

# General guidelines of the Children's Curricula

Vision for the Future is happy to present this curriculum for children. Parents and family members can explain this curriculum in either the setting of the family or at church. The curriculum assumes interaction between the child and teacher through the use of several different methods, most of which include modern media presentation technologies. The effect is to help teachers explain many Christian principles to children.

## Introduction

Since we started to think about developing this curriculum, we kept one goal at the front of our minds: to present distinctive materials that provide new ways of thinking and styles of presentation in order to reach our beloved children. We thought that this would be a simple matter and easy to prepare, but we discovered it to be much bigger than our abilities. For this reason, we approached experts and formed partnership with others who had the specific experiences we needed to prepare such curricula. In addition to this, even as we were working on the curricula, our team observed a great shift taking place during this time period, in the use of sophisticated illustrative aids.

It was necessary to present interesting and attractive illustrative aids that would encourage children and parents to watch these lessons together, and enable the parents to explain them to their children. Our idea was to present an introductory video that would contain a drama for each lesson. The drama presents the biblical story with a Christian song that also supports the idea of the lesson. The lesson itself contains a set of pictures and memory verses from the Bible—these are made available in the form of a Power Point presentation—helping the teacher at church or the parents at home to easily explain the lesson.

We thank God for the team who exerted great effort in order to accomplish this work.

We hope that this curriculum becomes a blessing to our churches and to our homes, and to the homes of new believers, to bring up an exceptional generation of young people who are equipped with both knowledge and spiritual understanding.

## How can you use the curriculum?

The curriculum is entitled “Stories in my Bible,” and presents a vision for a bright future. This vision is for our children’s future and for their connection with Biblical truths, in order to achieve the difficult goal of linking biblical truths with real life. The curriculum is aimed at teaching children biblical truth, and moving them from being people who have knowledge and understanding, to becoming people who are able to apply truth to their practical lives. The curriculum gives attention not only to the information found in the biblical stories, but also to an understanding of the truth and of the spiritual meaning behind each of these stories and behind the biblical information. It seeks to show children how to apply and to live this biblical truth in their everyday lives, and to be prepared to give an answer to everyone

who asks them to give the reason for the hope that they have—that they might truly become salt and light in the communities in which they live.

“Biblical truth” is declared in the Bible. The teachers of this course should focus on living these truths first, so that they can teach them to the children in the power of Holy Spirit, in easy and simple ways. We, as ministers, leaders, and officials, should be examples for our children in the declaration and application of these truths. The Bible says, “The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher,” (Luke 6:40).

“Stories in my Bible” was prepared to help each teacher, each father, and each mother to present the Biblical lessons to their children, in interesting and wonderful ways, for those who have a background in the church, and for those who haven’t had the opportunity to go to a church yet.

This curriculum was prepared in three parts. It contains Biblical lessons and stories from Genesis to Revelation. It uses the following three indispensable pillars, which we will describe in greater detail below:

- The Teacher’s Book
- The Children’s Book
- The Illustrative Aids (CD): videos and power point presentations

### **The Teacher’s Book**

The Teacher’s Book is one of the main pillars of this curriculum. It consists of fifty-two lessons from the Old and New Testaments. In order to be well prepared, the teacher (or parent) must have read the lesson and understood each paragraph. We advise every teacher to meditate on the lesson, and to completely depend on the Holy Spirit, who leads and guides us to apply the principles in our daily lives. Having followed this method, it is possible for any adult to present these lessons to their children, by the power of the Holy Spirit and by their own personal practical testimony.

### **Each lesson has several advantages, summarized in the following points:**

1. **Biblical verse:** It is very important to read the verses of each lesson carefully. We should not merely rely on our previous knowledge.
2. **Lesson objectives:** We have tried to provide general goals for each lesson, which point the way to achieving real practical life-change. Each objective serves three areas in the child's life. These three areas are: “knowledge,” which addresses the mind, and its wealth of information; “feelings,” which are a source of motivation for the child to pay attention to something in their environment; and “will,” which is meant to help a child to make a decision. When teaching, we must take into account children's mind, feelings, and will. Children are capable of thinking, feeling, and taking action. The Holy Spirit affects the child in these areas through the lessons presented to him or her.

**The teacher needs to ask him or herself the following questions:**

- What is the objective of this lesson? What is the Biblical truth that I want to teach to children with this lesson?
- What do I want children to feel during and at the end of this lesson?
- What do I want children to do as a result of hearing this lesson?

(Note that children's actions might appear immediately at the end of the lesson, or perhaps they may not appear until the future).

3. **Achieve the objective:** Lessons contain practical points which measure whether the children have understood the Biblical story and its purpose at the end of the lesson.

4. **Verse of the lesson:** We have chosen a verse that connects well with the objective and the idea in each lesson. We should encourage children to memorize the verses of each lesson and to understand their spiritual meaning. We, as teachers, and as parents, are compelled to make use of children's special ability to memorize, and we should be motivating them to hide these verses and these Biblical passages in their hearts, as a reserve and spiritual asset which they can draw on in the future. Without question, the teacher should memorize these verses as well.

5. **Theme:** Each lesson is presented with a particular idea for the teacher to focus on. It serves as a key for the lesson, so the teacher should give special attention to this idea, and may need to correct some of his or her inherited ideas or concepts, or to clarify for themselves the idea of the lesson before teaching it.

6. **Interesting introduction:** Good teachers know that it is important to have appropriate and interesting introductions. For each lesson in the curriculum we have provided one which we believe will attract children's minds and motivate them to follow through with the whole lesson. Teachers can also invent other own creative ways to teach the lesson, provided that they are well-suited to the objective of the lesson and to the Biblical story.

7. **Biblical story:** Narrating the Biblical story is one of the oldest ways to transfer knowledge (information) to children. The story may attract their attention if it is told in a clear, effective, and expressive way. The Biblical story is the most important part of the lesson. Teachers need to be prepared, and to meditate on it, to connect the biblical story with the practical life of the child, so that they will realize the importance of the lesson for him or her in their current circumstances. One of the objectives of the biblical story is to teach children a lesson which addresses what is happening in their life at this time. The Bible is a guide for children to know God and to know how to live with Him.

The biblical story section is divided into paragraphs with subtitles so that it will be easy for the teacher to prepare and to facilitate it. With almost every paragraph of the story, a special message is presented, helping to apply the Biblical truths, which the story has declared, to contemporary life. This special message is written in a box.

8. **Application and discussion:** The teacher asks children a set of questions to make sure that they have understood the biblical story and the purpose of the lesson.

9. **Weekly activity:** Perhaps “Stories in my Bible” is the first curriculum of its kind, and surely the first Arabic Children’s curriculum, to focus on weekly activities for children. The child is directed and encouraged to interact with the lesson during the days which follow its teaching. Each week’s work includes activities aimed at training children to do several things which they learn from the stories’ characters, incorporating guidelines for practicing things such as: innovation, creativity, testimony for the Lord Jesus to others, cooperation, being helpful to others, etc.

10. **Interaction:** Teachers must have the goal of leading children to apply the lesson, and to interact with the Biblical story. Presenting such a challenge to the child is the point at which his or her behavior begins to change. It is necessary for children to participate in, to interact with the lesson, or to perform some task related to the lesson. Unbelievably, when children hear, see, and interact with a lesson, they can remember 90% of it. This is why we want to encourage every child to interact with and participate in the lesson through multiple and varied activities, such as: drama, interviews, imitation, games, etc.

11. **God wants to teach us:** Each lesson includes a sentence which begins with these words. It aims to help the children understand the goal and change their behavior.

12. **Prayer:** Every lesson should include a time of prayer, focused on giving children the opportunity to pray and express themselves. Then, the teacher should lead children in a short prayer that deepens their relationship with God, and teaches them how to live a life of prayer. The best way to encourage children to pray is to do so in front of them.

### **The Children’s Book**

The Teacher’s Book forms the second main pillars of the curriculum. It is designed in an exciting and wonderful way for children 5 to 12 years old. In it, various questions are presented, suitable for different ages. Teachers will need to take into consideration the ages of their children and ask them suitable questions. The book includes the following:

1. The Biblical story, verse, and applicable objective for each lesson: We present these basics in the book, so that the children will be able constantly to return to their lessons whenever they want to.

2. Pictures for coloring (for all ages, especially less than 9 years): Every lesson contains a picture for coloring suited to the biblical story discussed in that lesson. Coloring gives a child the opportunity to meditate on the picture, and to remember the lesson that they have just heard, or which they heard before.

3. Questions: Each lesson includes a number of questions that children need to answer.

- True or false questions: To answer these questions children check “true” or “false,” allowing teachers to measure the understanding of the children. These questions are suitable for all ages.

- Another question measures the children’s observational skill, intelligence, their imagination, intuition, and their ability to remember. These questions are often connected either to the lesson or to the biblical story.

- Finally, there is a practical question for the children (who are older than 9 years). This question is very practical, measuring a child's attentiveness to understand how the lesson connects to their decisions. It

is based on what they have learned from the lesson. This question also positions the lesson to impact the practical life of a child, to help them understand the importance of practical behavior.

### **The Illustrative Aids (CD)**

The goal of the illustrative aids is to help children to understand and internalize the lesson at the deepest levels. The illustrative aids are designed to affect children in a few minutes at levels which exceed what lectures and paraphrases can do in hours. Without an attention grabbing method of engagement, children today are not conditioned to be attentive, or to understand. This is why the use of illustrative aids is one of the most successful methods for education. Children remember what they see more than what they hear. When they have seen and been involved in a subject, they remember it more than what they have only seen. Children's concentration and understanding increases even more which teachers use other ways to engage children's multiple sense. The use of effective illustrative aids enable this to happen consistently. Educational scholars are unanimously agreed that most people follow this memorization scale:

1. People remember only 10% of what they have heard.
2. People remember only 30% of what they have seen.
3. People remember 50% of what they have heard and seen at the same time.
4. People remember 70% of what they have heard, seen and said (in their own verbal communication).
5. People remember 90% of what they have heard, seen, said and acted on (in interaction or practice). This is the target which "Stories in My Bible" aims to hit.

This curriculum tries to help children toward both internal and external change. We believe that a child will not change unless he or she participates actively and effectively in the lesson. Thus, the curriculum focused on application, discussion, and interaction in the lesson. To this end, we have prepared a special CD full of illustrative aids, each of which helps the teacher to explain the lesson. The CD contains the following:

1. A simple video drama presents the biblical story to attract children's attention to the lesson and to motivate them to follow-up, listen and enjoy the lesson.
2. There is a video clip song that speaks to the same theme as the story and the lesson. Teachers can play the song before or at the end the lesson in most cases. Thus, children learn an appropriate song with the biblical story and the goal of the lesson, so that they can remember the lesson whenever they sing the song.

3. Rather than using the blackboard, the elements of the lesson are presented using the PowerPoint format. Pictures suited to the biblical story are used with each lesson, so that children can see them as illustrative aids while listening to the lesson. Thus, the children see pictures and listen to the explanation at the same time, so that they can benefit and remember more.

### **Conclusion**

The success of this curriculum in achieving the difficult balance between living what we say, and teaching the truths which we depend on in order to live depends on three things: (1) teachers' willingness to adequately prepare the lesson, (2) their efforts to adapt and choose from the material to suit the age they are working with, and (3) their complete submission to the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them. Because we believe in these materials, and the teachers we are providing them to, we believe they will be able to help teach children to fulfill what is in God's heart for them—and this, in turn, will support the larger Vision for the Future ministry with success and fruit.

We pray that the Lord achieves the objectives of this curriculum—we have a vision for a bright and hopeful future. We pray that God will raise a new generation of children who know the Bible, observe the faith, and become workers in God's field who can prioritize their conduct and their words. Such habits and practices will give them a living daily relationship with their God.