendance a joyful act of worship because

- Monthly themes are based on the four dynamics of a Christian life: Grace - Jesus Loves Me
Worship - I Love Jesus
Community - We Love Each Other (Inreach) Service - Jesus Loves You (Outreach)
- All age groups run with the same theme which is especially helpful because the majority of small Sabbath schools start the programme together and only separate for the Bible Story time.
- The Bible stories are a mixture from the Old and New Testament. The Kindergarten/Primary child will no longer have to wait until 18 months into their cycle before hearing a story about Jesus.
- The stories of Easter and Christmas are at their seasonal time of year.
- The teachers' guide includes their own background material, memory verse, programme outline, children's Bible story and weekly Bible challenge. The teacher has the Bible story set out in an interactive way.
- Reading the Bible story or passage is emphasised, not studying the lesson book.
- The Bible story or passage is presented first at Sabbath School so that all children, non-members' children too, are not expected to teach the teacher or feel foolish because they do not know the Bible facts and information.
- The children/teens go home curious to re-read or be read the Bible passage, the story in their study guide, and keep a journal of their answers to the weekly Bible challenge.
- The following Sabbath the children feedback to the class leader what they found out during the week by studying and living out the Bible principle.
- The questions to be studied during the week can be incorporated in the family worship.
- Daily prayer is encouraged so that God's power can help them live out the

Bible principles learnt each week.

- Activities are supplied which help to connect the Bible principle to life.
- The teaching methods incorporate learning modes and styles, that stimulate an interest in attending church, enjoyment in studying God's Word and encouragement to live a Christ-filled life.
- An emphasis is given to the children participating and feeding back what they are learning.
- The teacher does not have to keep checking they are including all the learning styles and modes, as it is incorporated in the prepared program.
- The program has plenty of material provided so it will need shortening. In the BUC most Sabbath Schools are not for an hour and a half, as in some parts of the world, so the program will need shortening. **Please do not miss off the last section. It is a vital part of the children's understanding of how to put the lesson into practice.**
- The student/teacher material is in four colors and formatted in a style attractive to the child/teen, i.e. art work and size of study guide.

● Age Groups

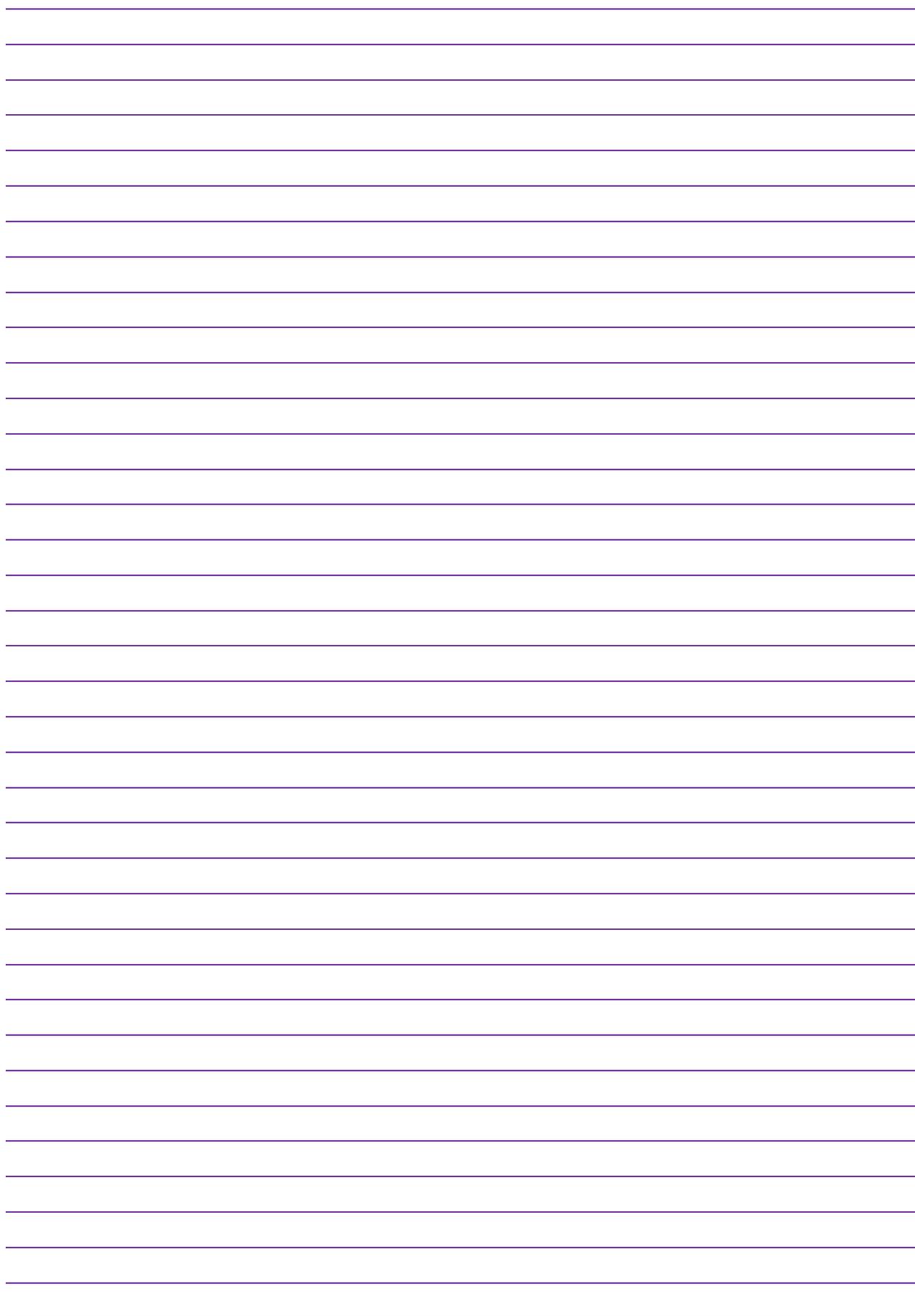
Group	Cycle	Age
Beginner	2-year cycle	0-2 years
Kindergarten	2-year cycle	3-5 years
Primary	3-year cycle	6-9 years
Junior/Teen	4-year cycle	10-14 years

(Power Point & Real-Time Faith)

The most exciting mission and goals of GraceLink are:

due to the way the Bible lesson is taught, as relevant to the children's lives, they know by the end of Sabbath School how to put its message into practice.

The children are learning that God's grace enables them to live as a Christian, His Holy Spirit empowers them to be a witness and eternal life is a free gift from a loving Saviour.



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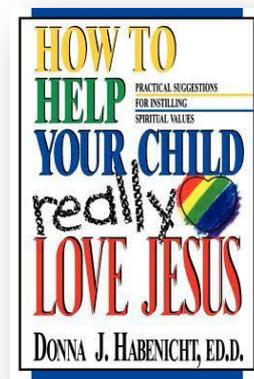
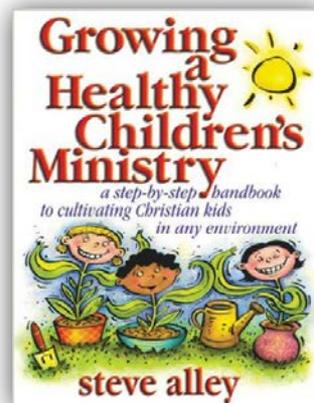
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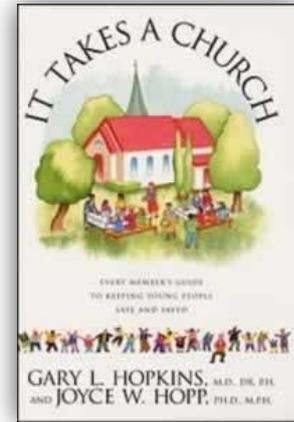
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WEBSITES

www.childrensministries.gc.adventist.org: This is the website of the Children's Ministries Department of the General Conference. Its goal is to serve those who work with children by providing ideas, resources, and information that are helpful to children's leaders and teachers.

www.KidsBibleinfo.com: This is a website specifically for children, ages 6 to 12, so they can learn in an easy-to-read and attractive format the wonderful truths of Scripture. The web components are Bible Topics, Stories, Games, and a Bible Lesson Series.

www.childmin.com: This is a website of the Children's Ministries Department of the North American Division. Its mission is to encourage and support those working with children in the congregation.

www.childrensministries.org: This is a website of the Children's Ministries of America which was formed by a group of Christian educators in Chicago. This national non-profit organization aims to empower pastors and educators to transform churches through creative learning environments (for Sunday school) that bring people of all ages to a mature Christian faith.

www.hikidz.org: This is a fascinating website for children, ages 6-12. It contains stories, Bible search, nature, computer, games, knowing about God and many more. Its goal is to provide a safe world for children where they can have fun, discover lots of new and interesting information about the world, life, important values, etc, as well as Christianity. The site also aims to be dynamic, contemporary, biblically accurate, denominationally unspecific, culturally accessible and appropriate to children regardless of background.

www.fema.gov/kids: This is a website of the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the American government. It teaches children how to be prepared for disasters and prevent disaster damage. It also help children learn what causes disasters, play games, read stories and become a Disaster Action Kid.

www.4kids.ag.org: This is the website of the National Children's Ministries Agency, which exists to serve the local church, its pastors, and laity in their pursuit of excellent ministry to the children of their church and their communities. It endeavours to unify the many facets of a local church's children's ministry and strives to help the local church grow by attracting, reaching, and discipling children and their families

www.childrensministry.net: This website is owned and operated by IWAS Internet, CulpepperVA, USA. Its aim is to provide links to the best resources for children's pastors, church leaders, parents, and volunteers.

www.kidology.org: This website aims to equip and encourage those who minister to children by providing practical training, creative teaching resources, and personal consultation.

www.netministries.org: This website has the KIDS LINK web page that is dedicated to linking you with Christian and other wholesome sites on the Internet that are appropriate for children. Resources are devotional, educational, or just plain fun. Excellent for kids!

www.rainbows.com: This website provides excellent resources, tips, articles, and ideas on helping children deal with grief and hurt.

www.mssscrafts.com - SDA materials

http://msssbible.com - SDA materials