

# Sunday School Superintendent

FALL QUARTER

September, October, November 2018

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Writer: Kenneth A. Sponsler

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# Editorials

## A New Look

With this issue of *Sunday School Superintendent*, we are happy to announce a new look and a new format. As you flip through the booklet, the differences will be obvious. The biggest change, and the one that necessitated revision of this publication, is that adults and children have been given separate lesson tracks. All adults and teens (down to twelve years of age) will be studying one set of lessons. Juniors, primaries, and beginners (eleven years and younger), however, will be learning from their own set of lesson texts. This is the case for all Union

Gospel Press quarterlies.

Reasons for this change are discussed on page 31. Here, we wish to highlight the new features of *Sunday School Superintendent* as well as provide a brief summary of the two lesson tracks.

The necessity of covering two complete lesson schedules has required extensive revision in how the lessons are handled. As superintendent, you need to be aware of what all the students in your Sunday school are studying. That means two sets of lessons must be covered in this booklet. To

### LESSONS FOR JUNIORS, PRIMARIES, AND BEGINNERS

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**PLEASE NOTE:** Fundamental, sound doctrine is the objective of The Incorporated Trustees of the Gospel Worker Society, Union Gospel Press. The writers are prayerfully selected for their Bible knowledge and yieldedness to the Spirit of Truth, each writing in his own style as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. At best we know in part only. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

## The First Days of Creation

Genesis 1:1-13

**GOLDEN TEXT**—“The earth was without form, and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”  
—Genesis 1:2

OPENING MOMENTS  
Suggested Song

“How Great Thou Art” (Biblical)

**Icebreaker**  
If you were assigned the task of creating the universe, how would you go about it?

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Creation of Light (Gen. 1:3-5)
2. Creation of land and sea (Gen. 1:6-10)
3. Creation of life (Gen. 1:11-13)

## KEY ISSUES

Our text for the first week this quarter looks at the first three days of Creation. But the focus must always stay the student back to the Creator. Notice how many times “God” is mentioned just the first day alone in Genesis 1:1-5. “Is the beginning of God creation?” And the Spirit of God moved?” And God said?” And God saw?” And God divided?” And God called.” The rest of the passage continues in the same vein.

The study of Creation is meant to draw us to our Creator, to lead us to know Him in our Creation, to lead us to adore and adore Him. Any class session that does not get to the end of the lesson, the point and falling to help students learn what is most important. Above all else, emphasize to your adult Sunday school the experience and glory of the Creator!

• While many find it fascinating to un-

derstand details and minutiae, the thing to catch is the orderliness and authority of God's work. God was God said. God acted. The Genesis account is set in stark contrast to pagan creation accounts of the ancient world with their battling gods and chaotic chaos. Our God is fully in control, and the chaos has no part in it. Remember, the thing that God created is designated as “good.” An ocean reflects His glory, but it is not His that He created. He created the water, but He created the order.

## BRINGING IT HOME

This lesson should move all students and teachers to bring sincere praise and worship to God. Those who make worship a stronger part of our daily lives?

## FINAL THOUGHTS

For students who bring up questions regarding science and the reliability of the biblical account of Creation (www.generationsof.com) has a wealth of resources and resources that can be helpful to your teachers.

## Evil King, Hidden Prophet

1 Kings 16:29-32

**GOLDEN TEXT**—“And Elzebi, and her sons, As the Lord God of Israel hath, believe whom I have said, shall not be dead nor will these years, but according to the word of the Lord.”

## OPENING MOMENTS

## Suggested Song

“Mighty to Keep” (Pentecost)

**Icebreaker**  
Can a person hide from danger and serve God at the same time?

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Ahab's sin (1 Kings 16:29-30)
2. Elijah's mission (1 Kings 17:1-7)

## KEY ISSUES

There is a lot of detail in this passage, more than most children can probably digest, especially the younger ones. It is best to be spending time on the main points. Consider how their people leave with the answering to his questions. The question is, What did King Ahab do that was so bad and why did God hate him? He did it by a knock.

The answer to the first question is that Ahab not only worshipped a false god (Baal), he also made the people worship Baal. Ahab promoted idolatry in many ways. He was influenced in a large degree by his husband's sin. He was idolatrous for him to worship Baal. Why is idolatry so bad? Worshipping false gods shows complete disloyalty to God, who has done us everything and deserves all our love and honor. Children should think about how they can love, honor, and worship God by the way they live.

The answer to the second question may be a little harder. We may wonder why God did not have Elijah say please to Ahab and remind him that the drought was happening as he sinned. The best answer perhaps is that Elzebi needed time to have his heart prepared. He needed to see God provide for him when there was no rain that year. He needed to know that he could trust God for everything. That would enable him to firmly stand for God against the strongest opposition imaginable.

## BRINGING IT HOME

Kids may sometimes think that God cannot see them for anything significant. They are shrouded at home and not able to go out and see or be seen. Let them know that God can see anything in a big way, even though He had His hidden away in a house, far from anyone. Make sure children love they can be trusting God for things right where they are.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**  
The gift for a good teacher is to have many things to share. Ahab, not even the name, but the name of the name, that brought them to the name of the name.

positor and Illuminator and one of the teacher manuals for children.)

The last section, “Bringing it Home,” focuses on application. How do the emphases of the lesson text bear on our lives today? What should students take from their interaction with the Scripture? We do not want them to simply fill their heads with information and not be changed by it.

In addition to these standing sections, points of interest unique to particular lessons are offered. These may point to further resources to consult or offer a perspective on a particular lesson aspect that does not fit easily into the overall emphases. We hope that these sections, with varying locations on the page, will prove useful and interesting.

Now to this quarter's lessons: The adults will be focusing on the beginning of all things, devoting their full attention to lessons from the book of Genesis. These studies are intended to elevate and deepen their understanding of God, their worship of Him, and their desire to serve Him.

The children will be looking at the lives of two great Old Testament prophets, Elijah and Elisha, with all the lessons being drawn from the books of I and II Kings. Examining the lives of these two men, as well as the people they impacted, should give ample opportunities for role playing, interaction, and application. Above all, children should come away with the knowledge that God works in people's lives, including their own.

We hope that this new format will prove helpful to you and aid you in leading an effective Sunday school!

—The Editors.

(Editorials continued on page 31)

# The First Days of Creation

Genesis 1:1-13

**GOLDEN TEXT**—“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

## OPENING MOMENTS

### Suggested Song

“How Great Thou Art” (Boberg)

### Icebreaker

If you were assigned the task of creating the universe, how would you go about it?

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Creation of light (Gen. 1:1-5)
2. Creation of land and sea (Gen. 1:6-10).
3. Creation of life (Gen. 1:11-13).

## KEY ISSUES

Our text for the first week this quarter looks at the first three days of Creation, but the focus must always draw the student back to the Creator. Notice how many times “God” is mentioned for just the first day alone in Genesis 1:1-5: “In the beginning God created”; “And the Spirit of God moved”; “And God said”; “And God saw”; “And God divided”; “And God called.” The rest of the passage continues in the same vein.

The study of Creation is meant to draw us to our Creator, to lead us to know Him and to worship Him in awe and admiration. Any class session that does not go in this direction is missing the point and failing to help students learn what is most important. Above all else, emphasize to your adult Sunday school the preeminence and glory of the Creator!

While many find it fascinating to in-

vestigate details and minutiae, the thing to catch is the orderliness and sublimity of God’s work. God saw, God said, God acted. The Genesis account is set in stark contrast to pagan creation accounts of the ancient world with their battling gods and chaotic circumstances in which things came to be. Our God is fully in control, and He always has been. Furthermore, everything that God created is designated as “good.” All creation reflects His glory. Let us not miss that!

Relevant passages to consider as time permits would include Job 38:1-11 and John 1:1-10.

## BRINGING IT HOME

This lesson should move all students and teachers to bring sincere praise and worship to God. How can we make worship a stronger part of our daily lives?

### FINAL THOUGHTS

For students who bring up questions regarding science and the reliability of the biblical account, Answers in Genesis ([answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org)) has a wealth of information and resources that can be of help to your teachers.

# Evil King, Hidden Prophet

I Kings 16:29—17:7

**GOLDEN TEXT**—“And Elijah . . . said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word” (I Kings 17:1).

## OPENING MOMENTS

### Suggested Song

“Mighty to Keep” (Harris)

### Icebreaker

Can a person hide from danger and serve God at the same time?

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Ahab's sin (I Kings 16:29-34)
2. Elijah's mission (I Kings 17:1-7)

## KEY ISSUES

There is a lot of detail in this passage, more than most children can probably digest, especially the younger ones. It would be good if teachers focus their efforts on making sure their pupils leave with the answers to two questions. The questions are: What did King Ahab do that was so bad? and Why did God have Elijah hide by a brook?

The answer to the first question is that Ahab not only worshiped a false god (Baal); he also made the people worship Baal. Ahab promoted idolatry in many ways. He was influenced in a large degree by his heathen wife Jezebel. It was disobedient for him to marry her, but the primary issue is idolatry.

Why is idolatry so bad? Worshiping false gods shows complete disloyalty to God, who has given us everything and deserves all our love and honor. Children should think about how they

can love, honor, and worship God by the way they live.

The answer to the second question may be a little harder. We may wonder why God did not have Elijah stay close to Ahab and remind him that the drought was happening as foretold. The best answer perhaps is that Elijah needed time to have his heart prepared. He needed to see God provide for him when there was no human provision. He needed to know that he could trust God for everything. That would enable him to faithfully stand for God against the strongest opposition imaginable.

## BRINGING IT HOME

Kids may sometimes think that God cannot use them for anything significant. They are sheltered at home and not able to go out and take on projects. Let them know that God was using Elijah in a big way, even though He had him hidden away by a brook, far from anyone. Make sure children know they can be trusting God for things right where they are.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

This might be a good lesson for some teachers to dramatize. Kids can play Elijah, Ahab, and even the ravens that brought food to Elijah.

# Creations in Sky, Sea, and Land

Genesis 1:14-25

**GOLDEN TEXT**—“God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also” (Genesis 1:16).

## OPENING MOMENTS

### Suggested Song

“This Is My Father’s World” (Babcock)

### Icebreaker

What is your favorite animal? What truth about God does it remind you of?

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Creation of sun, moon, and stars (Gen. 1:14-19)
2. Creation of sea life and birds (Gen. 1:20-23)
3. Creation of land animals (Gen. 1:24-25)

## KEY ISSUES

The sublime orderliness of the Creator’s work over the first three days of Creation, seen in last week’s lesson, is further highlighted this week in looking at the second three days. During the first three days.

On day four, God completed the environment for sustaining life by setting in place the sun, moon, and stars. Having these come into being after plant life was already present would be impossible in an evolutionary scenario, but it presented no problem for God in His sovereign, direct creation.

On day five, God filled the sea and the air with abundant life. As with the creation of the earth itself, God accomplished this with a simple, omnipotent command. The majesty and reach of His power should bring us to

our knees in awe and wonder.

Day six began with the creation of animal life on land. Again, it took only a command from God, and it was accomplished. The sixth day also saw God’s crowning work of creation, the entire subject of next week’s lesson.

Related passages to this week’s lesson include Psalms 19:1-6 and 104:24-30.

## A FUN BUT INSTRUCTIVE SONG

If your Sunday school is open to such things, you might want to have them join in singing a more light-hearted piece. The song “All God’s Critters Got a Place in the Choir” by Bill Staines is cheekily informal, but it humorously brings out some vital truths. The most important perhaps is that all creation proclaims the glory of the Creator.

## BRINGING IT HOME

People today are often shut away indoors, isolated in climate-controlled environments from the glories of God’s natural creation. We have become more used to interacting with images on small screens than with the things God has made. Encourage your people to spend some time outdoors, marveling at God’s creation and praising Him for it.

# A Widow Risks Everything

I Kings 17:8-16

**GOLDEN TEXT**—“Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, unto the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth” (I Kings 17:14).

## OPENING MOMENTS

### Suggested Song

“God Will Take Care of You” (Martin)

### Icebreaker

What would you do if you had only one piece of candy left and a friend asked you for it? Would you give it to him, or would you tell him to find his own piece of candy?

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The widow’s need (I Kings 17:8-12)**
2. **The widow’s faith (I Kings 17:13-16)**

## KEY ISSUES

This lesson picks up where last week’s lesson left off with Elijah. But this week’s passage puts a stronger focus on another person—the widow whom God sent the prophet to stay with. Using Elijah’s need, God put this non-Israelite woman to a hard test of faith. It was a test that she passed, earning her a special mention by the Lord Jesus Himself (cf. Luke 4:25-26).

Elijah’s first request, for some water to drink, did not prove too difficult for the widow, despite the long drought. But his second request, for some bread to eat, brought a protestation of inability from her lips. She had only enough flour and oil left to make one small loaf for her and her

son. When that was finished, they would wait for death to take them. There was no prospect of any more food to come.

It was a bleak outlook, and the woman was not looking for assistance or rescue. She simply could not be expected to extend herself any further. Surely the prophet could understand!

But the prophet insisted (somewhat selfishly, it must have seemed) and then countered with an outlandish-sounding promise: if she would do this, essentially giving up her last meal, God would see to it that she and her son would have enough to survive the rest of the famine. The woman offered no further objections but simply did as Elijah asked. How strongly she believed his words is not mentioned; she obeyed, and that was enough. God kept His word, and provision was never lacking. It was not extravagant or lavish, but it never failed.

## BRINGING IT HOME

God will probably not ask any of the children in your Sunday school to give up their last meal, but He may ask them to take risks by trusting Him to do what seems impossible. What faith risks might your students face? They can discuss these in their classes and talk about how they would respond. Do you have examples from your life that could help them see this more clearly?

# Editorials

*(Continued from page 3)*

## Why Two Tracks?

For longer than most of us can remember, Union Gospel Press has followed a unified lesson schedule for students of all ages, using the curriculum of the International Sunday School Lessons. Many other Christian publishers have also made use of this curriculum schedule. It has served us and our readers well over the decades.

A few years ago, however, a number of factors led to the conclusion that it was time to begin producing our own Sunday school curriculum schedules. It proved to be a formidable undertaking. Many hours and much work went into mapping out seven years of lesson plans, beginning with this quarter.

Early on, we decided to create separate curriculum tracks for adults and children. This was a major change, and it was not entered into lightly. The framework under which the entire Sunday school studies the same passage each week has been a mainstay of our approach for many decades.

Nevertheless, a number of compelling reasons argued for making the break. Chief among these is the fact that some Scripture passages contain elements that are far above the comprehension level of young children. Four-year-olds simply cannot grasp the exotic material in the Song of Solomon, for instance, and that is only one example (although admittedly an extreme one). Over the years, we have found many of our writers struggling valiantly to bring adult-level texts down to the children's level. Our editors have shared this struggle, and we have not always met success. It seemed to us highly probable that teachers were

struggling in their classrooms as well. We felt there had to be a better way.

We are absolutely committed to the truth that all Scripture, being part of God's inspired and inerrant Word, is important. Nevertheless, we faced an unavoidable reality: Over the course of fifty-two Sundays per year, it is not possible to cover all of the Bible—even in a curriculum cycle that extends a full seven years. Whether adults and children studied the same text or different ones, we had to be selective. For children's classes, then, it made sense to focus on those passages that would most readily contribute to their spiritual understanding, faith, and growth.

There is also a reverse benefit in moving the children's lessons onto their own track: we are free to tackle passages for adults that might be passed over for the children's sake. It is now possible, for example, to do a short series on the Song of Solomon, not just one or two lessons as in the past. (Have no fear; there are no plans for a series on the genealogies in I Chronicles!)

We thus believe that this plan actually promotes a more comprehensive approach to studying the Bible. Over the course of a student's lifetime, from childhood into adulthood, he will be exposed to more of the Bible, not less, than would have been possible before. And the lessons offered can be more readily crafted to fit his comprehension and interest level.

Under the new format, the children now have their own golden texts, often making them much better suited to memorization and application. Key passages can be repeated more often to reinforce essential truths. But again, most important, the harder passages can be reserved until the learners are older and have the spiritual and mental ability to process them. We fervently trust and hope that the students in your Sunday school will welcome and benefit from this new approach!

# Keeping Their Interest



In one sense, this is an article that should not have to be written. The Bible is not a boring book! Scripture is filled with the most fascinating stories and characters ever encountered. Many of these stories and people are the subjects of this quarter's lessons. Both adults and children are have an amazing array of intriguing lessons in store.

Nonetheless, boredom in Sunday school seems to be a habitually reported problem. What steps can your teachers—of both adults and children—take to correct this and hold the interest of their students?

The following suggestions may already be familiar to your staff but may still serve as useful reminders. We will look at a few things to avoid and a few things to implement.

*Avoid lecturing.* This seems obvious, but many teachers still turn to the lecture format, especially if they have not taken time to adequately prepare and plan for other methods. Without a clear idea of how to structure the class time, it is too easy to simply dispense information. A few gifted individuals are able to pull off an exciting lecture, but it more often becomes a droning monologue that snuffs out interest.

*Avoid reading the quarterly.* The quarterlies that we offer are full of information and cover the lessons from start to finish. But they are meant to give the teacher a handle on the material, not to be read verbatim in class. Teachers also need to remember that the students have their own quarterlies!

*Avoid the urge to "get it all in."* Some teachers grow nervous if they are unable to cover all the information offered in the lesson. They must fight that feel-

ing. A preoccupation with covering all the material can squelch discussion and sap attention. It can even push to the side one of the most important parts of class time: drawing out pertinent application.

*Make use of drama and role-playing.* Skits are an old stand-by of Sunday school, especially in children's classes, but they can be profitably used with teens and adults as well. And with older age-groups, the possibilities of varying the format are endless. Teachers can try a "what-if" scenario, having students come up with an alternate story line based on changing one key element in the text. Make sure the biblical implications are discussed and understood.

*Assign students to problem-solving exercises.* This can be done individually or in groups. The exercises can be anything from investigating a difficult word or phrase to coming up with ways the people in the passage could have approached their situation more wisely. The teacher's imagination is the only limit to the possibilities here.

*Do special projects.* These can be long-term or short-term, mainly done outside of class with the students reporting their findings or showing their creations to the class.

*Ask lots of questions!* The icebreaker section in each lesson gives a suggestion for one question to get things going, but teachers should be asking questions all through the session. Thought questions should be emphasized over simple yes/no or short-answer queries. The main thing—get the students involved!