

Beginner

Bible Study Guide

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A Sabbath School Bible Study Guide for Beginner Children
GraceLink® Sabbath School Curriculum

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Year A, Fourth Quarter

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Contents

SERVICE: We serve God when we care for others.

1. Jesus Heals a Little Girl (October) 7

GRACE: God brings His love to us.

2. The Good Shepherd (November) 25

WORSHIP: We are thankful for the birth of Jesus.

3. Baby Jesus Is Born (December) 43

Basic Needs of Children*

All children have certain basic needs as well as needs that are specific to their age and stage of development. The basic needs of children are . . .

Physical

- Food
- Warmth
- Shelter

Mental

- Power—to make choices and follow plans

Emotional

- A sense of belonging
- Approval and recognition
- Expressions of unconditional love and acceptance
- Freedom within defined boundaries
- Humor—a chance to laugh

Spiritual

- An all-knowing, loving, caring God
- Forgiveness of wrongs and a chance to start over
- Assurance of acceptance with God
- Experience in prayer, answers to prayer
- A chance to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God

The Beginner Child

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church the GraceLink curriculum for beginners targets children ages birth through 2 years. However, both the beginner and the kindergarten materials are adaptable to 3-year-olds.

A general rule applying to the beginner child is: seat children so their feet easily touch the ground. For children under 18 months use walkers (without wheels).

To better understand beginner children, ages birth through 2 years, it is helpful to note characteristics of their growth and development.

Physical

- Vary greatly in their physical development
- Are growing rapidly
- Tire easily
- Cannot sit still for long

Mental

- Have an attention span of only one or two minutes
- Learn by active involvement and imitation rather than by instruction
- Learn best one ministep at a time
- Focus attention on what they see and/or touch

Emotional

- Are extremely egocentric—centered in themselves
- Fear separation from parents
- Cry easily—one crying child sets other children crying
- Express their needs by crying—crying usually stops when needs are met
- Become attached to adults who show love and acceptance of them

Spiritual

- Sense attitudes of respect, joy, and anticipation in connection with church, the Bible, and Jesus
- Can identify pictures of Jesus and lip His name
- Will fold hands (briefly) for the blessing before meals and kneel (again briefly) for prayer

Developmental Needs

In addition to the basic needs listed earlier, 2-year-olds need to experience:

- Power—to have a chance to manipulate objects, events, people
- Freedom—to make choices, to interact in learning situations, to sometimes move about at will
- Independence—to do some things unaided
- Security—to feel safe

**Children's Ministries: Ideas and Techniques That Work*, ed. Ann Calkins (Lincoln, Nebr.: AdventSource, 1997).

A Letter to Parents

Dear Friends,

In each issue of the *Beginner Bible Study Guide* you will find only three lessons—one for each month of the quarter. This gives your child a better opportunity to learn concepts emphasized throughout the month and to offer more repetition. Children at this age learn best through repetition.

The three lessons in this Bible study guide focus on serving God by caring for others; God bringing His love to us; and the birth of Jesus. Activities in the Do & Say section at the end of each lesson teach and reinforce these three important concepts.

Now is the time to help your child start to learn about God's Word, the Bible. Show your child the memory verses in your Bible. Then use the motions to help reinforce the text. Be an example. Let him or her see you reading God's Word every day.

As you share these lessons with your child, take time to pray a short prayer, sing a happy song, read with enthusiasm, and have fun with the Do & Say activities as part of your family worship. Involve your young child in worship now, and you will foster a love for Jesus and His Word that will last.

Make the time—take the time—to worship with your child every day. Years from now you'll be glad you did.

Our prayer is that these lessons will bring joy and peace to you and your child. Let us pray for one another as we work together to lead little ones to Jesus.

**Cordially,
General Conference
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Department**