

Genesis

Sixteen Lessons on the Book of Beginnings



Building the truths of God's Word into the hearts of the next generation

Psalm 78:5–7

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Acknowledgments

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For His glory,
Bill Shannon
Pastor, Children's Ministries
Grace Community Church

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Generations of Grace

Year One Schedule

Series	Passage	Title	Date
Gen 01	Genesis 1	God Creates the Heavens and the Earth	
Gen 02	Genesis 2	God Creates Man and Woman	
Gen 03	Genesis 3	Man Rebels Against God	
Gen 04	Genesis 4	Cain Rebels Against God	
Gen 05	Genesis 6&7	God Floods the Earth	
Gen 06	Genesis 8&9	God Preserves Noah	
Review	Genesis 1-9	Review Genesis Chapters 1-9	
Gen 07	Genesis 11	God Judges the Nations at Babel	
Gen 08	Genesis 12-15	God Makes a Promise to Abram	
Gen 09	Genesis 16-17	Abram and Sarai Doubt God	
Chr1-01	Genesis 3,12,17,49	God Promises to send a Messiah I	
Chr1-02	Micah 5	God Promises to send a Messiah II	
Chr1-03	Luke 1	God Promises to Send Jesus	
Chr1-04	Luke 1	God Sends John the Baptist	
Chr1-05	Matthew 2	The Magi Worship Jesus	
Gen 10	Genesis 18-19	God Judges Sodom and Gomorrah	
Gen 11	Genesis 21	God Fulfills His promise with Isaac	
Review	Genesis 11-21	Review Genesis Chapters 11-21	
Gen 12	Genesis 22	God Tests Abraham with the Offering of Isaac	
Gen 13	Genesis 25-27	God Chooses Jacob and not Esau	
Gen 14	Genesis 32-33	God Wrestles with Jacob	
Gen 15	Genesis 37	God Brings Joseph through great difficulties	
Gen 16	Genesis 39-50	God Delivers Joseph	
Review	Genesis 22-50	Review Genesis 22-50	
Ex 01	Exodus 1-2	God Hears Israel and Protects Moses	
Ex 02	Exodus 3	God Raises Moses to Lead Israel	
Ex 03	Exodus 7-10	God Sends Plagues on Egypt	
Ex 04	Exodus 12-14	God Ordains the Passover	
Res-23	Matthew 21	Jesus Enters Jerusalem As King	
Res-24	Matthew 26	Judas Betrays Jesus	
Res-25	Matthew 27	Jesus Endures the Cross	
Res-26	Matthew 28	Jesus is Rises from the Dead	
Ex 05	Exodus 14-15	God Parts the Red Sea	
Review	Exodus 1-15	Review Exodus 1-15	
Ex 06	Exodus 15-18	God Preserves Israel	
Ex 07	Exodus 19	God Prepares Israel for the Covenant	
Ex 08	Exodus 20:1-17	God Gives the Ten Commandments	
Ex 09	Exodus 25-31	God Ordains the Tabernacle	
Ex 10	Exodus 34, 40	God's Presence Fills the Tabernacle	
Review	Exodus 15-40	Review Exodus 15-40	
Lev 01	Leviticus 1-7	God Ordains The Sacrificial System	
Lev 02	Leviticus 8	God Establishes the Priesthood	
Lev 03	Leviticus 16	God Ordains the Day of Atonement	
Lev 04	Leviticus 19	God Demands Holy Living	
Num 01	Numbers 11-12	Israel Rejects God's Provision	
Num 02	Numbers 13-14	Israel Reject God's Plan	

Series	Passage	Title	Date
Num 03	Numbers 16	Israel Rejects God's Prophet and Priest	
Num 04	Numbers 21	God offers Israel Healing from Sin	
Num 05	Numbers 22-24	God Blesses Israel through Balaam	
Review		Review Leviticus and Numbers	
Bib 02		Promotion Sunday (Bible Overview)	

Generations of Grace Philosophy

We are embarking a new phase in Children's Ministries here at Grace Community Church. This new phase fleshes out many of our long-held commitments. We have always been committed to glorifying God through caring ministry and accurate teaching of God's Word to all children. We do not simply provide childcare or entertainment. We teach the whole counsel of God to the whole family. We believe that God will use His Word to transform the hearts of children and their parents.

In recent years, it has become more and more difficult to find curriculum that is accurate, God-centered, and covers more than the "top 20" Bible stories. Furthermore, it has always been a battle for parents to train their children in the Scriptures on a consistent basis. We often have not helped matters when each age group covers a different portion of the Bible on a given Sunday. How can a parent keep up with the barrage of different materials that go home on Sunday morning? These are the reasons we have begun *Generations of Grace*.

Generations of Grace is a biblically-based and God-centered curriculum designed for children from three years of age through the sixth grade. Every Sunday, our children in this age range will be taught from the same passage of Scripture in a way that is appropriate for their respective age level. We call this a unified curriculum. It is broken down into three levels: EC is early childhood (ages 3–5), EL is early elementary (grades 1–3), and JR is juniors (grades 4–6). We have included teaching ideas, activities, and/or crafts appropriate for each level.

Generations of Grace is written for a high degree of interaction between student and teacher. In the elementary grades, the Bible lessons are written in a question-and-answer format to insure that the students participate in and understand the lesson. We have included key truths, objectives, and application points to the beginning of each lesson so that a teacher clearly understands what he wants his children to know at the end of the lesson. Furthermore, we have provided ideas and activities that will increase a child's understanding and help him/her to remember the lesson.

Over a three-year period, we cover the historical books of the Old Testament, the life of Christ, the book of Acts and Revelation. We have been using and refining this material in our classrooms at Grace and around the world for the past three years and are excited to now make it available in all Sunday School classrooms.

How to Use Generations of Grace

Each lesson seeks to accomplish one overarching goal. At the beginning of each lesson, that goal is clearly stated. We often hear, “It is better to drive one idea home than to leave three on base.” The “lesson objectives” or “key truths” are written to unpack and explain the lesson goal. The rest of the lesson is tied directly to the goal and objectives stated at the beginning.

We divide a Sunday School lesson into four parts: “Prepare with the Truth,” “Point to the Truth,” “Proclaim the Truth,” and “Practice the Truth.” The “Lesson Overview,” the “Teacher Planning Sheet,” and the “Prepare with the Truth” section are devoted to teacher preparation. The second three parts deal with the actual time in the classroom. Become familiar with these sections as you plan for each lesson to help drive home the lesson’s goal. In each section, we have sought to give a number of ideas. These ideas can be used directly, adapted, or serve as a launching point for more ideas.

Lesson Overview

Each lesson begins with an overview page containing the major goal, specific lesson objectives/key truths, key verse, and application. Use these to guide your study and preparation for the week. The objectives will help you measure what your students learn. This page sets the framework of the lesson. We have intentionally included more objectives/key truths than the average class will be able to cover. As you teach week in and week out, you will be able to gauge how much your students can handle.

Teacher Planning Sheet

Use this sheet as you prepare and organize for the lesson each week. There is room to write down ideas and activities that you want to cover during your teaching time.

Prepare with the Truth

Teacher preparation is critical. A teacher must prepare spiritually and mentally. Read the Bible passage several times before you read the background. The more you understand the passage and apply the truths to your life, the more effective your teaching will be. Use this section to gain crucial background information about the passage.

Point to the Truth

The first part of the Sunday School hour we call the Point time. From the time a child enters the class to the time he leaves, we take seriously our duty to impart the truths of God’s Word. Teaching is not done merely during the Bible lesson. It is done the whole class period. This section includes ideas that will help review old lessons. Review helps to clarify and cement ideas students have learned in previous weeks. It also provides a basis on which to build the coming Bible lesson. This is a time to build anticipation and create mental hooks. In the curriculum, we have included activities to prepare for the coming lesson. Use them to hook the students’ interest and point them to the coming Bible lesson.

Proclaim the Truth

The major features of this section are the Bible lesson, presentation ideas, and worship ideas. Use the Bible lesson as a reference. It is a sample of how to approach the passage. All teaching needs to be done right from the Bible, not from the lesson book. In the elementary level, we take a question-and-answer approach to the lessons. Our basis for teaching is the Bible text itself. As much as possible, we read right from the Bible. Lead-off questions (LOQs) are then asked which takes the students through the text and causes them to actively interact with the passage. See the “What are LOQs” section for further explanation. In the early childhood level (EC), this process has to be simplified. We have included a more traditional approach with lesson questions at the end.

Practice the Truth

We want children to put the truths of Scripture into practice. However, they must first know the truths of Scripture before they can apply them. Learning is maximized when students review the lesson immediately

following the teaching time. In the “Practice the Truth” section, there are review ideas, worksheets, and/or crafts that simply review the facts of the lesson. However, there are also ideas that spark personal application. Use or adapt these ideas to best fit your class situation.

What Are LOQs?

Thomas Edison coined a phrase that is just as true today as it was when he lived, “Five percent of the people think, ten percent of the people think they think, and the other eighty-five percent would rather die than think.” As humorous as that may be, his point is just as prevalent with children as it is with adults. Lead-off questions, or LOQs, are designed to encourage students to think actively. They are designed to make our children not only master information, but to also engage in critical thinking. Using LOQs holds the students’ attentions by making them active rather than passive participants in the lesson.

Why Use LOQs?

How often we lament about our students’ apparent lack of thinking. But what are we doing to help them develop that ability in our Sunday School classrooms? The dominant tendency is to teach our students what to think so that they learn what the teachers know. It is far better to teach students how to think with the facts they have learned. We are reminded in Psalm 19:7, “The Law of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul.” Nothing else can restore the soul: not medication, not philosophy, and certainly not psychology. All human reasoning must come under the authority of Scripture.

Traditionally, thinking has been divided into two types: intuitive and reflective. When a student arrives or leaps at a tentative answer without being aware of the supporting reasons or evidence and without careful analysis, he is thinking intuitively. Such “thinking” results in immature students who act impulsively and maintain only a short-term perspective. When a student thinks reflectively, his thinking and actions are developed. In other words, change is much more likely to be initiated. He asks relevant questions to discern and organize information necessary for reaching a conclusion. He is much more likely to formulate and test hypotheses, consider evidence, draw valid supportable conclusions, and analyze those conclusions. Thomas Wade, in his book *The Home School Manual*, says, “If you want to teach your students to think critically, you must first put them in different situations where they have to think (through) problem situations.”

Think of a dull class session you have attended—a class you wished would end so that you could leave, a class where you learned very little. Do you have the picture? Now ask yourself, “Why was it a waste of my time?” or “Why didn’t I learn?” Most likely, it was not interesting, which resulted in little reflective thinking. We learn a subject or skill largely to the extent that we are interested in it and challenged by it. A good teacher will capture his students’ interest from the start and sustain that interest through each teaching lesson. The Apostle Paul models masterful teaching because he provoked critical thinking. People flocked to his teaching, eager to hear him and anxious to learn from him. Why? Paul engaged their interest and challenged them to think. How did the apostle-evangelist-teacher do this? Paul asked great questions.

Do your students seem uninterested in a subject? Ask a question. Are your students unsure of their thinking on a subject? Ask a question. Do you want to guide your students into learning new facts or ideas? Then ask questions. Paul asked a total of 250 questions in his epistles. The master questioner probed his readers’ minds and pricked their spiritual ears with several kinds of interrogations. Roy Zuck points out that Paul’s questions addressed issues of profound importance doctrinally and spiritually and could be classified in these eleven categories:

1. Questions to petition the student for information (Gal. 3:19; 1 Cor. 5:6; Rom. 11:2)
2. Questions that cause the students to realize the inconsistency of their positions (Rom. 2:3; 1 Cor. 11:22; Gal. 3:3)
3. Questions to elicit agreement from the hearer (Rom. 3:29; Acts 21:37; 1 Thess. 2:19)
4. Questions to promote further reflection by the reader (Rom. 11:35; Rom. 14:10)
5. Questions that urge the learner to offer an opinion (Rom. 13:3; 1 Cor. 9:18; Gal. 1:10)
6. Questions to prick the listener’s conscience (Rom. 3:27; 1 Cor. 6:15,16)
7. Questions that will cause the student to apply the truth (Gal. 2:14; Rom. 2:21–23)

8. Questions to help reverse faulty thinking (Rom. 6:1; 1 Cor. 9:7)
9. Questions to move the listeners to think through to a conclusion (Rom. 9:14; 1 Cor. 14:26)
10. Questions that express emotions (Rom. 7:24; 1 Cor. 6:5).
11. Questions that probe the student's motives (Gal. 2:14)

How Do I Use LOQs?

Lead-off questions appear in the "Proclaim the Truth" section of the lesson. For instance, in lesson two of Genesis, one of the LOQs asks, "From what was man made according to Genesis 2:7?" This question was designed to elicit information from the child. This type of question falls under "category 1" from the above section. If the student answers correctly and you, as the teacher, wish to move on to another topic, then a subsequent LOQ would be appropriate, or additional teaching on that topic at a greater depth may be desired. The LOQs have the answer below the question in the lesson. LOQs allow you to ascertain the knowledge or level of learning of your students. Once this is known, you can review for mastery of the subject and move on to a new area to avoid losing your students' interest. If the student does not answer correctly, the teacher may wish to follow the question with another question on the same topic.

It is important to probe the reason why the student or students failed to reply with the correct answer. John Milton Gregory lists four most probable reasons in his classic book, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*: (1) the student understands only fragments of the information so he cannot think clearly; (2) some of the words of the question are unclear, leading the student to a faulty conclusion; (3) the particular scriptural principle or idea being taught requires reasoning needed to connect that thought with previous teaching, and the student has not grasped that connection; or (4) the use or practical application of the lesson has "been neglected," and the child has determined this information as providing little relevance to his life. Questions are foundational to this curriculum, and your mastery of this process will determine to a large degree your effectiveness as a teacher.

Excellent teaching takes passion and preparation. How many take the time to be sufficiently prepared in Bible content, teaching methods, and student characteristics? How many are enlisted on a fill-in basis with the attitude, "You can do it. It doesn't take much time or preparation." Regrettably in many churches, this approach may mirror a lack of dedication to give God the highest level of competency possible (Col. 3:23). As Jonathan Edwards said, "Our children do not so much need to have their heads further stored up as to have their hearts touched, and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of teaching which has a tendency to do this." By becoming a master questioner like Paul, you will more effectively reach the hearts and minds of the children you teach.

I Have Never Taught Like This Before

For many veteran teachers, this looks like an entirely new approach. Can I still use visual aids, puppets, or props? Can I use an outline? The answer is "yes." Outline the passage and arrange the lesson so that it flows well. Use alliteration or key phrases to frame the passage for students. Utilize many creative teaching styles. Then go back through and mingle in the LOQs. Very often, LOQs will be your introduction to the next idea in the lesson. These questions ensure that you are including students in the lesson.

Furthermore, you may have wonderful creativity, and the students may laugh and be entertained. But there is no way to know what they have learned without asking them questions. To get used to this format, we recommend that you read the lesson by just looking at the answers. The answers alone will make a solid narrative of the passage. Familiarize yourself with the Bible passage by reading and rereading it. Then go back and pick a number of LOQs to use in the lesson.

Suggested Resources

We utilize and recommend the following resources for purchase and use in conjunction with this curriculum.

NKJV Bible

The MacArthur Study Bible

Visual Aids

A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards™: These are excellent pictures to use for presentation with the Bible lesson. To order materials, contact A Beka Books at www.abeka.com.

Betty Lukens Flannel Graph: Characters, scenes, and background pieces are vibrant, clear, and easy to use. To order materials, contact Betty Lukens at www.bettylukens.com or contact your local Christian book distributor.

Music

The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration, Word Music

www.wordmusic.com

Praise Hymns and Choruses (Green Book Classic 4th Edition), Maranatha! Music,

www.maranathamusic.com

Songs for Praise and Worship, Word Music

www.wordmusic.com

The Christian Children's Songbook, Hal Leonard

www.halleonard.com

Wee Sing Bible Songs, Price Stern Sloan

www.penguinputnam.com

3rd Sunday Sing-a-long, Maranatha! Music

www.maranathamusic.com

4th Sunday Sing-a-long, Maranatha! Music

www.maranathamusic.com

Additional Internet Resources:

www.ccli.com

www.cyberhymnal.org

www.igracemusic.com

Teaching Ideas

Family Bible Classroom published by Faith Bible Church in Spokane, Washington. To order this curriculum, contact Faith Bible Church at www.fbchurch.org.

Books

Battle for the Beginning by John MacArthur

Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis by John J. Davis

Although the Generations of Grace curriculum contains recommendations of materials not produced by Grace Community Church or its affiliates, it does not necessarily mean that we endorse all doctrines contained within those materials.

Evangelizing Children

For many believers, fulfilling Christ's command to make disciples of all nations begins at home—with their children. In fact, few experiences bring greater joy to Christian parents than seeing their children come to faith in Christ.

The process of evangelizing one's children, however, can be a daunting task. For many parents, the questions are as practical as they are disconcerting: How should I present the gospel to my children? What's the best approach to take? How do I know if I'm doing it right? Pitfalls, both real and imagined, intimidate virtually every parent who contemplates this responsibility. On one hand, there's the danger of leading children to think they are saved when they are not. On the other, there's the risk of discouraging children who express a genuine desire to follow Christ.

How, then, should we evangelize our children? The answer to this question is not an easy one, but it begins with recognizing and avoiding some of the common pitfalls in child evangelism.

COMMON PITFALLS IN EVANGELIZING CHILDREN

Oversimplifying the Gospel of Christ

Because a child's comprehension is less developed than an adult's, the temptation for many parents is to oversimplify the message of the gospel when they evangelize their children. Sometimes this stems from canned or programmed approaches to child evangelism, which often abbreviate the gospel, downplay the demands of the gospel, or leave out key aspects of the gospel altogether.

Like adults, children must be able to understand the gospel clearly before they can be saved. This involves grasping concepts such as good and evil, sin and punishment, repentance and faith, God's holiness and wrath against sin, the deity of Christ and His atonement for sin, and the resurrection and lordship of Christ. Certainly parents need to use terminology children can comprehend and be clear in communicating the message, but when Scripture talks about teaching children spiritual truth, the emphasis is on thoroughness (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). Oversimplification is a greater danger than giving too much detail. It is the truth—found in God's Word—that saves, but that truth must be understood.

Coercing a Profession of Faith

Whether parents present the gospel in an oversimplified or thorough manner, many solicit some kind of active response to that message. It could be a show of hands in a group setting, a rote repetition of "the sinner's prayer," or almost anything that may be counted as a positive response. Children will almost always respond in whatever way parents ask—not at all guaranteeing real acts of faith in Christ.

Rather than getting their children to pray "the sinner's prayer" or enticing them into a superficial response, parents must faithfully, patiently, and thoroughly teach them the gospel and diligently pray for their salvation, always bearing in mind that God is the One who saves. There is no need to pressure or coerce a confession from the mouth of a child, for genuine repentance will bring forth its own confession as the Lord opens the heart in response to the gospel. And as time goes by, it is never right to reinforce to the child that a childhood prayer is evidence of salvation.

Assuming the Reality of Regeneration

The next pitfall is assuming with certainty that a child's positive response to the gospel is full-fledged saving faith. The temptation here is to regard regeneration as a settled matter because of an outward indication that the child has believed. One cannot assume, however, that every profession of faith reflects a genuine work of God in the heart (Matt. 7:21–23), and this is particularly true of children.

Children often respond positively to the gospel for a host of reasons, many of which are unrelated to any awareness of sin or real understanding of spiritual truth. Many children, for example, profess faith because of peer pressure at church or a desire to please their parents.

In addition, Scripture indicates that children tend to be immature (1 Cor. 13:11; 14:20), naive (Prov. 1:4), foolish (Prov. 22:15), capricious (Isaiah 3:4), inconsistent and fickle (Matt. 11:16–17), and unstable and

easily deceived (Eph. 4:14). Children often think they have understood the ramifications of a given commitment when they have not. Their judgment is shallow and their ability to see the implications of their decisions is very weak. Despite the best of intentions, they seldom have the ability to think far beyond today, nor do they perceive the extent to which their choices will affect tomorrow. This makes children more vulnerable to self-deception, and it makes it more difficult for a parent to discern God's saving work in their hearts.

For this reason, only when a child's stated convictions and beliefs are tested by circumstances in life as he matures do parents begin to learn more conclusively his spiritual direction. While many people do make a genuine commitment to Christ when young, many others—perhaps most—don't come to an adequate understanding of the gospel until their teenage years. Others who profess Christ in childhood turn away. It is only appropriate, then, that parents move cautiously in affirming a child's profession of faith and not be quick to take any show of commitment as decisive proof of conversion.

Assuring the Child of Salvation

After becoming convinced their child is saved, many parents seek to give that child verbal assurance of his salvation. As a consequence, the church is filled with teenagers and adults whose hearts are devoid of real love for Christ, but who think they are genuine Christians because of something they did as children.

It is the role of the Holy Spirit—not the parent—to give assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:15–16). Too many people whose hearts are utterly cold to the things of the Lord believe they are going to heaven simply because they responded positively as children to an evangelistic invitation. Having “asked Jesus to come into their hearts,” they were then given a false assurance and taught never to examine themselves and never to entertain any doubt about their salvation. Parents should commend and rejoice in the evidence of real salvation in the lives of their children only when they know the child understands the gospel, believes it, and manifests the genuine evidence of true salvation—devotion to Christ, obedience to the Word, and love for others.

Rushing the Ordinance of Baptism

A final pitfall for many parents is having the child baptized immediately after he professes faith. Although Scripture commands that believers be baptized (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38), it is best not to rush into the ordinance in the case of a child. As previously stated, it is extremely difficult to recognize genuine salvation in children. Rather than rushing them into baptism after an initial profession, then, it is wiser to take the ongoing opportunity to interact with them and wait for more significant evidence of lasting commitment. Even if a child can say enough in a testimony to make it reasonably clear that he understands and embraces the gospel, baptism should wait until he manifests evidence of regeneration that is independent of parental control.

Here at Grace Community Church, our general practice is to wait until a professing child has reached the age of twelve. Because baptism is seen as something clear and final, our primary concern is that when a younger child is baptized he tends to look to that experience as proof that he was saved. Therefore, in the case of an unregenerate child who is baptized—which is not uncommon in the church at large—baptism actually does him a disservice. It is better to wait until the reality to which baptism testifies can be more easily discerned.

FOUNDATIONAL KEYS TO EVANGELIZING CHILDREN

It is not enough for parents simply to avoid these common pitfalls—they must also seek to put into practice the following keys to child evangelism.

Setting a Consistent Example of Godliness

Evangelizing children consists not simply of verbalizing the gospel with one's mouth, but also of exemplifying it in one's life. As parents explain the truths of God's Word, children have the unique opportunity to observe their lives up close and to see whether they seriously believe what they are teaching. When parents are faithful not only to proclaim, but also to live out the gospel, the impact is profound.

Because marriage is a picture of Christ's relationship with the church (Eph. 5:22–33), the relationship between the parents as husband and wife is particularly significant. In fact, aside from the parents' fundamental commitment to Christ, the single most important foundation for successful parenting is a healthy,

Christ-centered marriage. Setting a consistent example of godliness is indispensable.

Proclaiming the Complete Gospel of Christ

The heart of evangelism is the gospel, “for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). If a child is to repent and believe in Christ, then, it will be through the proclamation of the message of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18–25; 2 Tim. 3:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23–25). Children will not be saved apart from the gospel.

For this reason, parents need to teach their children the law of God, teach them the gospel of divine grace, show them their need for a Savior, and point them to Jesus Christ as the only One who can save them. It is best to start from the beginning—God, creation, the fall, sin, salvation, and Christ in His life, death, and resurrection.

As they teach their children, parents must resist the temptation to downplay or soften the demands of the gospel and must proclaim the message in its fullness. The need to surrender to the lordship of Christ, for example, is not too difficult for children to understand. Any child who is old enough to understand the basic gospel is also able by God’s grace to trust Him completely and respond with the purest, most sincere kind of repentance.

The key is to be clear and thorough. Parents more than anyone have ample time and opportunity to explain and illustrate gospel truths, to correct misunderstandings, and to clarify and review the most difficult aspects of the message. The wise parent will be faithful, patient, and persistent, being careful to look at every moment of the child’s life as a teaching opportunity (Deut. 6:6–7).

One such teaching opportunity is found in the parents’ responsibility to discipline and correct their children when they are disobedient (Eph. 6:4). Rather than seeking simply to modify behavior, the wise parent will look at discipline as an opportunity to help his children become aware of their failure and inability to obey, and subsequently, their need for forgiveness in Christ. In this way, discipline and correction are used to bring children to a sober assessment of themselves as sinners and to lead to the cross of Christ where sinners can be forgiven.

As parents explain the gospel and exhort their children to respond to the gospel, it is best to avoid an emphasis on external actions, such as praying “the sinner’s prayer.” There is an urgency inherent in the gospel message itself—and it is right for parents to impress that urgency on the child’s heart—but the focus should be kept on the internal response Scripture calls for from sinners: repentance from sin and faith in Christ. As parents diligently teach the gospel and take opportunities each day to instruct their children in the truth of God’s Word, they can begin to look for signs that their children have indeed repented and believed.

Understanding the Biblical Evidences of Salvation

The evidence that someone has genuinely repented of his sin and believed in Christ is the same in a child as it is in an adult—spiritual transformation. According to Scripture, true believers follow Christ (John 10:27), confess their sins (1 John 1:9), love their brothers (1 John 3:14), obey God’s commandments (1 John 2:3; John 15:14), do the will of God (Matt. 12:50), abide in God’s Word (John 8:31), keep God’s Word (John 17:6), and do good works (Eph. 2:10).

Parents should look for an increasing measure of this kind of fruit in their children’s lives as they continue to instruct them in the truths of the gospel. In addition, parents should be fervent in their efforts to teach their children about Christ and their need for salvation, but they should also recognize that an essential part of that work is to guard them from thinking they are saved when they are not. Understanding the biblical evidences of salvation—and explaining them to one’s children—is foundational to this work of protection.

Encouraging Possible Signs of Conversion

Because of the immaturity and fickleness of children, it is tempting for some parents to write off childlike expressions of faith as trivial, or even meaningless. In contrast, parents should encourage every sign of faith in their children and use the opportunity to teach them even more about Christ and the gospel. When a child expresses a desire to learn about Jesus, parents should feed that desire and encourage the child when they see possible signs of conversion.

Even if parents conclude it's too early to regard their child's interest in Christ as mature faith, they must not deride a profession of faith as false, for it may be the seed from which mature faith will later emerge. Instead, the parent should continue to point that child toward Christ, teaching the truth of God's Word with patience and diligence, and always looking to the One who is able to open hearts to respond to the gospel.

Trusting the Absolute Sovereignty of God

The greatest need of children is to be born again. Regeneration, however, is not something that parents can do for them. Parents may pressure their children into a false profession, but genuine faith and repentance can only be granted by God who regenerates the heart. Put simply, the new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit and Him alone (John 3:8).

The salvation of children, then, cannot be produced by the faithfulness or diligence of parents, but only by the sovereign work of God Himself. Such a realization should bring comfort to parents. In addition, it should motivate them to bathe their evangelistic efforts in prayer to the One who does His work where they cannot—in the child's heart.

Parts of this article were adapted from John MacArthur, *What the Bible Says About Parenting* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2000); John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to the Apostles* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000); Dennis Gundersen, *Your Child's Profession of Faith* (Amityville, N.Y.: Calvary Press, 1994); and Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, Penn.: Shepherd Press, 1995). For a fuller treatment of child evangelism, consult these resources.

Genesis Overview

Background and Setting

The initial setting for Genesis is eternity past. God then, by willful act and divine Word, spoke all creation into existence, furnished it, and finally breathed life into a lump of dirt which He fashioned in His image to become Adam. God made mankind the crowning point of His creation, i.e., His companions who would enjoy fellowship with Him and bring glory to His name.

The historical background for the early events in Genesis is clearly Mesopotamian. While it is difficult to pinpoint precisely the historical moment for which this book was written, Israel first heard Genesis some-time prior to crossing the Jordan River and entering the Promised Land (ca. 1405 B.C.).

Genesis has 3 distinct, sequential geographical settings: 1) Mesopotamia (chaps. 1–11); 2) the Promised Land (chaps. 12–36); and 3) Egypt (chaps. 37–50). The time frames of these 3 segments are: 1) Creation to ca. 2090 B.C.; 2) 2090–1897 B.C.; and 3) 1897–1804 B.C. Genesis covers more time than the remaining books of the Bible combined.

Historical and Theological Themes

In this book of beginnings, God revealed Himself and a worldview to Israel which contrasted, at times sharply, with the worldview of Israel's neighbors. The author made no attempt to defend the existence of God or to present a systematic discussion of His person and works. Rather, Israel's God distinguished Himself clearly from the alleged gods of her neighbors. Theological foundations are revealed which include God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, man, sin, redemption, covenant, promise, Satan and angels, kingdom, revelation, Israel, judgment, and blessing.

Genesis 1–11 (primeval history) reveals the origins of the universe, i.e., the beginnings of time and space and many of the firsts in human experience, such as marriage, family, the Fall, sin, redemption, judgment, and nations. Genesis 12–50 (patriarchal history) explained to Israel how they came into existence as a family whose ancestry could be traced to Eber (hence the "Hebrews"; Gen. 10:24, 25) and even more remotely to Shem, the son of Noah (hence the "Semites"; Gen. 10:21). God's people came to understand not only their ancestry and family history, but also the origins of their institutions, customs, languages, and different cultures, especially basic human experiences such as sin and death.

Because they were preparing to enter Canaan and dispossess the Canaanite inhabitants of their homes and properties, God revealed their enemies' background. In addition, they needed to understand the actual basis of the war they were about to declare in light of the immorality of killing, consistent with the other 4 books that Moses was writing (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Ultimately, the Jewish nation would understand a selected portion of preceding world history and the inaugural background of Israel as a basis by which they would live in their new beginnings under Joshua's leadership in the land which had previously been promised to their original patriarchal forefather, Abraham.

Genesis 12:1–3 established a primary focus on God's promises to Abraham. This narrowed their view from the entire world of peoples in Genesis 1–11 to one small nation, Israel, through whom God would progressively accomplish His redemptive plan. This underscored Israel's mission to be "a light to the Gentiles" (Is. 42:6). God promised land, descendants (seed), and blessing. This 3-fold promise became, in turn, the basis of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:1–20). The rest of Scripture bears out the fulfillment of these promises.

On a larger scale, Genesis 1–11 set forth a singular message about the character and works of God. In the sequence of accounts which make up these chapters of Scripture, a pattern emerges which reveals God's abundant grace as He responded to the willful disobedience of mankind. Without exception, in each account God increased the manifestation of His grace. But also without exception, man responded in greater sinful rebellion. In biblical words, the more sin abounded the more did God's grace abound (cf. Rom. 5:20).

One final theme of both theological and historical significance sets Genesis apart from other books of Scripture, in that the first book of Scripture corresponds closely with the final book. In the book of Revelation, the paradise which was lost in Genesis will be regained. The apostle John clearly presented the events recorded in his book as future resolutions to the problems which began as a result of the curse in Genesis 3. His focus is upon the effects of the Fall in the undoing of creation and the manner in which God

rids His creation of the curse effect. In John's own words, "And there shall be no more curse" (Rev. 22:3). Not surprisingly, in the final chapter of God's Word, believers will find themselves back in the Garden of Eden, the eternal paradise of God, eating from the tree of life (Rev. 22:1–14). At that time, they will partake, wearing robes washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 22:14).

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GENESIS MASTER SONG LIST

EC	Lessons	Found in
Arky, Arky	05,06	4
Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down	01,04,06,08,09,12	1,2,3
Create in Me a Clean Heart	03,05,10	2
Father Abraham	08,09,11,12	4,5
God is So Good	01,02,08,10,11,13-16	4,5
God Made Me	01,02	5
He's Got the Whole World in His Hands	01,02,12,13,15,16	1,4,5
I Love You, Lord	06,07	1,2,3,4,6
I Will Call Upon the Lord	14	1,3
In His Time	08,09,11,13,15,16	1,2,3,6
Jesus Loves the Little Children	11	1,4,5
Lord, I Lift Your Name on High	06,07	2
Mighty is Our God	05-07,09,10,14	3
My God is So Great	01,02,13	4,5,6
Oh, Be Careful	03,04,07,10	4,5
Praise Him, All Ye Little Children	04,06,11	4,5
Rejoice in the Lord Always	11,15,16	1,4
Seek Ye First	03-05,07-09,12	1,2,3,4
The B-I-B-L-E	08,09,12	4,5
The Wise Man and Foolish Man	05,07,10	4,5
This is My Father's World	01-03,05	1,4
This is the Day	01,02,16	1,2,3,4
Trust and Obey	03-10,12,13-16	1,6
Who Built the Ark?	05,06	5

EL	Lessons	Found in
A Shield About Me	05,06,10,15,16	2,3
Arky, Arky	05,06	4
Cleanse Me	03-05,10	1 (#438)
Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down	01,04,06,08,09,12	1,2,3
Create in Me a Clean Heart	03-05,10	2
Father Abraham	08,09,11,12	4,5
God is So Good	01,02,08,10,11,13-16	4,5
God Will Take Care of You	13,15,16	1
Great is the Lord	01,02,06,07,11	1,3,4
I Love You, Lord	06,07	1,2,3,4,6
I Sing the Mighty Power of God	01,02,05	1
I Will Call Upon the Lord	14	1,3
In His Time	08,09,11,13,15,16	1,2,3,6
Jesus Loves the Little Children	11	1,4,5
Lord, I Lift Your Name on High	06,07	2
Mighty is Our God	05-07,09,10,14	3
My Faith Has Found a Resting Place	08,09,12,15,16	1
My God is So Great	01,02,13	4,5,6
O Worship the King	04-07,12	1,2
Oh, Be Careful	03,04,07,10	4,5
Praise Him, All Ye Little Children	04,06,11	4,5
Rejoice in the Lord Always	11,15,16	1,4
Seek Ye First	03-05,07-09,12	1,2,3,4

Standing on the Promises	08,09,12,14	1
Sweet Hour of Prayer	14	1
The B-I-B-L-E	08,09,12	4,5
The Solid Rock	10-12	1 (#404)
The Wise Man and Foolish Man	05,07,10	4,5
This is My Father's World	01-03,05	1,4
This is the Day	01,02,16	1,2,3,4
Thou Art Worthy	01,02,12,13,15,16	1,2
'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus	03,06,08	1
Trust and Obey	03-10,12-16	1,6
We Bow Down	01,02,06,12	3,7
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	14-16	1
Who Built the Ark?	05,06	5

JR	Lessons	Found in
A Shield About Me	05,06,10,15,16	2,3
Cleanse Me	03-05,10	1 (#438)
Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down	01,04,06,08,09,12	1,2,3
Create in Me a Clean Heart	03-05,10	2
Father Abraham	08,09,11,12	4,5
God Will Take Care of You	13,15,16	1
Great is the Lord	01,02,06,07,11	1,3,4
I Love You, Lord	06,07	1,2,3,4,6
I Sing the Mighty Power of God	01,02,05	1
I Will Call Upon the Lord	14	1,3
In His Time	08,09,11,13,15,16	1,2,3,6
Jesus Loves the Little Children	11	1,4,5
Lord, I Lift Your Name on High	06,07	2
Mighty is Our God	05-10,14	3
My Faith Has Found a Resting Place	08,09,12,15,16	1
O Worship the King	04-07,12	1,2
Rejoice in the Lord Always	11,15,16	1,4
Seek Ye First	03-05,07-09,12	1,2,3,4
Standing on the Promises	08,09,12,14	1
Sweet Hour of Prayer	14	1
The Solid Rock	10-12	1 (#404)
This is My Father's World	01-03,05	1,4
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