

ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN APPROACH TO ENHANCE

THE CREATIVE BIBLE LESSONS CURRICULUM (HONG KONG)

WITH MULTIMEDIA

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

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(Curriculum and Instruction)

BY

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ENTITLED

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this production thesis was to enhance the Creative Bible Lessons (CBL) with multimedia. This curriculum is published in Hong Kong and provides weekly Sunday School lessons to teach children. The CBL curriculum provides detailed lesson outlines and printed visual aids. The product of this thesis were 26 PowerPoint presentations to complement the lessons of one volume of the CBL curriculum. The material used was the original artwork owned by the publisher in Hong Kong. The different pictures and figures were prepared for digital use, arranged and animated according to the narrations in the respective volume. The presentations are intended to be used either in addition to or instead of the printed visual aids. The 26 multimedia files were designed as prototypes for the publisher to prepare an avenue for further exploration into this field, as educational technology is an increasing tool in children's spiritual formation.

The product was developed based on the literature review in the three areas of the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler. To validate the product, a test group of twenty churches in the Philippines were provided with hardcopies of the CBL curriculum and asked to implement the lessons. For the period of six months the churches received the developed multimedia on a weekly basis. The researcher used observations, interviews and questionnaires to collect feedback concerning the implementation of the curriculum and the thesis product over a period of three months. Based on the findings, the product was evaluated and amended according to the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model by Caroline Crawford. It is recommended that the publisher should initiate further research to explore the effectiveness of the multimedia for the spiritual formation of children.

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DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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(Date)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Creative Bible Lessons curriculum (hereafter CBL) published by Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong is a Sunday School curriculum designed to teach the word of God to children in a systematic and creative way on a weekly basis. It consists of 416 lessons in 16 volumes divided into three age groups. These are *Kindergarten* to teach 4- and 5-year-olds, *Primary* to teach 6 to 8-year-olds and *Junior* to teach 9 to 11-year-olds. In addition, there are two volumes of the *Handbook for Teacher Training* and one video compact disc (VCD). The curriculum is organized into 18 sets. Each of them is accompanied with 12 to 14 sheets of colored visual aids.

The CBL curriculum was developed in an interdenominational setting at a Bible school in Indonesia. The two authors, Anni Dyck and Ruth Läufer, were German missionaries sent by Worldwide Evangelization of Christ (WEC International) to Indonesia, to teach under the Department of Christian Education. Together with the Bible school students, lessons to teach the Bible to children were written and initially published in 1964 under the name “Suara Sekola Minggu” (The Voice of Sunday School). Out of these lessons a comprehensive curriculum emerged which was kept non-denominational so that it could be offered to different church denominations in Indonesia. It has undergone several revisions concerning the sequence of units and the replacing of visual aids. Today it is published by Yayasan Sunfokus Indonesia and still widely used by churches in the archipelago.

In 1991 the two authors settled in Hong Kong. They revised the curriculum for the fourth time and had it translated into English as a “stepping stone” in order to translate it into the Chinese language. In the following years God opened the door for further translations which are at present Vietnamese, Bengali, Urdu, Khmer, Malay, Arabic and Swahili. The English manuscripts were published from 2003 onwards under the name of “Creative Bible Lessons” by Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong.

Each of the 16 teacher volumes contains 26 lessons grouped in four to seven units. The lessons for each year are arranged to suit the liturgical seasons of Advent, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. For this reason, the volumes for the first half year (January until June) cover Bible stories mainly from the New Testament. Lessons for the second half-year mainly cover Old Testament stories. The accompanying visual aids are print-based and consist of over 200 paper sheets (54 cm x 37 cm) including pictures, figures, maps, and charts. The artists were primarily from Indonesia and New Zealand. The teachers cut the pictures and figures and prepare them according to the instructions given in each lesson. No writing was included on the sheets except for the maps so that minimal adjustments had to be made when printed for other language groups.

Based on their experience in Indonesia the authors emphasized the importance of conducting seminars. Sunday School teachers had to be introduced to the teaching methods and visual aids of the curriculum as well as being trained in biblical, psychological and educational topics. Starting in 2004 the English CBL curriculum was introduced to churches in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, India, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria. At the same time the English manuscript served as the master file which has been revised on a smaller scale during the last ten years. In

addition, Sun Focus Foundation Limited had the artwork of the visual aids scanned and digital files of the sheets produced for printing. Due to its lower production costs, partners preferred digital printing to offset printing. During this process some of the pictures were replaced or amended, and others contextualized, particularly for the Swahili edition.

Sun Focus Foundation Limited which is a registered charity in Hong Kong aims to supply churches in East Asia and the southern hemisphere with an affordable Sunday School curriculum. Although the curriculum demonstrates cost efficiency in its design, the printing of the material still needed to be subsidized. As international shipping costs are high, additional funds are raised occasionally to lower the shipping costs of the English volumes. Some income is generated through the sales of the CBL volumes and royalties, but the company relies on donations so that the monthly operational costs in Hong Kong can be paid. This is supplied by a partnering organization in Germany which has sent two female missionaries as successors of the CBL authors and founders of Sun Focus Foundation Limited. One of them is the thesis writer.

Since the countries where the CBL curriculum is used have embraced the digital age, churches and ministries increasingly use digital media in their church services and children's churches. Due to this development, it was inevitable that Sun Focus Foundation Limited would explore possibilities to enrich the CBL curriculum with multimedia. However, the financial limitations of the company compel the publishers to maximize the use of the existing print-based artwork to produce such digital files.

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the design and production of supplemental multimedia files using the existing artwork of the CBL curriculum.

Theoretical Framework

For the development of multimedia to enhance the lessons of the CBL curriculum, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, developed by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler (2006) was used.

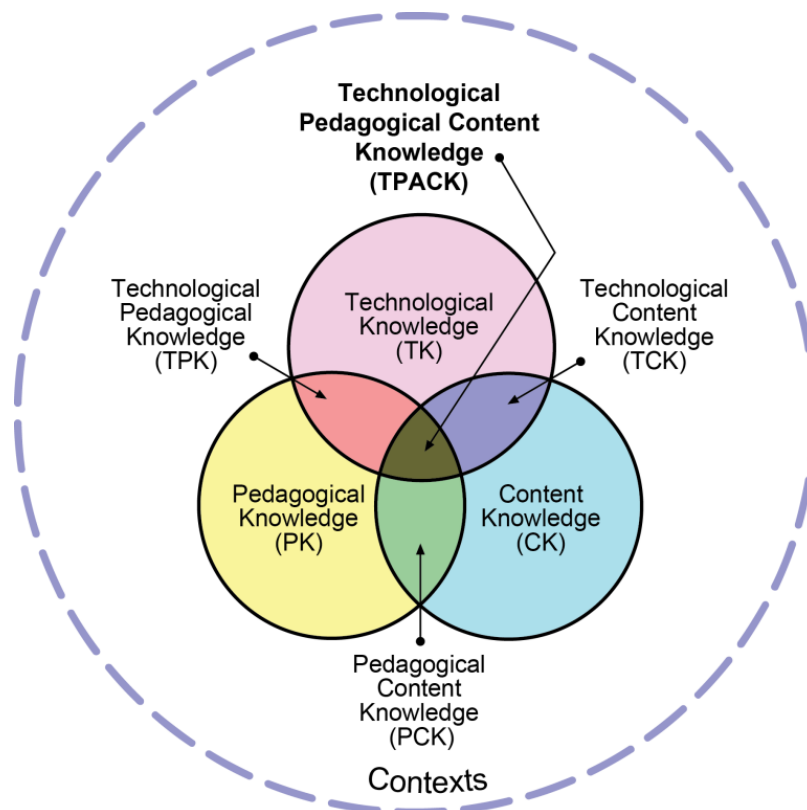


Figure 1. TPACK Model

Source: Data reproduced by permission of the publisher, © 2012 by tpack.org

Lee S. Shulman formulated the demand for pedagogy being integrated into the content knowledge of a specific subject and birthed the term of “Pedagogical Content Knowledge” (Shulman 1986, 9). Based on his composition, Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler introduced a framework in which pedagogical knowledge (PK) and content knowledge (CK) are combined with the additional aspect of integrating technological

knowledge (TK). They argue that technology cannot be viewed as a separate component in the educational process. The use of technology needs to interact with the components of content and pedagogy for good teaching results (Misha and Koehler 2006, 1025-26).

They write,

Quality teaching requires developing a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between technology, content, and pedagogy, and using this understanding to develop appropriate, context-specific strategies and representations. Productive technology integration in teaching needs to consider all three issues not in isolation, but rather within the complex relationships in the system defined by the three key elements (Misha and Koehler 2006, 1029).

The TPACK model was considered suitable as a theoretical framework to develop multimedia to enhance the CBL curriculum. Translated into the terms of this production thesis, the educational, biblical, theological and philosophical assumptions of the authors are the underlying principles for the content and the pedagogy of the CBL curriculum. Thus, the authors' assumptions formed the three areas of pedagogical knowledge (PK), the content knowledge (CK) and the overlapping part of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of the CBL curriculum.

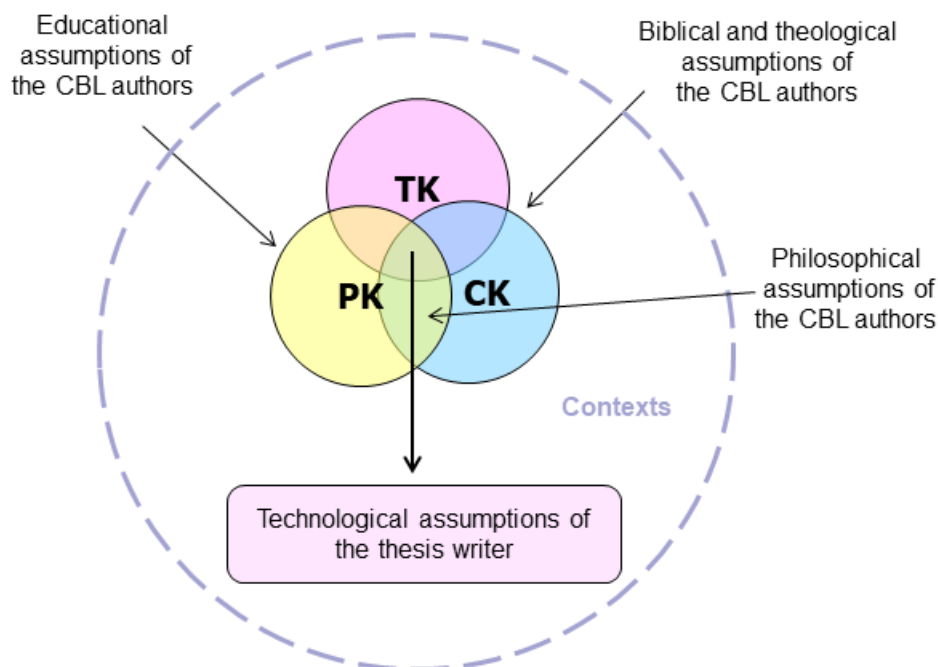


Figure 2. TPACK Framework Adapted

Since the thesis writer was committed to the integration of technology in relation to the content and the pedagogy of the CBL curriculum, she had to consider technological knowledge (TK) and the three overlapping parts. First, she considered the area of technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK) which includes opportunities and limitations when using technology in a children’s church setting (context). Second, the writer included the area of technological content knowledge (TCK) which considers questions of how the presentation of the CBL lessons could be advanced, in other words, how the Bible stories could become attractive through the utilization of multimedia. Third, the overlapping portion of all three circles, the TPACK area, informed and guided the thesis writer formulating technological assumptions for the design and development of multimedia for small and medium-sized churches in target countries of the publisher (context).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework outlines the purpose of this production thesis followed by four stages which are a) the analysis of the current situation, b) the formulation of technological assumptions, c) the design and development and d) the feedback and evaluation of the product.

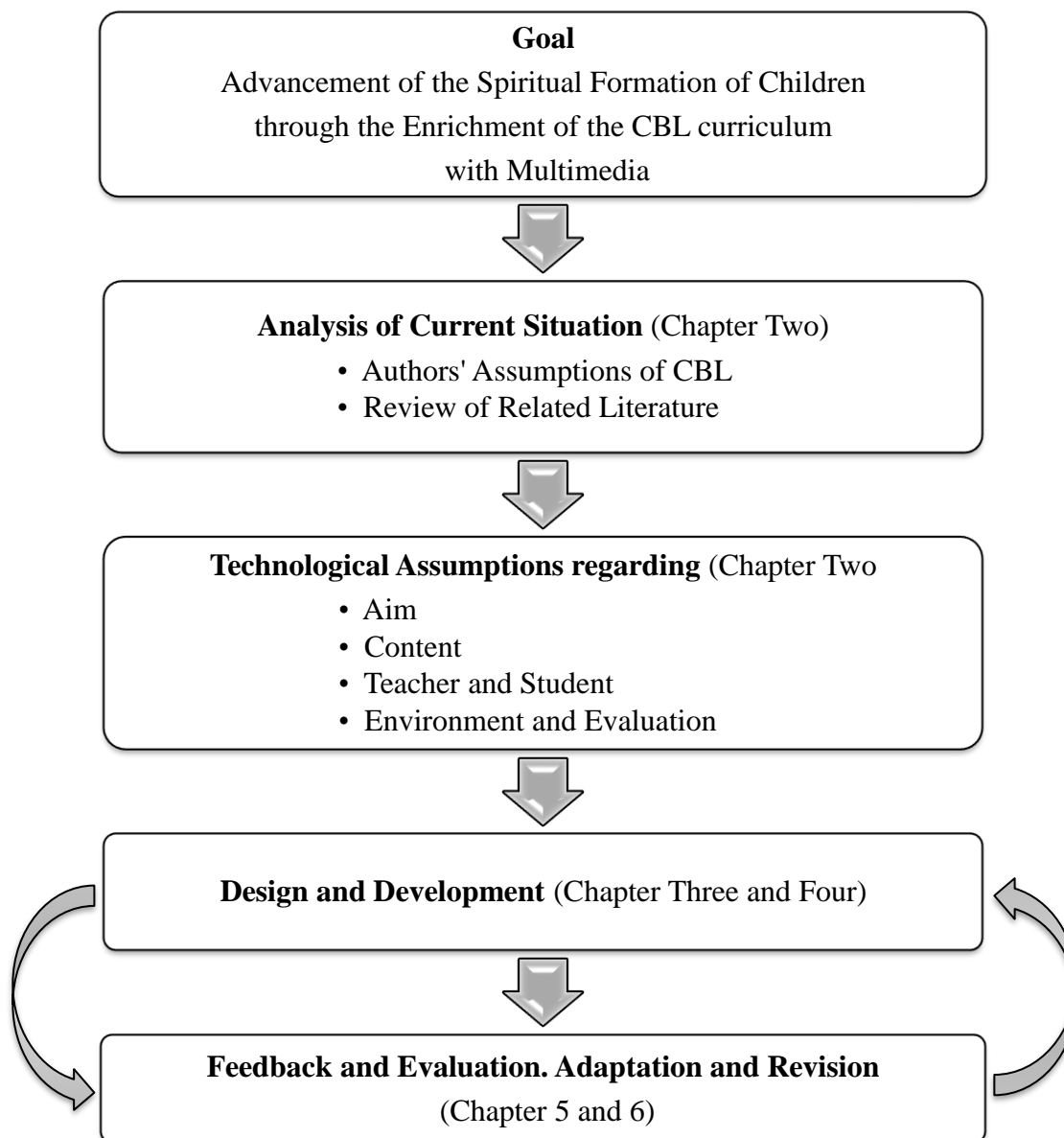


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework

The framework shows the defined stages so that the product would comply with the desired outcome. The purpose or goal was to advance the spiritual formation of children by enhancing the CBL curriculum with multimedia files. Therefore, the current situation was analyzed by reexamining the CBL authors' assumptions and by reviewing related literature. Based on this analysis, technological assumptions were formulated followed by the specification for the design of the product and the development. The multimedia files were continually evaluated in the real context of Sunday Schools and feedback was collected. Although illustrated in a consecutive order in the diagram (Figure 3), the thesis writer was guided by all of these stages simultaneously during the process.

For the last four stages of the conceptual framework (design, development, evaluation, and feedback) a multitude of Instructional Systems Design (ISD) models were available. Most of them are based on the widely used Instructional Systems Design model of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE) and are linear. As the thesis writer planned to develop multimedia and at the same time had most of them tested in real children's church settings, these four stages were based on a non-linear model described by Caroline Crawford (2004). It is known as the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model.

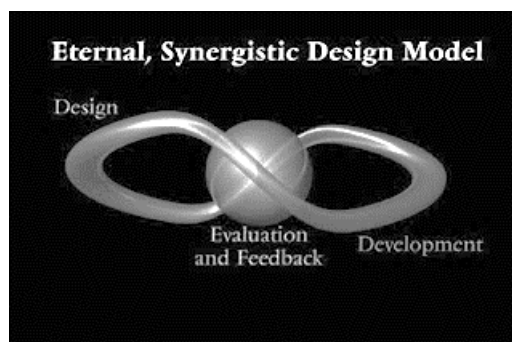


Figure 4. Eternal, Synergistic Design Model

Source: Crawford 2004, 416. © British Educational Communications and Technology Agency

This non-linear model introduces the notion that the design and development of a product is ongoing and centered on continuous evaluation and feedback. The evaluation of the thesis product and the feedback from a sample test group in the Philippines concerning its use was therefore not the final stage but an integral part of the ongoing design and development of the multimedia during the timeframe of this study.

Purpose Statement

The aim of this study was to explore and develop an approach for the enhancement of the CBL curriculum with multimedia in addition to the existing printed visual aids. The thesis writer wanted to develop multimedia which would be more attractive to children than printed pictures. A digital image can be projected bigger compared to a printed picture, so children can see the picture better. This helps children to focus on the Bible story and listen to the narration attentively. For these reasons, the thesis writer hopes that children will grow spiritually as the word of God is presented to them using contemporary educational technology.

Such curriculum enrichment would further give Sunday School teachers the choice between either one of the two forms of media or they could choose to use both to

illustrate the Bible story. Therefore, their variety of instructional teaching methods would be enriched. In addition, the teachers could watch how the visual aids are arranged in the multimedia files during their lesson preparation. They could also be guided and inspired to create their own digital files to teach the children in their church.

In addition, the design and development of such files provided the publisher of the CBL curriculum with a product which serves as a prototype to possibly generate multimedia files for the other volumes of the curriculum in the future. It was intended that such an additional product would enable the publisher in keeping up with customers' needs and expectations at a progressive rate. In addition, the CBL teacher's books and multimedia files could be offered in a digital format which would lower production and storage expenses for the publisher.

Significance of the Study

Many children born in East Asia and Southeast Asia in the twenty-first century grow up with digital devices and learn how to operate them at an early stage. They watch TV, play on their gadgets and use smart phones often for several hours a day. It is therefore the task of curriculum publishers and churches to develop and employ suitable digital media to teach children from the word of God. Megachurches in Manila, Jakarta, and Hong Kong which are rich in financial resources have implemented Sunday School curricula from the United States, like the Orange® curriculum published by Group Publishing or Superbook® published by Christian Broadcasting Network Incorporated. The lessons of these curricula come along with professionally made videos. However, some of these curricula are hardly an option for small churches as they lack financial resources and insufficient access to the internet or even Christian bookstores. The CBL

curriculum contributes in a significant way to the range of available Christian education materials particularly where translated versions have been published. Therefore, it is imperative for the publisher to keep pace with technical developments as much as possible. Digital instructional media needed to be produced by Sun Focus Foundation Limited so that they could be offered for download or made available on memory storage devices in the years ahead. Partners who have translated and published the CBL curriculum in other languages would be given permission to translate and possibly adapt the files to the local scene.

Definition of Terms

Children are defined as boys and girls aged four to eleven years old as they are the target group of the three age groups of the Creative Bible Lessons curriculum.

The *Creative Bible Lessons (CBL)* is a curriculum published by Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong. The lessons are designed to teach children in children's church on a weekly basis for eight consecutive years.

One *CBL set* consists of one teacher volume with 26 lessons together with the corresponding visual aids printed on 12 to 14 sheets.

Curriculum as used in this production thesis is defined as "guides in the form of handbooks for teachers prepared by a publisher. The scope and sequence of the content is arranged systematically for the delivery of knowledge within a specific time frame" (*The Greenwood Dictionary of Education*, 2nd ed., s.v. "curriculum").

Curriculum Enhancement is used in the same way as *Curriculum Enrichment* and is defined by "the expansion of an existing curriculum to meet the needs of teachers and a

group of learners” (*The Greenwood Dictionary of Education*, 2nd ed., s.vv. “curriculum enrichment”).

Educational Technology is defined as “the appropriations of electronic technologies to deliver, enhance, and facilitate learning and teaching at all levels, from early school years through high-level tertiary education and beyond” (*Encyclopedia of Christian Education*, s.vv. “Educational Technology”).

Multimedia is defined as “an item composed of several different forms of media, such as text, images, audio, and video. ... Students can also create their own multimedia products, such as slide show presentations” (*The Greenwood Dictionary of Education*, 2nd ed., s.v. “multimedia”).

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

Considering such a project of developing multimedia, the publisher of the CBL curriculum decided to exclude the Kindergarten level since fours and fives are more prone to learn through using their senses of tasting, touching, seeing, hearing, and smelling (Cunningham 1992, 142). Using projected digital media would eliminate their sense of touching the CBL visual aids (stick figures, flashcards, 3D figures, and silhouette figures cut out of cloth) which is suggested in the Kindergarten lessons frequently. It would also remove playing with such figures which is an effective instructional method for this age group. Therefore, the publisher limited the development of multimedia to the Primary or Junior level. As the material for the Primary lessons holds more visuals than for the Junior lessons, it was decided to narrow the work to the Primary level. Another reason was the assumption that some churches of the test group would teach their children in just one group, and the Primary level was therefore most

appropriate as it spreads well either up or down the age range. Subsequently, the thesis writer limited the study to the CBL volume of Primary Year 1, July to December because the style of the artwork of this volume is more consistent within the units than in other volumes. In addition, this volume matched the timeframe of the field study (August to December 2018).

The content of these Primary lessons was not amended, and revisions of the actual content of the lessons did not fall within the scope of this thesis. The production of multimedia files was limited to PowerPoint presentations and excluded video clips. The presentations were developed and disseminated in English to selected churches in Metro Manila and in the neighboring province of Rizal as many Filipinos living in the country's capital are fluent in speaking and reading English. The multimedia files were limited to the illustration of the Bible stories. The narratives of Genesis 12 to 49 were not contextualized to the Filipino context instead they aimed to point to the original geographical locations which are the areas of the nowadays Middle East.

This chapter introduced the study of this production thesis by providing the background of this study, the theoretical and conceptual framework, the purpose and significance of the thesis product, the definition of terms and the scope and delimitations of the study. Chapter Two reviews the CBL authors' assumptions, related literature, studies, and works significant to the goal and the product of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE, STUDIES, AND WORKS

For this production thesis the writer reviewed the CBL authors' assumptions, as well as literature and studies from both local and abroad which relate to the goal of children's spiritual formation and the three areas of the TPACK framework, which are content, pedagogy and technology. The review resulted in the formulation of the thesis writer's technological assumptions for the product of this study. Several diagrams are included in this chapter that supplement the theoretical framework of this production thesis.

Children's Spiritual Formation in the Church

The overall purpose of this thesis project was the advancement of the spiritual formation of children as stated in the conceptual framework in Chapter One. Michael J. Anthony introduces four evangelical perspectives on children's spiritual formation and categorizes them in a chart of four quadrants (Figure 5).

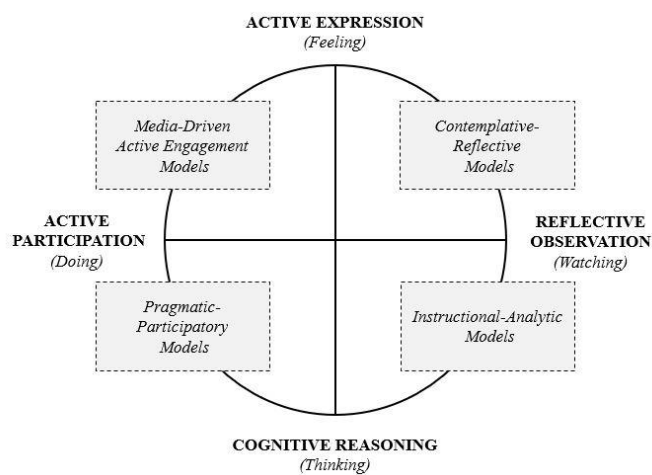


Figure 5. Anthony's Matrix of Children's Spiritual Formation Models
 Source: Anthony 2006, 36.

Based on Urban Holmes' diagram of human spirituality (Holmes 1980, 3-4) and David Kolb's Learning Cycle (Kolb 1984, 42), Anthony developed a combination of both in his matrix portraying the four perspectives. The model in the first quadrant of Anthony's matrix is based on *feeling* (experiencing) and *watching* (for example, the presentation of the Bible story). Scottie May (2006, 45) describes the Contemplative-Reflective Model and states that its aim is "to help children encounter God in ways that result in a sense of awe and wonder". She further writes, "The Christian spirituality of children is nurtured through openness to the Holy Spirit ... It is strengthened by corporate uses of Scripture, forms of prayer, hymns, ritual and sacraments, retreats, and the cycles of the liturgical year, which include feasts and celebrations" (2006, 50). Historically, emerging from the pedagogy of Maria Montessori and Catholic Catechesis, the environment of this approach is characterized by creating an atmosphere of reverence, elimination of frills and fluff, slow pace, and quietness (2006, 70). An exemplary curriculum for this approach is Godly Play by Jerome Berryman.

The Instructional-Analytic model which is in the second quadrant of Anthony's matrix emphasizes *watching* and *thinking*. Gregory C. Carlson and John K. Crupper (2006, 104) define this "as God working through the instruction of his Word and human agency whereby, he creates an environment where the young person comes to know Jesus at an appropriate age and then grows in that relationship. This environment features four dimensions: Scripture memory, biblical instruction, a graduated award system, and a systematic structure for training." In addition, this perspective emphasizes the need of evangelizing children and inviting them to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. The

ministries of AWANA Clubs International, Child Evangelism Fellowship and Pioneer Clubs are mentioned in conjunction with this model (2006, 136).

The third perspective is the Pragmatic-Participatory model which is characterized by *thinking* and *doing*. Trisha Graves describes it as “a ministry model that is dependent on a child’s thought process that is formed through active participatory learning. This model is known for engaging the children in learning while using a variety of different methods to teach them with practical and relevant application” (2006, 165). Program elements are dramatic presentations of the Bible, worship arts, application-oriented games and activities, and instructional technology. Graves points out that “postmodern generation children have grown up being exposed to technology ... To effectively reach and teach this media-driven generation, children’s ministry models should include modern technology as a method to help reinforce the lessons being taught from the Bible” (2006, 200). No specific program or curriculum is mentioned in conjunction with this model.

The fourth perspective on children’s spiritual formation is the Media-Driven Active-Engagement model described by Tim Ellis, Bill Baumgart, and Greg Carper. This model is the swing between *doing* and *feeling*. It is similar to the Pragmatic-Participatory model as it engages technology and interactive media which are culturally conditioned. In addition, the model “takes into consideration the unique learning styles of all learners” (Ellis, Baumgart, and Carper 2006, 225). The authors claim that “technology and media are effective tools in reaching the children of today” (2006, 228). An example of this model can be seen by the KIDMO program.

These four models represent the vast spectrum of evangelical perspectives on children's spiritual formation in the church. For this production thesis the question arose as to where the present CBL curriculum can be located within Anthony's matrix.

Therefore, the CBL authors' assumptions were reviewed.

The Creative Bible Lessons Authors' Assumptions

In order to locate the perspective on children's spiritual formation desired through the implementation of the CBL curriculum in churches, the researcher consulted the biblical, theological, educational and philosophical assumptions compiled by Anni Dyck and Ruth Läufer in an unpublished document of Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong in April 2006.

According to this document the CBL curriculum was designed around three underlying principles: First, the lessons of the curriculum are centered on God and his word which is taught systematically. Second, the teaching content and methods, as well as the accompanying visual aids, are designed considering the children's development. Third, children are involved in the teaching-learning process through interactive methods suggested in the lessons and through the visual aids as they are used to repeat and respond to the Bible stories.

The *biblical* assumptions are "to include as much as possible of the Bible content" so that the curriculum serves as "a door opener to life-long Bible study and discovery" (Dyck 2006, 1). The biblical narratives are told in their historic context and sequence to help children understand the continuity of the Bible. According to the authors, especially the stories for Kindergarten children "are short and simplified, without being watered down" (Dyck 2006, 1). They wanted to avoid the children's understanding of the Bible

needing to be revised at a later point in their lives. The scope and sequence of the CBL curriculum will therefore not be changed as part of this thesis project.

In their *theological* assumptions the authors make it clear that “in the center of the CBL Curriculum is God as the Triune God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the curriculum in its structured plan is God-centered and not man-centered” (Dyck 2006, 1). To underline this approach Dyck points to the six yearly themes selected for the Primary and Junior levels. They are “The Family of God,” “God Loves and Leads Us,” “God our Helper and Provider,” “God Judges and Saves,” “God is King—His Kingdom come,” and “Go into all the World.”

She continues to outline how God as the Creator, the Redeemer, the Law-Giver and the Righteous King is portrayed in different units of the CBL curriculum. Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, is introduced in one *Junior* volume as “Son of Man” as well as the “Son of God” (Dyck 2006, 2). In addition, the authors point out that Jesus is the Word of God, the Savior and Redeemer, and the Coming One. The Holy Spirit is the “Giver of Life” and the “Representative of Jesus between Jesus’ ascension and his return” (Dyck 2006, 3). This is emphasized each year with one unit on Pentecost. In addition, it is emphasized that every person is made in God’s image and is a steward of God’s creation “who will have to give account to God” (Dyck 2006, 4).

The authors developed the CBL curriculum on the basis that the Bible is God’s word, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Dyck writes, “Authors and editors, proofreaders and artists who contributed to the CBL curriculum are witnesses that over and over again they were inspired, enlightened and refreshed by studying the word of God in order to write the lessons for the different age groups and create their artwork” (2006, 4). These

theological assumptions underlie the enhancement of the CBL curriculum with multimedia as well. During the process of production, the principle of God being in the center of all teaching was not compromised.

In the authors' *philosophical* assumptions, they admit that they struggled for an overall aim of the CBL curriculum. Ruth Läufer then defines the aim as "God's aim is to bring us to the likeness of His Son Jesus Christ" (2006, 1) according to Romans 8:29 (Läufer and Dyck 2005, 58). Läufer concludes that "the Triune God" must be "the focus point of our life and teaching" and "when he is in the center, our life and our teaching will reflect his glory" (2006, 4-5). She, too, emphasizes the God-centered approach of the curriculum as she writes, "God in the center of a curriculum gives us freedom, wideness, creativity and balance" and "We believe there is no safer way than to have the Triune God, God Father, God Son and God the Holy Spirit, in the center of the curriculum" (Läufer 2006, 5). This correlates with what Robert W. Pazmiño emphasizes as he writes, "Evangelical educators have proposed that a God-centered education offers an alternative" (1997, 120) to the three foci of education which are content-centered, person-centered or society-centered as suggested by Hollis L. Caswell (Pazmiño 1997, 119).

Anni Dyck writes in the *educational* assumptions of the CBL curriculum about its design according to the three age divisions, which are Kindergarten, Primary, and Junior. She mentions, that the maximum number of students are 20 for a group of Kindergarten children, and 30 for a group of Primary or Junior students. The lesson aim takes into consideration cognitive, humanistic, and behavioral theories of learning (Yount 2001, 101). Thus, each lesson aim is threefold, addressing knowledge, attitude, and action. The lessons' sections are "Opening," "Creating Interest," "Telling the Bible Story,"

“Application and Response,” and “Closing.” In addition, the thesis writer would like to mention that the authors used spiral theory in their curriculum proposed by psychologist Jerome S. Bruner in 1960. Arthur K. Ellis summarizes this concept, “The idea of the spiral curriculum is that the key concepts and methods from each discipline are identified, and visited and revisited at increasing levels of sophistication throughout the school years” (Ellis 2004, 116).

Most importantly, Dyck points to the continuous method of storytelling and the different kinds of visual aids which are an integral part of the CBL curriculum. The emphasis in the CBL curriculum on storytelling for all three age groups (Kindergarten, Primary, and Junior) is significant. In each lesson the Bible story is fully narrated considering the speech comprehension and concentration (attention span) of the age group. The focus on the Bible story as the main part of the lesson is further emphasized by the visual aids which illustrate the biblical narratives in almost all the lessons with only a few pictures illustrating application accounts or memory verses. This led the thesis writer to the principle that the multimedia, too, would be designed according to the age division and that it would function primarily to support the biblical stories.

Reflecting on these assumptions by the authors of the CBL curriculum it can be concluded that Anni Dyck and Ruth Läufer’s perspective on children’s spiritual formation is positioned between the first and second quadrant of Anthony’s matrix. They designed the lesson units based on the liturgical year, placed high importance on biblical narratives and stressed the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the authors were guided by the principle of systematic and balanced biblical instruction. In addition, the current curriculum does not use digital media. Adding multimedia to the

CBL curriculum positions the material further to the center of the matrix. The thesis writer argues, that with such an enhancement the curriculum would include the characteristic element of instructional technology of the models in the third and fourth quadrant. On the other side, the CBL curriculum would weaken elements of the models in the first and second quadrant such as imagining the Bible story.

Bible Story Telling

The importance of nurturing children's faith through telling the stories of the Bible cannot be underestimated. Mary Hess writes that "Story-telling is at the heart of religious experience and religious identity, particularly ... within predominantly Christian communities" (2008, 112). Ivy Beckwith, an advocate of the Contemplative-Reflective Model (Anthony 2006, 38), affirms the importance of Bible stories. However, in *Postmodern Children's Ministry* (2004) she criticizes that Bible stories are often used to teach children moral behavior which she calls the "Aesop's Fableization" of the Bible (Beckwith 2004, 126). Additionally, the emphasis is too often on the cognitive domain, hardly including affective and kinesthetic learning. She also questions the common approach in teaching the Bible to children by adding elements of fun and entertainment (2004, 131). According to Beckwith these approaches rob children of emerging and engaging with the biblical narratives themselves and meet God through these stories. She claims that this does not help them to discover and wonder how God revealed himself to his people. She therefore suggests that the stories always need to have God in the center (2004, 131). Further she proposes that children should be allowed to enter the story by imagining it, playing and drawing it, and through such methods finding their own application. In this way children learn and are spiritually formed through a non-linear

process of thinking which characterizes postmodernism and, therefore, it becomes their own way of thinking (Beckwith 2010, 28). On the other hand, it could be argued that particularly in this postmodern age children need linear Bible teaching as used during the modern age to give clear guidance and orientation in an increasingly complex world. However, for this production thesis Beckwith's considerations were relevant as they are in line with the CBL curriculum's underlying principle that God needs to be at the center of all teaching.

Pedagogical Considerations Regarding Technology

The Primary lessons of the CBL curriculum are designed for children aged six to eight years old. Shelly M. Cunningham groups the developmental needs and characteristics of six- and seven-year-olds in four areas which are physical, cognitive, social/emotional and spiritual. In addition, she lists the implications for the ministry to these children in the church (1992, 143-44). Some of those are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Needs and Characteristics of Six- and Seven-Year-Olds

Characteristics	Ministry Implications
<p><i>Physical:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased small muscle coordination, though clumsy at times • Constant movement—need to wiggle • Likes to make things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunity to change activities and pace often • Provide for physical movement • Enact Bible stories
<p><i>Cognitive:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eager to learn • Ask a lot of questions • Still limited in space-time concepts • Much variation in reading skills • Tend to focus on only one or two details of a story or experience at a time • Attention span limited—seven–ten minutes • Literal thought processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid symbolism in telling Bible stories and Bible concepts • Avoid object lessons • Use visual illustrations to support Bible story • Avoid dependence on a child’s ability to read • Teach the Bible as a book of true stories, not as a story which might be mistaken for one more fairy tale or fantasy adventure
<p><i>Social/Emotional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for adult approval • Sensitive to criticism • Awkward in knowing how to get along with others • Competitive with siblings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate care to each individual child • Help children in accepting each other and practicing acts of kindness • Facilitate group activities
<p><i>Spiritual:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories of Bible people and how they obeyed God and why we should also • How to worship God • I can respond in love, worship, and obedience to God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the truth of Bible stories • Provide opportunity for them to experience as much of the Bible story as possible • Lead them in worship and celebrative experiences

Source: Anthony 1992, 143-144.

The implications listed in the cognitive area, which are the importance of visual illustrations to Bible stories, to avoid dependence on a child's ability to read, and to teach the Bible as a book of true stories, are especially applicable for the design of this thesis product.

In *Education that is Christian*, Lois LeBar calls for an active process of teaching and learning by involving pupils in discovering the Bible. However, activities should not occur during the Bible story, "because children must listen quietly to the Bible story, the rest of the Bible school hour should contain much activity for them. If there is not enough (*activity – KW*) we can't expect them to sit still to listen to the story" (LeBar 1989, 181-82). This is in line with the CBL authors' belief that children should have the opportunity of listening to and imagining Bible stories without being disturbed. Dyck and Läufer expressed this concept during Sunday School teacher trainings witnessed by the thesis writer.

A second point made by Lois E. LeBar shall be mentioned here. She emphasized that every pupil is an individual person and learns differently. She notes, "If each leaf on a tree differs from any other, how much more the complex human personality, each with its unique combination of traits" (LeBar 1989, 172). This was confirmed by developmental psychologists Howard Gardner and Thomas Hatch. Based on their research they introduced the notion that students possess multiple intelligences. They proposed seven intelligences of which among others is the spatial intelligence, defined as "Capacities to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately and to perform transformations on one's initial perceptions" (Gardner and Hatch 2009, 6). They state that everybody has these seven intelligences, but the strengths differ because of environment and inheritance

(Gardner and Hatch 1989, 5). From Gardner's theory that people possess multiple intelligences it can be inferred that people also learn through multiple avenues.

Bernice McCarthy defines four different learning styles and portrays the imaginative learner, the analytic learner, the common-sense learner, and the dynamic learner (McCarthy 1997, 46-49). Referring to these learning styles, Stephen Petrina states that "Imaginative learners tend to be visual or iconic. They prefer to learn by figural and spatial thinking or the "mind's eye" (Petrina 2007, 151).

Marlene LeFever in *Learning Styles* describes learning modalities and explains, "Our senses or modalities are our main avenues of sensation. Those who learn best by seeing are called visual learners. Visual learners may learn best through reading, but many of our students today are as picture literate as they are word literate" (Anthony 2001, 136). She states that 40 percent of students are visual learners who, in turn, remember 75 percent of what was visually presented. LeFever appeals concerning these learners, "We need to use pictures in more creative ways to hold their attention and to capture and use the skills they have developed. Pictures and art are occasions for intelligence ... For many teachers this will require an extra application of creativity" (LeFever 2001, 137). Although different in each theorist's categories, the various theories of learning styles underline the importance of including images during the teaching-learning process.

Educational Technology in the Church

In 1946 Edgar Dale introduced his influential Cone of Experience to distinguish different kinds of learning experiences. He classified them into ten different categories, placing concrete experiences at the bottom and abstract experiences at the top of the cone

(Figure 6). In 1954 he added television as an eleventh category. In *Education and Technology: An Encyclopedia*, Michael Molenda writes about Dale's Cone of Experience that "by the third edition of the textbook, Dale (1969) acknowledged the growing popularity of Jerome Bruner's (1966) cognitive psychology concepts by overlaying Bruner's classification system for modes of learning—enactive, iconic, and symbolic—on top of his own categories" (*Encyclopedia of Educational Technology*, s.vv. "Cone of Experience"). William Yount explains these three modes, writing "Enactive understanding is based on actions, demonstrations, and hands-on experimentation. Iconic understanding is based on pictures, images, diagrams, models, and the like. Symbolic understanding is based on language and the use of words to express complex ideas" (2001, 105-06).

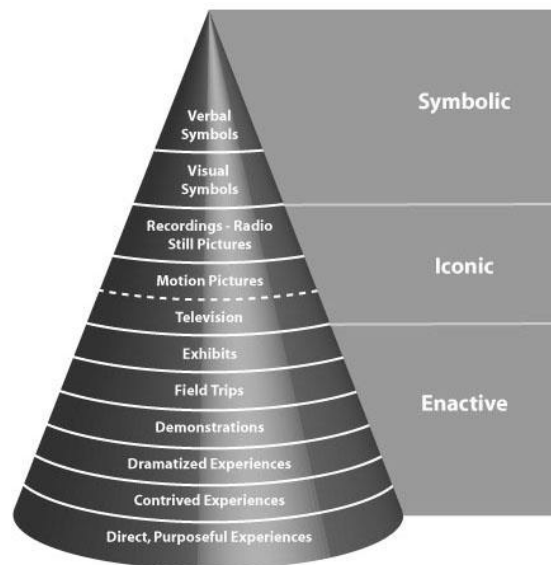


Figure 6. Dale's Cone of Experience 1969, adapted

Source: <http://jhonalver.blogspot.com>.

Figure 6 shows the cone according to Edgar Dale's last amendment in 1969 in the third edition of his textbook *Audiovisual Methods in Teaching*. The cone indicates that Dale related recordings, radio, still pictures, motion pictures and television to Bruner's iconic mode of understanding. Although still in the same category, Dale considered motion pictures and television less abstract than still pictures. The thesis writer concluded that when using multimedia, it will be, therefore, more concrete for primary children compared to print-based visual aids and more appealing to visual learners since images, figures and other elements are moving. Until today the Cone of Experience is widely accepted and used. Molenda comments on the popularity of the Cone of Experience,

Dale's textbook in its three editions remained popular for over a quarter-century. Inasmuch as the Cone provided the organizing principle for the book, it became ingrained in the thinking of generations of educational technology students and professors who used the textbook. It stimulated many efforts to extend the original idea by developing its implications for elementary education, secondary education, adult education, corporate training, and even counseling (*Encyclopedia of Educational Technology*, s.vv. "Cone of Experience").

In 1964 Marshall McLuhan (1994, 7) stated, "The medium is the message" and pointed to changes a medium creates. Shane Hipps in *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture* writes, "McLuhan's words tell an important truth: *Whenever methods or media change, the message automatically changes along with them*" (2005, 30). This implies that the approach of this thesis, changing the media from printed visual aids to multimedia, would lead to a change of the message. However, this was not the intention of the thesis writer. Instead, she leans towards Rick Warren's statement, "Our message must never change, but the way we deliver this message must be constantly updated to reach each new generation" (Warren, cited in Hipps 2005, 29).

McLuhan further suggested in his “tetrad” four perspectives which were applied by Mark Hayse to the use of educational technology in the church asking “When using educational technology, what does it *enhance*? What aspect of a student’s experience does it *intensify*?” (2016, 204). In response to this question two benefits of educational technology pointed out by Kenneth D. Moore are significant. Moore states that a liquid crystal display (LCD) projector is “allowing the computer screen to be viewed by the entire class” and “LCD’s allow teachers to reach students with multiple approaches. Students enjoy seeing, hearing, and interacting with technology rather than just reading a textbook or listening to a lecture” (Moore 2015, 144). The thesis writer agrees that these advantages demonstrate two important reasons for the approach of this study to enhance the CBL curriculum with multimedia.

Richard A. Koffarnus illustrates McLuhan’s aphorism by writing “what you teach on Sunday morning is not a lesson; it’s a group of students. The lesson is simply the medium by which you extend your thoughts and the truths of Scripture to them. The actual message is the change in your students’ attitude and actions that result from that lesson” (Koffarnus 2012, 81). He then encourages the teacher to “think of a PowerPoint presentation as an extension of what you already do as a teacher” and suggests that the teacher is the one “putting the power into PowerPoint” (2012, 82). The thesis writer concurs with this perspective as she would go to the extent of claiming that the message of the lessons must not be changed but must be reinforced by multimedia.

In response to the question “What are the potential spiritual benefits of multimedia?” the representatives of the Media-Driven Active-Engagement Model point to George Barna’s diagram on tiers of influence (Figure 7).

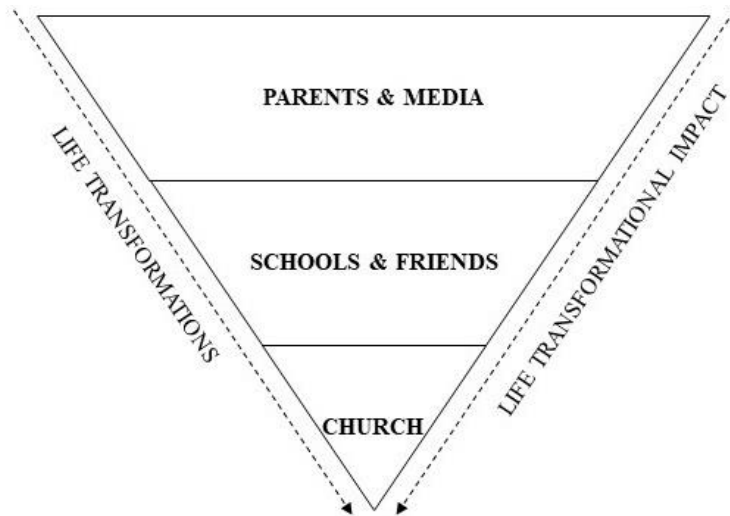


Figure 7. Tiers of Influence

Source: Ellis, Baumgart, and Carper 2006, 242.

This diagram shows that the influence of media is so great that it can be equated with the influence parents have on their children. Based on this statement the authors of the Media-Driven Active-Engagement model demand, “we must leverage the prevalence and influence of media so that we may capitalize on the unprecedented opportunity we have to reach kids with the gospel of Christ” (Ellis, Baumgart, and Carper 2006, 243-244). They further point out that “our kid’s culture can be defined by a single word: *media*. Indeed, media is such a defining element of today’s culture that kids between the ages of eight and eighteen have been dubbed Generation M, or the Media Generation” (2006, 227). They continue, “Online gaming, music, instant messaging, blogs, Xbox, PlayStation, portable handheld games, and computer-based interactive games make up the collective television for this generation (2006, 228). Due to this shift in children’s culture they developed the media-driven KIDMO program to include educational technology in children’s churches.

However, in *Deconstructing Digital Natives* Sue Bennett and Karl Maton argue that the widespread labeling of young people as “digital natives” (Pensky 2001) is without grounded evidence and resulted in effects which were not conducive to the educational debate on technology. They state that, “educators need to be mindful of diversity within the student body and wary of generalizations about technology skills” (Bennett and Maton 2011, 176-77). Based on the experience of the researcher that might be especially true about children in the wide range of churches across Asia.

Scottie May in her reply to the Media-Driven Active-Engagement model confirms “that technology and media can be effective tools for reaching today’s generation of children” (May, cited in Anthony 2006, 260). However, she raises serious questions about the model and advocates “careful discernment” when using media in children’s ministry (2006, 263). Her concern is shared by the thesis writer as she and her co-worker witnessed several children’s lessons during which multimedia watered down the biblical message or disparaged not only biblical characters but even Jesus Christ through inappropriate presentation. In addition, some multimedia for children included magic elements and unacceptable violence. In such cases the thesis writer agrees with McLuhan’s expression (1994, 7) that the medium changes the message. It is indisputable that teachers select multimedia cautiously and responsibly. In summary this discussion encouraged the thesis writer in her assumption that the multimedia files were not designed to replace the teacher or overlay his or her verbal teaching, but rather to enrich and help reinforce the content, as Donald L. Griggs contends, “No technological device will ever replace what only a teacher can do” (Griggs 2003, 136).

The Design of Multimedia

How should multimedia be designed for effective use in children's church? In her production thesis Tetiana Koldunenکو (2014) compares commercial media design with the design of Kindergarten Mathematic textbooks. She answers the title question of her Master thesis "What can graphic design of static teaching resources learn from commercial film and media to be more relevant for today's children?" Her suggestion is adopting specific elements of design used especially in commercial film and media produced by Walt Disney and DreamWorks Animation. Such elements are, for example, the imitation of a screen by adding a frame around the design, a horizontal instead of vertical orientation of the media, intense and bright colors for backgrounds, text and images, as well as a non-linear and volumetric design (Koldunenکو 2014, 47). She argues, that by integrating these elements into the design of mathematical teaching resources, such resources are more appealing for children. They associate them with multimedia used during their pleasure time and, therefore, children are more motivated to learn. Some of those design elements were helpful for and were applied in the design of the multimedia of this production project, for example, the brightening of figures and pictures as well as adding shadows and two-dimensional (2D) animations (see Chapter Four).

Karin Fossell analyzes the impact of the TPACK framework for those who design learning tools. She states that designers of learning tools need to understand the larger subject area of the chosen content (Fossell 2016, 252). Subsequently, it is not enough that designers of learning tools focus on the technological aspect only. They need to understand the content knowledge teachers possess which includes the "major questions

and approaches to understanding the subject, the nature of argument and controversies in the field, and how the target learning fits in the overall landscape of the discipline” (2016, 252). Applying this statement to this production project, it was understood that a professional designer of learning tools might be skillful in applying designing principles and tools. However, he or she might lack the knowledge of the content of the CBL curriculum. Therefore, the thesis writer decided to design the product mainly by herself as she has taught the CBL lessons over a period of more than ten years in Sunday School and was acquainted with the content. Still, she analyzed Genesis 12-49 from the biblical text which form the content for the multimedia files (see Appendix B).

According to Fossell the designer of learning tools also needs to understand the pedagogical knowledge of teachers which are for example strategies for organization and classroom management, the developmental stages of students, their capabilities as well as their challenges and needs (Fossell 2016, 251). In addition, she states that designers of learning tools need to give organizational support to teachers using educational technology (Fossell 2016, 251). For the production as part of this thesis, it was therefore necessary that the capabilities and challenges of the target teachers were considered.

Educational Technology Acceptance

Karin Fossell’s suggestion of teacher support is confirmed by the research of user acceptance of educational technology. Research shows that there are two important factors that determine the success of technology which are reflected in the wide use of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) introduced by F. D. Davis in 1989 (Teo and van Schaik 2009, 48). The two variables in this model are the *perceived usefulness* and the *perceived ease of use*. Timothy Teo and Paul van Schaik write that according to Davis

“Perceived usefulness (PU) is defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance his or her job performance” (2009, 50).

Consequently, Sunday School teachers are more likely to use educational technology if they believe that it will benefit themselves and enhance their teaching, as well as decrease their time “of doing the job” (Teo and Van Schaik 2009, 50). The second variable, perceived ease of use (PEU), is related to “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will be free of effort” (Teo and van Schaik 2009, 51). This means that Sunday School teachers’ attitude towards using multimedia is also influenced by how readily such digital files and the needed technical equipment is available for them during their time of preparation and teaching at church. Hence, these variables are to be taken seriously by designers and publishers when developing educational technology for implementation in churches. During seminars, Sunday School teachers should be trained how to use educational technology if they are expected to accept and integrate multimedia successfully into their teaching ministry. It is therefore imperative to continue training Sunday School teachers as stressed by Norma Hedin, "Training is not a luxury; it is a necessity" (Hedin 1995, 69).

Guidelines for the Use of Educational Technology

The researcher was aware that the correct use of educational technology is a precondition for its effective use. She, therefore, included literature research on the set-up of technology in rooms for a wider audience.

Concerning the distance of the viewers to the screen and the height of the screen, Gene A. Getz illustrates that the minimum distance of viewers to the screen is two screen

widths and the maximum distance is six screen widths. The image should be projected over the heads of the audience and above eye level (Getz 1972, 161).

In addition, an illustration by *Audio-E AV Integration*, provided by email to the researcher by Ervz Tia of *World Missions Organization* on November 3, 2018, shows that the minimum distance to the screen should be the screen diagonal. The maximum distance for the projection of slides with the standard ratio of 4:3 should be five times the height of the projected image. For projected slides with the widescreen ratio of 16:9 the maximum distance should not be bigger than 3.3 times the slide's height. The image should be at least 90 centimeter above the ground, and at the most 125 cm (Figure 8).

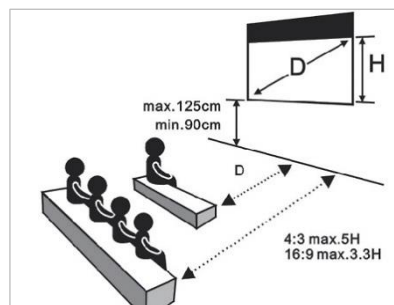


Figure 8. Distance between Projection and Viewers

Source: https://www.facebook.com/Audio-E-AV-Integrations-1853959091346773/?__tn__=k*F&tn-str=k*F

In addition, Getz writes that “to be used effectively, projected aids must be shown in a well-prepared room. There must be adequate facilities for darkening the room, proper ventilation, and a satisfactory seating arrangement. All equipment should be set up and made ready for use before the viewers arrive” (Getz 1972, 160). Getz’s guidelines were used by the thesis writer to evaluate the set-up and projection of the thesis product in selected churches (see Chapter Six and Appendix E).

The Thesis Writer's Technological Assumptions

As a result of the thesis writer's review of related literature it is her intention to enhance the CBL curriculum with multimedia respecting Anni Dyck and Ruth Läufer's underlying assumptions. Therefore, she compiled certain technological assumptions to guide her in the production of the thesis product. The assumptions are organized according to Harold Burgess' "categories of thought common to theorizing about religious education: aim, content, teacher, student, environment, and evaluation" (Burgess 1975, 12). These six elements were complemented by Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannel (2005, 197) by adding the influence of the Holy Spirit as a component which is shown in Figure 9.

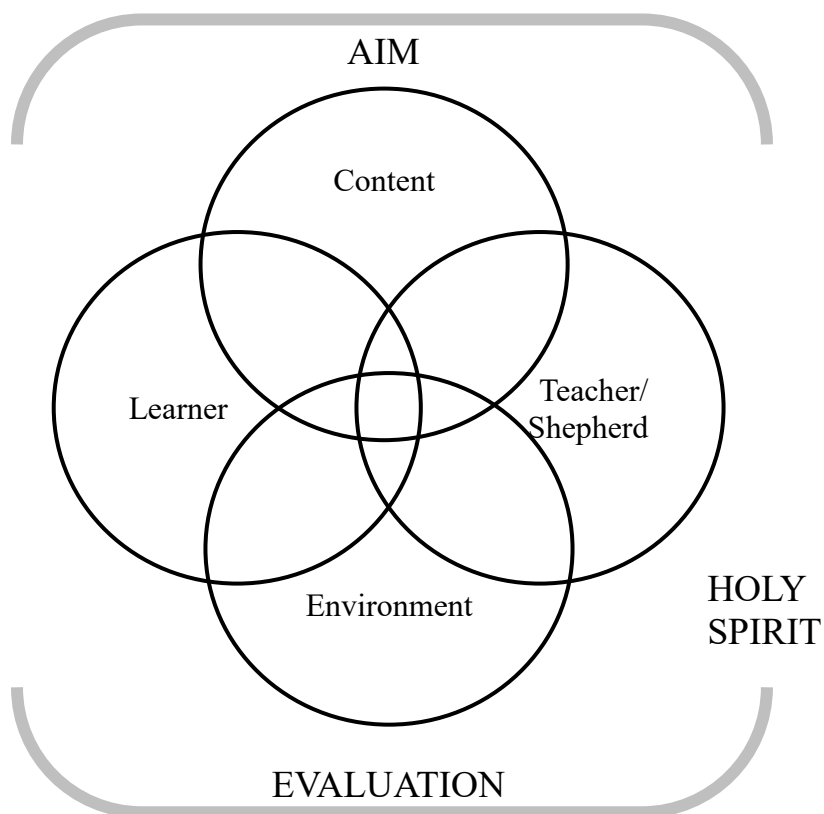


Figure 9. Burgess' Categories of Thought

Source: May, Posterski, Stonehouse, and Cannel 2005, 197.

According to Burgess' six categories of thought the following technological assumptions for the design and use of multimedia to enhance the CBL curriculum are outlined.

Aim

- The final product shall visualize the Bible story through digital media without changing the aim and the message of the CBL lesson—hence adhering to the assumptions and principles defined by the CBL authors.
- The influence of churches on children's spiritual formation shall increase.

Content

- The multimedia shall mainly illustrate the Bible stories.
- The presentations shall make use of original artwork of the CBL curriculum and may include additional images and shapes.
- The presentations shall support the fact that the Bible stories are true and historic events with people who lived in the past.

Teacher

- The teacher is a witness and an example of a disciple of Jesus Christ to the children. Therefore, the teacher shall not be replaced as story teller.
- The teacher shall perceive the finished product as useful and easy to use.

Student

- The ability of primary children aged six to eight years old to distinguish between the real and the unreal world increases steadily. This ability shall not be undermined by using multimedia through which children often enter fictional

worlds, instead the media shall present the biblical narratives as realistically as possible without using any magic and fictional elements.

- The attention of the students shall be increased through the means of multimedia.
- The presentations shall uplift the children spiritually as the word of God is illustrated with beautiful artwork and in an appealing way.
- The multimedia shall increase the retention of the Bible story in the lives of the students.

Environment

- The teaching environment of Sunday schools in countries targeted by the publisher of the CBL curriculum often falls short regarding lighting. The multimedia shall, therefore, provide bright and appealing images.
- The multimedia is believed to increase students' attention as projected images are bigger and can be seen by the whole group of students if the set-up of the technology is according to technological standards.

Evaluation

- The evaluation of multimedia to enhance the CBL curriculum is best done through a long-term study in “terms of the change in knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviors manifested by both student and teachers” (Pazmiño 1997, 112-13).
- An initial evaluation of the thesis product was done by the thesis writer in Sunday School classes in the Philippines (see Chapter Six).

The Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is able to use the means of multimedia in the teaching and learning process.
- The Holy Spirit is actively at work in the design and development process of the multimedia.

This chapter presented related literature in the area of children's spiritual formation, pedagogical aspects of teaching primary children with educational technology, as well as the use of educational technology in the church and its acceptance by teachers. From this literature review the thesis writer inferred technological assumptions as guidelines for the thesis product. Chapter Three will outline the methods and the procedure of the production process of multimedia to enhance the CBL curriculum.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE PRODUCTION

This chapter describes the stages in the production process of multimedia for the 26 lessons of the CBL Primary Year 1, July to December volume. As this was a production thesis and not a qualitative research thesis, the churches who participated in the project were not being studied or analyzed, the purpose of the research was solely for the validation of the product and its usage in real church settings. The data collected from the participating churches was part of the application of the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model of curriculum development introduced in Chapter One.

A. Objectives

The objectives of the production were twofold. The first goal was to explore and create multimedia for each lesson of one CBL Primary volume using the existing artwork of the respective volume. The multimedia aimed to be age-appropriate and attractive for children aged six to eight years old. The second goal was to evaluate the design and the use of the product during Sunday School classes and to collect feedback from teachers through class observations, questionnaires and interviews. The results of the collected data provided the writer with considerations and suggestions for the ongoing design and development of the product according to the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model presented in Chapter One.

B. Techniques—Design and Technical Specifications

The existing artwork of the chosen volume of the CBL curriculum consists mainly of single figures and pictures. The software of Microsoft Office PowerPoint was chosen

to arrange the artwork due to four reasons. First, the software offers a wide range of choices of formatting tools for figures and images, different kinds of backgrounds, 2D animations, transitions, and shapes. Second, PowerPoint presentations allow editing the slides not only by the producer but also by the user (the teacher) according to the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model. Third, PowerPoint presentations are easily controllable by the teacher during the procedure of the lesson in contrast to videos. In this way, the teacher remains the story teller. He or she determines the timing of when to show the next slide. In addition, during the application section the teacher can return to a previous slide. Fourth, based on the experience and observation of the thesis writer Microsoft Office PowerPoint is widely used in churches and educational settings in the Philippines. The only concern she had, was how to protect the copyright of the artwork. She, therefore, decided to save each file as a PowerPoint Show (*.ppsx) instead of a PowerPoint Presentation (*.pptx) to hamper the modification of the slides prior to distribution.

Concerning the design, the following specifications were pursued:

- The slide size is Standard (4:3) or Widescreen (16:9)
- Invisible Frame within the slides
- White speech bubbles for people and light-yellow stars for the promises of God
- Minimal use of text
- Short and clear sentences, suitable for children aged six to eight years old
- Clear and easy to read font for grade one to three students (Calibri or Arial)
- Usual height of figures is $\frac{2}{3}$ of the slide size
- Mostly the full body of figures are shown

- Shadow is added to each figure
- Images are saved as TIF or PNG Files to ensure transparency of background
- 2D animation of figures and elements
- Realistic transition effects of slides to minimalize distraction
- Use of bright colors in text, shapes, figures, and pictures whenever possible.

C. Procedures

The production project proceeded simultaneously through the three stages of pre-production, production and post-production over several months as the thesis writer created one PowerPoint presentation weekly. During the pre-production process each figure and picture had to be groomed using Adobe Photoshop CS4 and Adobe Photoshop Creative Cloud. During the production the PowerPoint presentations were created using Office PowerPoint 365, and the post-production included the completion of the digital files for distribution by email.

1. Pre-Production





The pre-production process was extensive as the grooming of figures and pictures included several steps as listed:

- Cut-out each figure and picture from the twelve digital files of the CBL visual aid sheets (see Chapter Four, B. Artwork)
- Convert every image from Adobe Photoshop to a Tagged Image File (TIF) to enable compatibility with Office PowerPoint 365
- Save filenames of every image according to the corresponding number of the figure in the CBL lesson book (eg. 27-01.tif)

- Reduce the file size from 300 dpi (used for printing) to 150 dpi (used for projection)
- Reduce the image size to suit the widescreen slide sizes of 16:9 (width 13.3 inch, height 7.5 inch) or standard size of 4:3 (width 10 inch, height 7.5 inch)
- Change the image mode from CMYK (used for printing) to RGB (used in electronic systems)
- Remove the white background
- Remove the black background and thick black outlines of figures
- Saturate the colored areas
- Brighten the colors
- Correct blurs
- Cut-out figures within a picture
- Refill the background
- Change the facial expressions
- Adjust the Abraham figures as they were drawn by two different artists within the first unit
- Apply white contour around figures
- Search for and select background photos and additional images

The following examples illustrate some of these steps:

Table 2. Original and Processed Artwork

	Original artwork	Processed artwork
Removal of white and black background		
Saturation and brightening of colors		
Cut out elements and refilling backgrounds		
Removal of black background and adding white contour		
Cut-out figures and change facial expression		

2. Production

The production process was the creative part, during which background, figures, text, and bubbles had to be arranged and animated. Some of the existing lesson outlines included sketches of scene images to help the teachers understand how to place the figures. These scene images set the base for the initial storyboard (Figure 10).

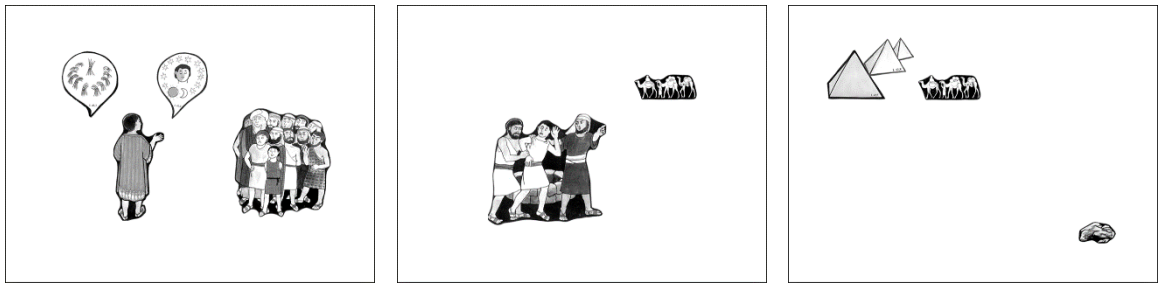


Figure 10. Scenes in CBL Lesson 42 Outline

Source: CBL Primary Year 1, July-December, 80-82.

However, for eleven lessons only one picture is included (Lesson 31, 35-41, 48, 50, and 51). This posed a challenge for the thesis writer as she aimed for at least three slides illustrating the Bible story in each presentation. So, she had to create additional scenes with only one picture at her disposal. An example of this challenge was in the third unit *Jacob and His Family*. In order to increase flexibility, the thesis writer dissected the pictures into various elements and filled in the background. Now the story could be told with several slides (Figure 11 and 12):



Figure 11. Original Artwork of Lesson 36



Figure 12. Dissected Elements on Filled-in Background

Three lessons in the volume do not have any pictures. In Lesson 34 (Isaac loves Peace), it is suggested that the teacher will draw four wells on the board based on a miniature sketch in the outline. The thesis writer utilized this particular sketch, enlarged and colored it. In addition, she decided to reuse the figures provided in the previous unit (see the storyboard of Lesson 34, page 63). Also, the Christmas unit uses just one picture for three lessons. The thesis writer struggled but decided to include two pictures that came from the Christmas unit in Year 2 of the CBL curriculum. The pictures were drawn by the same artist and therefore matched in style and color (see storyboard of Lessons 49 to 51, page 69-70). This was not the case in other units where different artists had contributed pictures and figures within a unit. So, the styles were different. This is striking in the first unit as the two artists portray Abraham differently. The thesis writer adapted the figure by adjusting the colors of the two Abraham figures (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Original Figures of Abraham by two Artists and the Figures of Abraham adapted by the Thesis Writer

To further equip the teacher according to the lesson outlines, the thesis writer included pictures of previous lessons when suggested under the first section “Creating Interest” in the CBL lessons (see the storyboard of Lessons 37, page 64). In addition to designing the different scenes, the production proceeded through the following steps:

- Decide background style (e.g. photos, texture fill)
- Design of title slide for each unit
- Darken slides to indicate night scenes
- Insert figures and pictures on several slides
- Add shadow on each image
- Design the scenes on each slide using the available figures and pictures
- Adjust figures to suitable size
- Supply scenes with additional shapes (bubbles, stars, scrolls)
- Include text in speech and thought bubbles

- Adjoin additional images (e.g. animals) in the right proportion
- Add different types of 2D animations and effects to figures and shapes
- Add of transition to the slides
- Add last slide with copyright details.

These steps were not undergone in the above order but were done as the PowerPoint presentations developed.

3. Post-Production

The post-production was the process of reducing the size of the PowerPoint presentations to make them user-friendly and manageable. This process included the following steps:

- Reduce the size of figures and pictures
- Reduce the overall file size to less than ten megabytes
- Delete the cropped areas of pictures
- Save the files with identifiable and consistent file names
- Edit the PDF lesson files by inserting comments for the teachers telling when to advance the slides or click for an animation
- Write an email with additional instructions for the teachers
- Send the email with attached PowerPoint presentation and PDF lesson file on a weekly basis
- Store the files on USB flash drives and distribute them to selected participants to simplify access.

While the first presentations were produced, several CBL lessons using the multimedia files were pilot tested by the thesis writer during a summer program in Hong Kong. The evaluation of these lessons provided valuable information which influenced the development of the following presentations. The Eternal, Synergistic Design Model by Caroline Crawford described in Chapter One was applied during this production stage and will be in the future, as Sun Focus Foundation Limited could design and develop perpetual three-year plans to produce CBL multimedia while collecting ongoing feedback and evaluation from users.

During the six months of the actual project stage in the Philippines, Sunday School teachers were asked to prepare and teach the lessons using the multimedia files. The use of the educational technology during the lessons was observed and evaluated by the thesis writer. Teachers of the participating churches were asked to answer a questionnaire and were interviewed. Findings were incorporated during the production of the remaining presentations (see Chapter Six). These could be further considered by Sun Focus Foundation Limited to produce PowerPoint presentations of other CBL volumes in the future.

D. Schedule

Prior to the production of the multimedia the thesis writer started to select a test group of churches in the Philippines. The test group churches were selected based on the following criteria:

- a) The Philippines are a main market for the English version of the curriculum.
- b) The Philippines is in Asia where the curriculum is utilized the most.
- c) The Filipino churches were willing and able to participate.

- d) The Philippines uses this level of mid-market curriculum rather than the high-end, or on the other hand no curriculum.

The test group churches were introduced to the CBL curriculum and the thesis project. This procedure was conducted in three stages, discussed in Chapter Six. They were initiated on the following dates:

- February 17, 2018 – Initially 15 pastors signed up to be part of the study to verify the thesis product.
- February 24, 2018 – The Sunday School teachers of those congregations received the first CBL Primary volume with the request to implement some lessons until the end of June 2018.
- March 24, 2018 – The Sunday School teachers were provided with the second CBL Primary volume with the request to implement the lessons from July 2018 onwards.

With the permission to use the artwork copyrighted by Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong, the thesis writer started with the production of the multimedia in Hong Kong during the last week of June 2018. Each week she developed one PowerPoint presentation and sent it to the recipients of the test group of churches. She continued this procedure until the last week of December 2018.

On August 22, 2018 the thesis writer returned to the Philippines to continue her studies. She visited the first church on August 26, 2018 for follow-up and observations about the implementation of the CBL curriculum and the PowerPoint presentations. She drafted and collected data through two questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and

observations (Appendices E, F, G, and H) in most of the participating churches until November 25, 2018. The findings are summarized in Chapter Six.

E. Budget

The projected and real cost of the thesis production were:

Table 3. Projected and Real Costs of the Thesis Project

Expenses	Projected Costs	Real Costs	Comments
20 CBL Primary Year 1, January – June 20 CBL Primary Year 1, July – December	USD \$0	USD \$240	The CBL lesson books were not included in the projected budget.
Services provided by a professional design company	USD \$300	USD \$0	The thesis writer did not end up consulting a professional design company.
Media Communication Course	USD \$0	USD \$288	This course was attended by the thesis writer at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in April 2018.
Additional images, sound and music	USD \$100	USD \$0	The thesis writer used free or private images.
Adobe Photoshop Creative Cloud Subscription for four months (September to December 2018)	USD \$0	USD \$65	From June to August, the thesis writer could use the license of Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong.
7 USB flash drives	USD \$20	USD \$32	USB flash drives were given to some pastors for easier access to the files.
Transportation to churches	USD \$20	USD \$53	The thesis writer took a taxi to some of the locations.
Printing of questionnaires, lessons etc.	USD \$0	USD \$2	
Gifts for teachers	USD \$20	USD \$12	Teachers received the CBL VCD.
Total	USD \$480	USD \$692	

The total cost of USD \$692 was supplemented by a research grant of USD \$500 by Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

F. Locations

The PowerPoint presentations relating to this thesis project were produced in the office of Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong during the months of June to August 2018. In August 2018 the thesis writer returned to Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in Taytay, Rizal, Philippines and continued the production on her personal laptop. The production testing of the integration of the digital files into the actual teaching was done by the thesis writer in a church in Hong Kong and by Sunday School teachers of selected churches in Metro Manila and the province of Rizal in the Philippines.

G. Equipment

The equipment to carry out the project of this production thesis had two elements, namely software and hardware. The thesis writer utilized the software programs of Adobe Photoshop CS4, Adobe Photoshop Creative Cloud and Microsoft Office PowerPoint. She utilized the desktop computer of Sun Focus Foundation Limited and later, her personal laptop computer. For the actual testing of the digital files in church settings a desktop computer, laptop, LCD projector, monitor or TV was needed at the venues of the Sunday Schools.

H. Personnel

To facilitate the production of the multimedia files, the personnel of Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong was involved. In addition, the thesis writer benefited from a project with Yayasan Sunfokus Indonesia, a partner of Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong, who had developed biblical lessons and multimedia files for pre-teens during the last five years. While the materials they had created were used as a

resource, the thesis writer did not engage the team in Indonesia due to time factors and language barriers. However, Sun Focus Foundation Limited could consider working together with the ministry in Indonesia concerning multimedia in the future.

I. Strategy

The production project was used to supply churches which had implemented the CBL Primary Year 1 curriculum with PowerPoint presentations as an additional medium during their teaching of children in Sunday School.

The PowerPoint files can be further utilized by Sun Focus Foundation Limited, Hong Kong for distribution to ministry partners in countries where the curriculum had been translated before. These ministries could evaluate the usefulness of the files within the context of their churches and give feedback to the team of Sun Focus Foundation Limited. Based on this feedback and further research by the organization the team of Sun Focus Foundation could develop PowerPoint presentations for the other volumes of the CBL curriculum.

This chapter described the different factors in the development of the thesis product according to the Thesis Handbook of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. Chapter Four summarizes the content, the artwork, the style and treatment of the material used, and presents the storyboard of each PowerPoint presentation.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCEPT AND SUMMARY OF THE PRODUCTION

This chapter presents the content of the 26 CBL lessons used for this production, the artwork which was at the disposal of the thesis writer, the approach and procedure during the production, and the storyboard of the 26 PowerPoint presentations which were created by the writer during the months of July to December 2018.

A. Synopsis of the Project Content

For this production project the CBL volume of Primary Year 1, July to December was in the scope. The content of this volume is a selection of biblical narratives taken from Genesis 12 to 49. The 26 lessons, numbered 27-52, of this volume are grouped in five units under the year's theme "The Family of God." The biblical content in the units is arranged chronologically according to the narrative in the book of Genesis except for the last unit which consists of four lessons around the birth of Christ. The five units and 26 lessons are titled:

Abraham and His Family

27. Abraham Receives God's Promise
28. Abraham and Lot Go Separate Ways
29. Abraham and Sarah Find it Hard to Wait
30. Abraham and Sarah Laugh
31. Abraham Loves God More than Isaac

Isaac and His Family

32. Isaac Marries Rebekah
33. Isaac and Rebekah's Children
34. Isaac Loves Peace

35. Isaac Blesses Jacob

Jacob and His Family

36. God Speaks to Jacob

37. Jacob in Laban's Home

38. Jacob Leaves Laban's Home

39. Jacob Receives a New Name

40. Jacob is Reconciled with Esau

41. Jacob Worships at Bethel

Joseph the Son of Jacob

42. Joseph is Sold to Egypt

43. God is with Joseph in Egypt

44. Joseph Becomes Pharaoh's Assistant

45. Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt

46. Joseph Forgives His Brothers

47. Jacob and His Family Move to Egypt

48. Jacob Blesses His Sons and Grandsons

The Savior is born

49. Jesus is Born in Bethlehem

50. The Shepherds Visit Jesus

51. The Wise Men Present Gifts to Jesus

52. Who Can Celebrate Christmas?

Each lesson in the CBL Primary book includes the fully narrated Bible story according to the cognitive development of primary children. The slides of the PowerPoint presentations were created based on these narratives. The title of the lesson was mostly included, except when the lesson title potentially gave away the climax of the Bible story, for example "Joseph is sold to Egypt." The Bible references as well as the memory verses

of this volume are outlined in Appendix A. The content analysis of Genesis 12-49 is included in Appendix B. The narrated Bible stories of the 26 CBL lessons are included in Appendix C.

B. Artwork

Each volume of the Creative Bible Lessons curriculum is enhanced by age appropriate visual aids. As the curriculum was originally developed in Indonesia, mainly artists from Indonesia contributed pictures and figures. The authors and their successors continued to update and replace pictures so that a broad variety of different styles of artwork evolved from a number of artists. All artwork is original and owned by Sun Focus Foundation Limited. The pictures and figures are arranged on visual aid sheets and need to be cut and prepared by the Sunday School teachers.

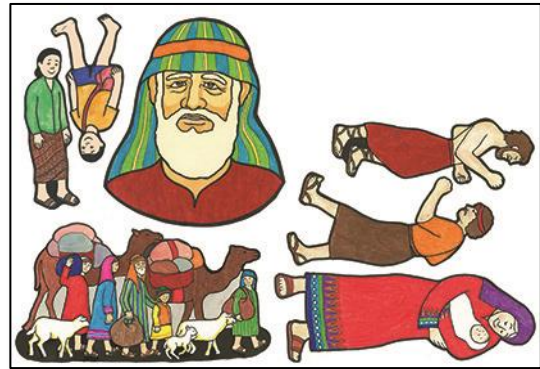
The visual aids provided by the publisher for this volume are:

1. Twelve single figures which are Abraham (two figures), Sarah (two figures), Lot, the crowd traveling, two shepherds fighting, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob.
2. Four single pictures which show Hagar in the desert, Abraham and Isaac walking up Mount Moriah, Isaac blessing Jacob, and Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph.
3. Nine silhouette figures for Lesson 32 “Isaac marries Rebekah.”
4. Six pictures for the unit “Jacob and His Family.”
5. Six stencil patterns for a children’s activity and two figures for a memory verse competition. These were not used for the production.
6. Thirty-one pictures for the unit “Joseph, the Son of Jacob.”
7. One picture illustrating the Nativity scene.
8. Two figures illustrating the story of a Javanese village boy for Lesson 52.

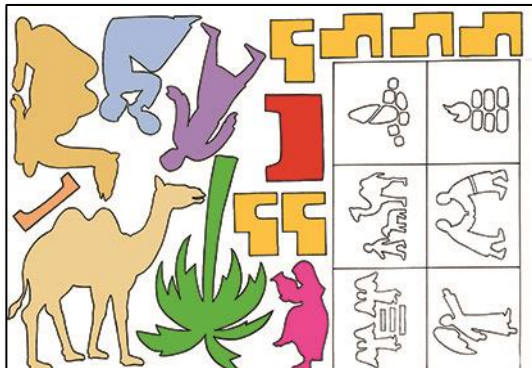
These figures and pictures were at the thesis writer's disposal for creating multimedia. In the past Sun Focus Foundation Limited had had the original artwork scanned (mostly Adobe Photoshop files) for the printing of the visual aid sheets to accompany the CBL Primary Year 1, July to December lesson book. They are as follows:



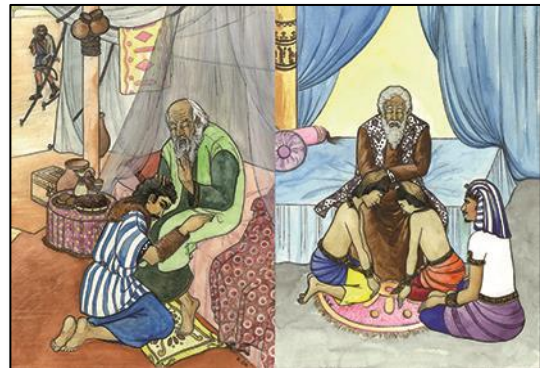
Sheet 1. Figures for the Units *Abraham and His Family* and *Isaac and His Family*



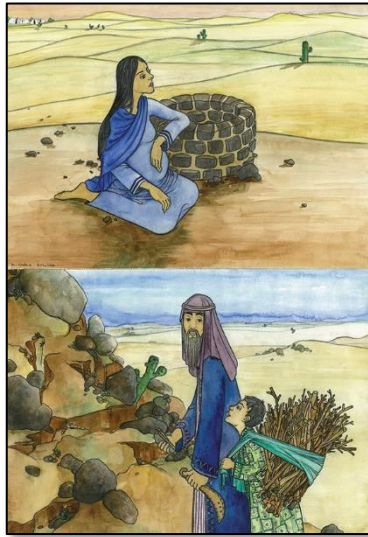
Sheet 2. Figures for the Unit *Abraham and His Family* and Lesson 52



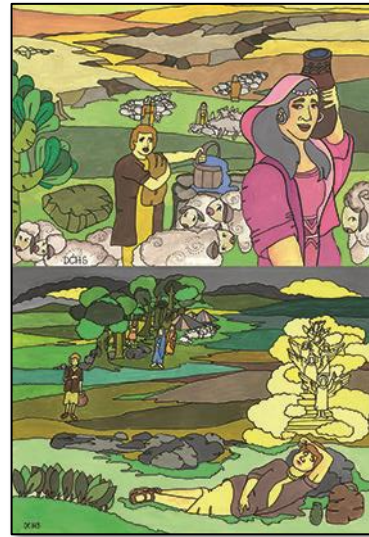
Sheet 3. Silhouette Figures for Lesson 32



Sheet 4. Pictures for Lessons 35 and 48



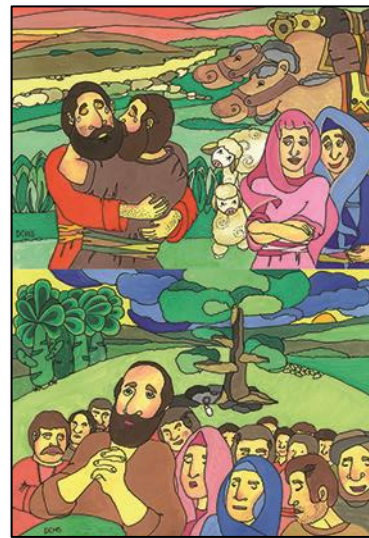
Sheet 5. Pictures for Lessons 29 and 31



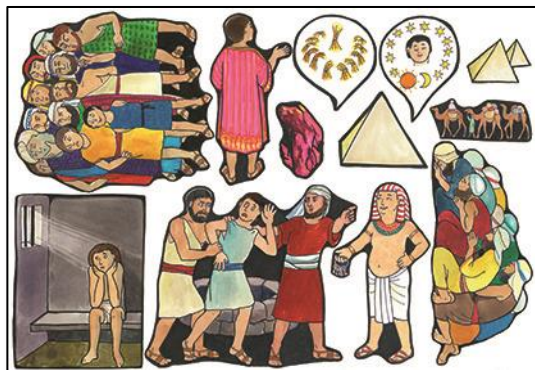
Sheet 6. Pictures for Lessons 36 and 37



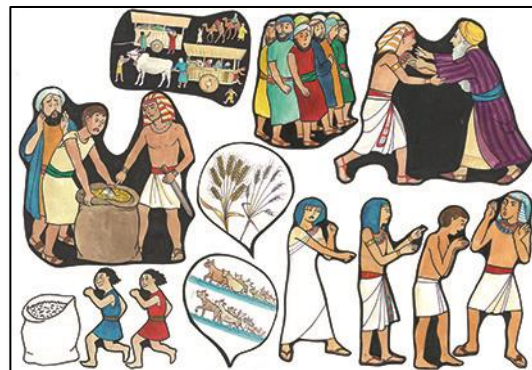
Sheet 7. Pictures for Lessons 38 and 39



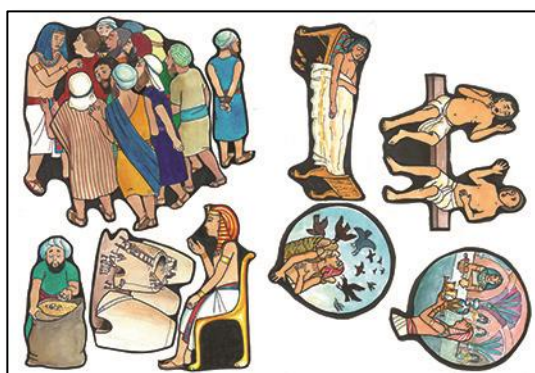
Sheet 8. Pictures for Lessons 40 and 41



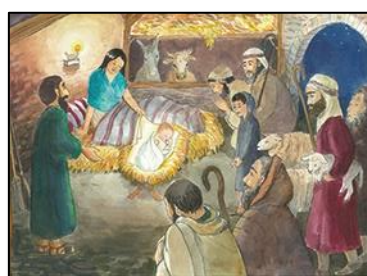
Sheet 9. Figures A for the Unit *Joseph the Son of Jacob*



Sheet 10. Figures B for the Unit *Joseph the Son of Jacob*



Sheet 11. Figures C for the Unit *Joseph the Son of Jacob*



Sheet 12. Picture for Lesson 50

The thesis writer was aware of the rich artwork in other CBL volumes, however she did not plan to utilize it. She wanted the PowerPoint presentations to be conform with the illustrations provided in the lessons of the CBL Primary Year 1, July to December book.

C. Style and Treatment

The production project was tailored for the implementation of the lessons of the above mentioned CBL volume in a children's church. Since story-telling takes such an important part within religious communities in general (see Chapter Two) and is a method used in most cultures, the thesis writer did not have a specific context in mind while developing the PowerPoint presentations. However, she aimed to keep the files

consistent with the simple and clear outline of the lessons and, therefore, not overload the slides with visual elements. The PowerPoint presentations were saved as and arranged according to the units so that each folder would consist of four to seven files. Every PowerPoint presentation has a title slide mentioning the unit title and the lesson title or Bible reference, so that the files can be matched easily with the appropriate lesson. The design of the title slides was mostly kept consistent within a unit. Smaller changes were made to pique the children's curiosity for the Bible story. The title slide includes a picture of the main character of the unit or story.

The body of the presentations were composed of the pictures and figures included in the CBL visual aids, making use of the artwork of one whole unit. Pictures and figures of previous and successive lessons were included to enrich the scenes and to assist the teacher review preceding Bible stories in line with the suggestions in the lessons. The last slide of each presentation includes the copyright details and a statement limiting the production to the usage within the selected churches in the Philippines.

Following the Eternal Synergistic Design Model introduced in Chapter One, the thesis writer incorporated the feedback and evaluation of the users into the PowerPoint presentations. She kept the technological assumptions and specifications in mind, as outlined in Chapters Two and Three. The file size was kept as small as possible to ease the download for those recipients with limited or slow access to the internet. Therefore, each presentation consists of a total of four to nine slides to keep the size of the files below ten megabytes.

This production project is unique in a way that the PowerPoint presentations illustrate the Bible story in accordance with the narration in the CBL lessons. Previous to

this production the thesis writer had downloaded resources available on the internet. However, such presentations had often not fit the outlined narration in the CBL lesson. The sequence of slides had to be rearranged or slides from other presentations had to be added. Other multimedia available on websites were too short or designed for a different age group. Thus, the thesis writer was not satisfied when she utilized them in Sunday School.

D. Storyboard of CBL Primary Year 1 Lessons 27-52

Lesson 27: Abraham Receives God's Promise



Lesson 28: Abraham and Lot Go Separate Aays



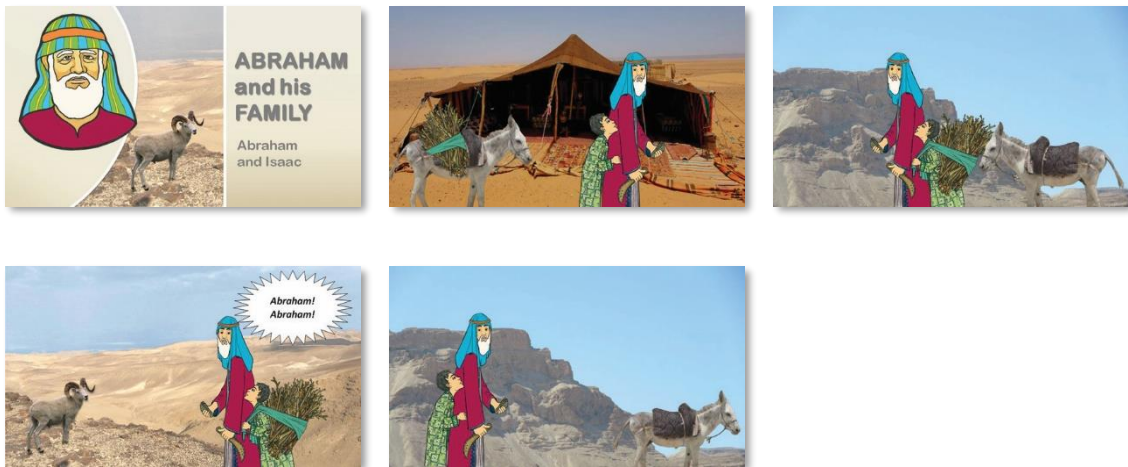
Lesson 29: Abraham and Sarah Find it Hard to Wait



Lesson 30: Abraham and Sarah Laugh



Lesson 31: Abraham Loves God More than Isaac



Lesson 32: Isaac Marries Rebekah



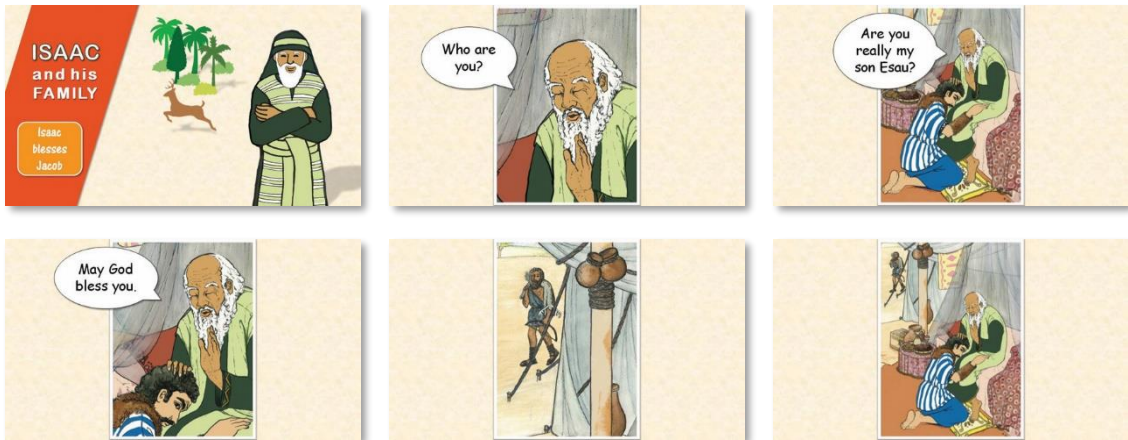
Lesson 33: Isaac and Rebekah's Children



Lesson 34: Isaac Loves Peace



Lesson 35: Isaac Blesses Jacob

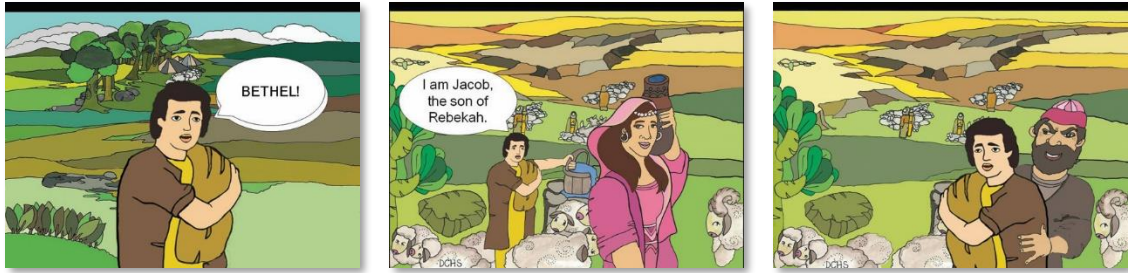


Lesson 36: God Speaks to Jacob



Lesson 37: Jacob in Laban's Home





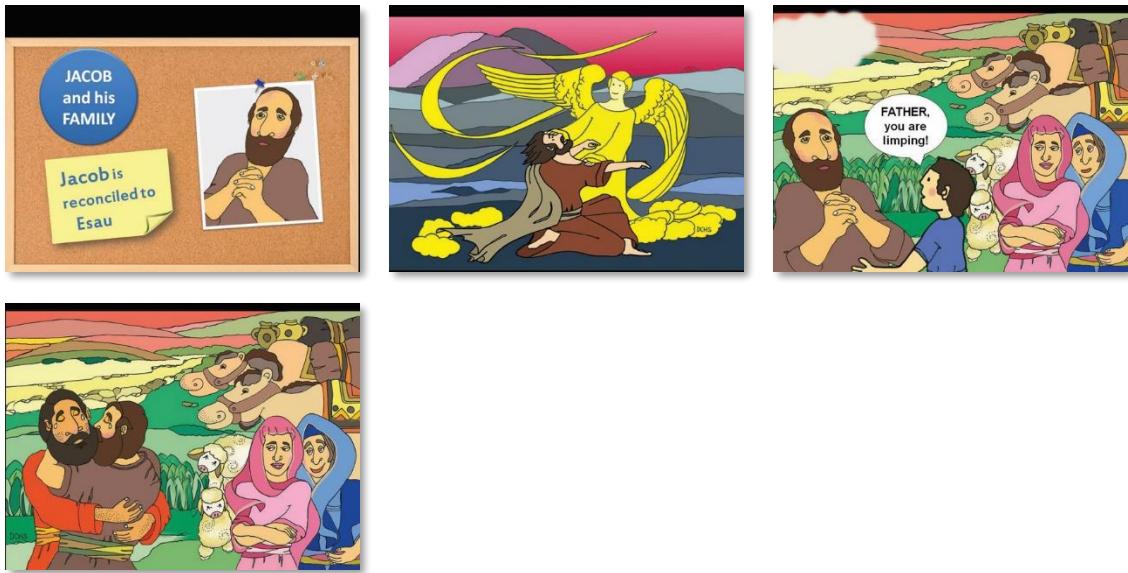
Lesson 38: Jacob Leaves Laban's Home



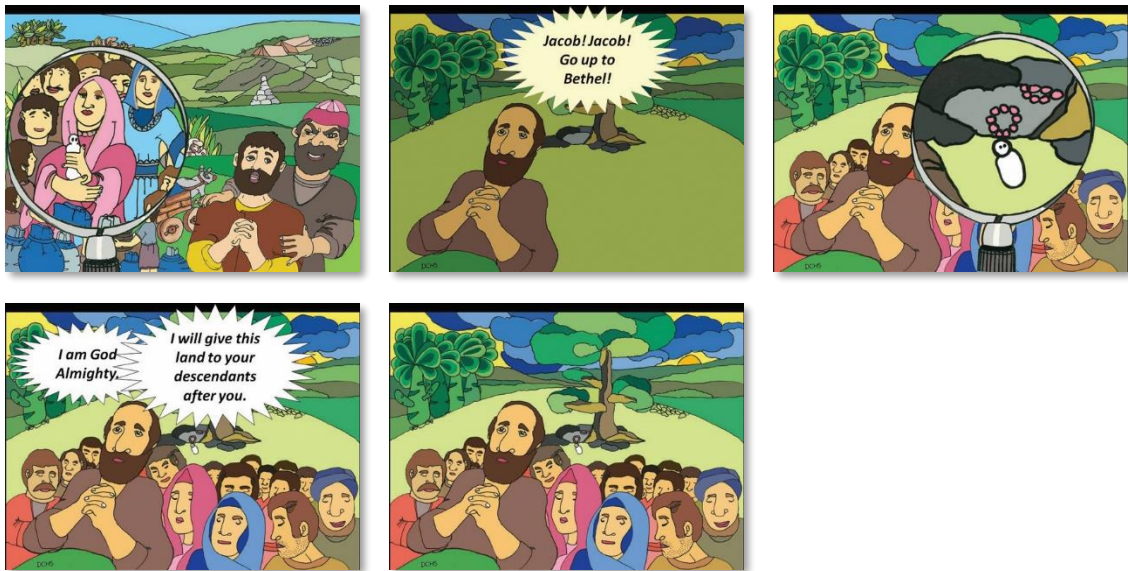
Lesson 39: Jacob Receives a New Name



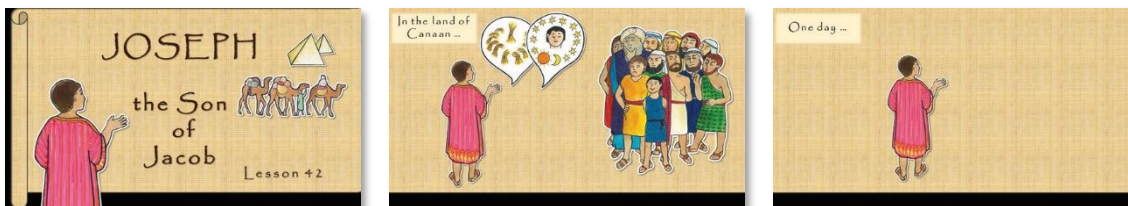
Lesson 40: Jacob is Reconciled with Esau

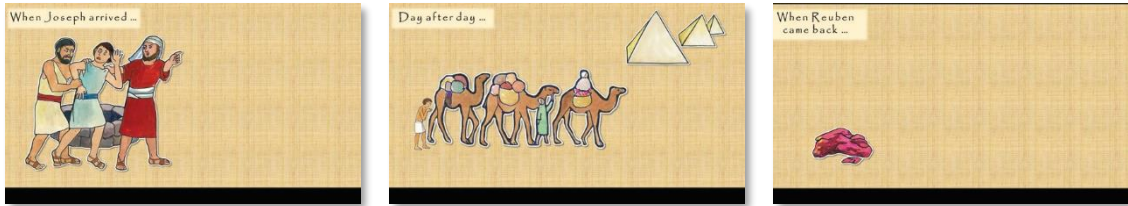


Lesson 41: Jacob Worships at Bethel

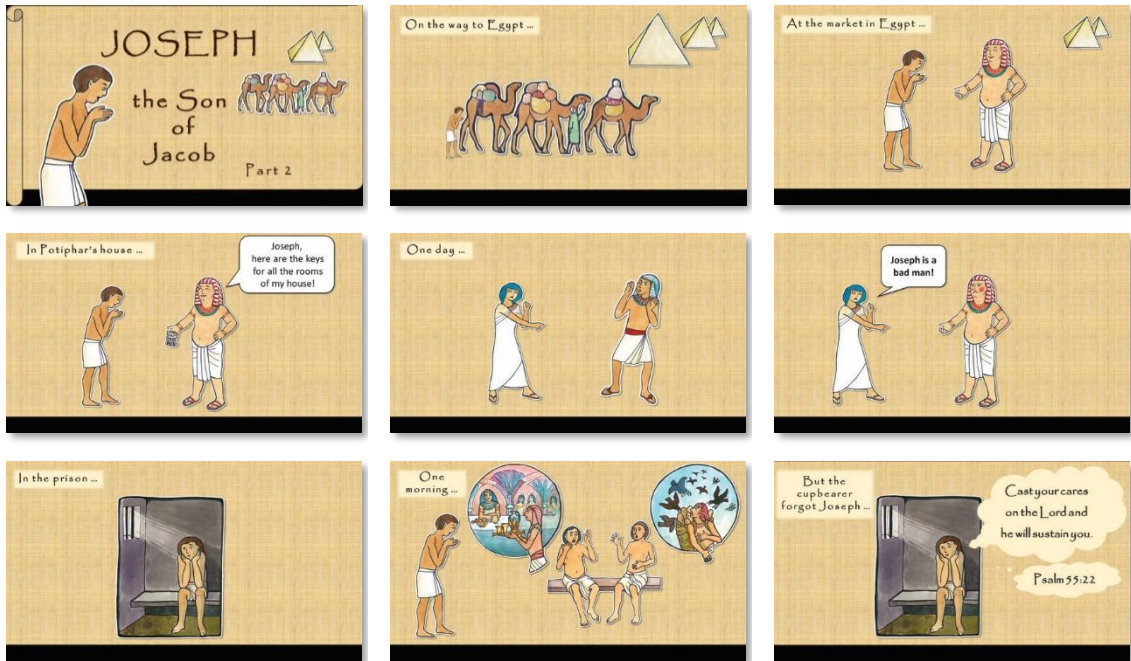


Lesson 42: Joseph is Sold to Egypt

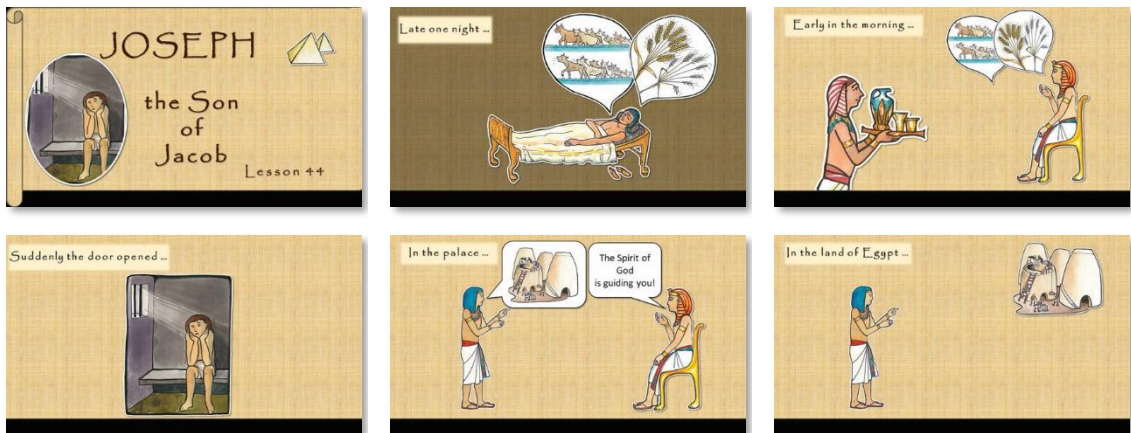




Lesson 43: God is with Joseph in Egypt



Lesson 44: Joseph Becomes Pharaoh's Assistant

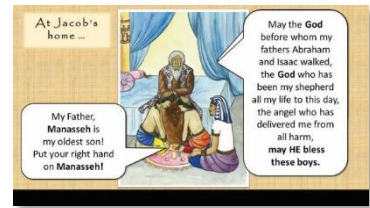
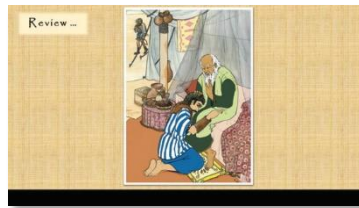
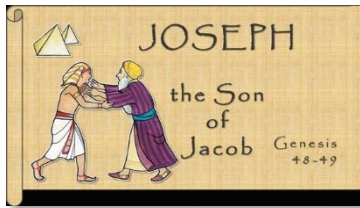


Lesson 45: Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt

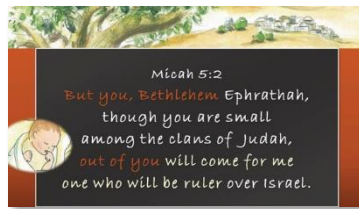
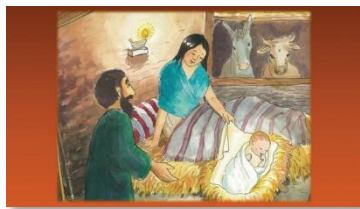
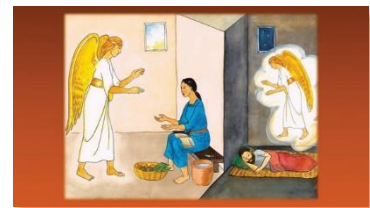
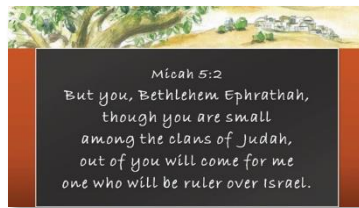
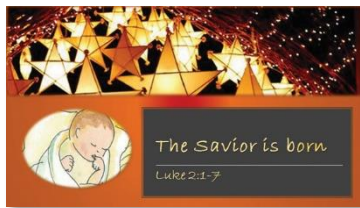
Lesson 46: Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Lesson 47: Jacob and His Family Move to Egypt

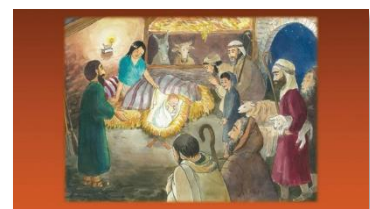
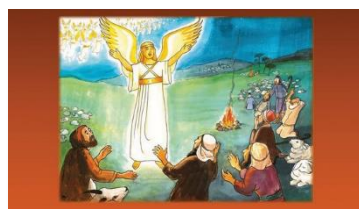
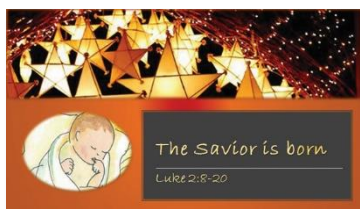
Lesson 48: Jacob Blesses His Sons and Grandsons



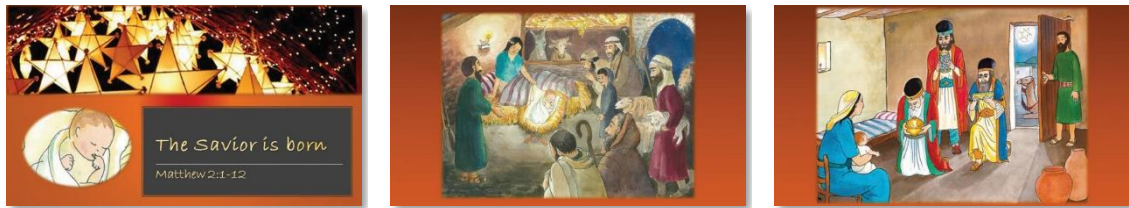
Lesson 49: Jesus is Born in Bethlehem



Lesson 50: The Shepherds Visit Jesus



Lesson 51: The Wise Men Present Gifts to Jesus



Lesson 52: Who Can Celebrate Christmas?



This chapter presented the content and the artwork of the 26 CBL lessons of Primary Year 1, July to December which were the raw materials for the product of this thesis. It also described the course of action during the production based on the narratives in the chosen CBL volume. Finally, the slides for each of the 26 PowerPoint presentations were included. In Chapter Five the comments and recommendations of the panelists are summarized.

CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT BY THE PANELISTS

According to the Thesis Handbook of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary this chapter is based on the comments and suggestions by the panelists who evaluated the project. They looked at the project from different points of view, including theology, religious education, Christian communication, aesthetics and technical features. The production thesis evaluation form included in the Thesis Handbook lists four areas of project evaluation which are strengths, weaknesses, content/message, and areas of improvement. The panelists' comments were included here after the final defense.

On February 22, 2019 the defense committee members highlighted that the CBL curriculum shows validity since the lessons themselves have been used successfully without the PowerPoints. Dr. F. Cunningham added that "Story telling is a "tried and true" method that fits the Bible itself". The effort put in making the PowerPoint presentations was commended. It was deemed that the original artwork fitted naturally into the PowerPoint presentations. The slides were described as "bright and colorful", the figures and pictures "realistic and not like cartoons" and "very clear and suited for the target audience". Dr. D. Behr acknowledged the presentations for the "ease of use" and that they could be edited by the teachers. Dr. C. Bestre believed that "multimedia captures more attention than still pictures". Dr. C. Armstrong wrote, that the project "provides an additional tool to the teacher. But still the teacher is in control and is in the foreground. The PowerPoint supplement does not overtake the medium of the live person who is telling the story".

Concerning the weaknesses of the project, three panelists felt that the original artwork, which limited the number of slides, was insufficient in some places and not enough for enhanced presentations. In addition, Dr. F. Cunningham commented, “I wonder if the style of the art is appealing enough to children these days. They may want something more sophisticated and polished.” Dr. N. Petallar remarked on the different looks of Jacob as he was drawn by several artists. She felt that the look of figures and pictures should be consistent. Dr. D. Behr pointed out that the silhouette figures used in Lesson 32 did not match the style of the other presentations within the unit. Another area of concern was that teachers would need more time for their preparation. Dr. F. Cunningham noted, “The teachers will have to make themselves familiar with both the stories and the PowerPoints so that they know what part of the story to tell with each slide” and Dr. C. Bestre suspected that the teachers “rely on the PowerPoint to tell the story or neglect it. That may cause the changing of slides not in consistency with the biblical story”. Dr. C. Armstrong, the thesis writer’s adviser, pointed out, that “there were not enough actual users and not enough tangible feedback from teachers in order to produce the very best, finished product”.

The content of the project was called good and biblical. Dr. D. Behr and Dr. C. Armstrong emphasized that “Based on some of the feedback, the “bubbles” were engaging and added to the learning experience”. Dr. N. Petallar was fond of the PowerPoint presentation for Lesson 52 due to its Philippine scenery in the background.

Dr. D. Behr recommended to add more artwork and Dr. F. Cunningham wrote, “There does not seem to be a need to only use the figures cut from the previously printed lessons.” In the same way Dr. C. Bestre suggested to add “more slides to depict the

sequence of the stories.” Dr. N. Petallar thought the reference of the scripture should be included “so children are aware that this story is taken from the Bible.” Dr. C. Armstrong noted, that “the Jacob unit needs some further development. Some of the pictures in that unit may need to be replaced.” He recommended, “the use of a professional designer before final marketing could be helpful for adding finishing touches”. Finally, Dr. F. Cunningham encouraged the thesis writer to “continue to improve the style of the PowerPoints.”

In this chapter the thesis writer summarized the evaluation of the panelists’ comments and suggestions. They are especially valuable with regard to the ongoing design and development according to the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model introduced in Chapter One. Chapter Six describes the thesis writer’s approach and procedure to validate the thesis product in two different contexts and the conclusions she drew from the findings. Ultimately, the thesis writer compiled some recommendations which emerged from this thesis project.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The validation of the product of this thesis project was carried out in two phases. The first phase was the trial of the PowerPoint presentations by the thesis writer in Hong Kong. The second phase was the fieldwork for this study in the Philippines. This second study proceeded through three stages, namely (1) the implementation of the CBL Primary Year 1 curriculum, (2) the implementation of the CBL PowerPoint presentations, and (3) the ongoing evaluation based on the feedback from the test group of churches. The feedback was given during the period of designing and developing the multimedia according to the Eternal Synergistic Design Model introduced in Chapter One.

There were three components for the means for the ongoing evaluation of the product and its use by the test group. They were two questionnaires, Sunday School class observations and semi-structured interviews as the triangulation of qualitative methods is commonly used for testing the validity in research (Merriam 2016, 204). The observation list for site visits, the semi-structured interview questions, and the two questionnaires are included in the Appendices.

A. Summary of Findings

In this section the findings are summarized in four categories. They are the findings by the thesis writer in Hong Kong, the adaptation of the CBL curriculum in churches in the Philippines, the suggestions and comments by Sunday School teachers, and the findings concerning the technical features of local Sunday Schools as well as teacher's technology acceptance.

Findings by the Thesis Writer

Phase one, the preliminary evaluation of the CBL PowerPoint presentations by the thesis writer, was conducted in Hong Kong on five consecutive Sundays, July 8, 15, 22, 29 and August 5, 2018. During this period the thesis writer taught the five lessons of the CBL unit “Abraham and His Family” to a group of Chinese Primary children aged six to seven years old. The teaching took place at one of the classrooms in the *Assembly of God Hebron Secondary School* in Hong Kong. The venue was professionally equipped with a built-in desktop computer, an overhead LCD projector, a screen which could be pulled down over the blackboard, and two speakers attached to the front wall. The use of the PowerPoint presentations was, therefore, appropriate and a natural medium of instruction for the children during the story telling. The thesis writer gained valuable insight and observed the following:

First, the projected size of the picture by the LCD projector was fixed and designed for a class consisting of forty students. For a small group of seven to twelve children the size of the image projected could have been significantly smaller. However, seating the children at the back of the classroom would have distanced the teacher as the storyteller either from the students or from the pictures. So, the thesis writer decided to seat the children in front of the screen, accepting that the image displayed was oversized according to Getz’s standards outlined in Chapter Two. She concluded that for a small group like this, a portable projector with which the size of the image can be adjusted manually, would have been preferable.

Second, the computer together with the keyboard and monitor was installed in a fixed desk container between the teacher’s desk and the window. The container was

about two meters away from the screen. In order to stay close to the group of children who were sitting in a circle in front of the screen, it was essential for the thesis writer to use her wireless presenter to click through the slides while telling the Bible story.

Third, it was disappointing for the thesis writer that the LCD projector had less illuminating power compared to the desktop screen in her office which she had used to develop the presentations. Thus, the colors were not as brilliant and appealing as the thesis writer had expected.

Fourth, the thesis writer, as the storyteller, found it distracting if there were too many 2D animations to click at any given time. She, therefore, reduced the necessary clicks in the following PowerPoint presentations and grouped animations more often which is an option as part of the software.

Fifth, when the narrative was recorded and the background music was added, it was observed that the children were less attentive compared to the previous lessons when she had told the story herself. She concluded that this occurred because the children could hear the teacher's voice, but facial expressions, eye contact and the story teller's body movements and gestures were missing due to the recording. So, the presentation of the Bible story was almost static except of the animation of the figures and slides of the PowerPoint presentation. No interaction could be observed, the children were passive listeners. This affirmed the thesis writer of the importance of the "live" teacher as story teller who can connect directly and spontaneously with the students. The reduced attention of the students was probably also caused because the narration was in English which was the second or even third language of the students after Cantonese and Mandarin. The recorded narrative was more difficult to understand for them compared to

the teacher's actual narration because the pace and the word choice could not be adjusted to the facial feedback of the children. In addition, the selection of the background music and the adjustment of its volume to the narration had been time-consuming. Therefore, the thesis writer dismissed adding recorded narration and music.

Sixth, after teaching Lesson 29 the thesis writer's assistant teacher commented that the PowerPoint presentations would be more interesting for the students if the slides showed children and animals. The thesis writer therefore added the figure of Ishmael when creating the PowerPoint for Lesson 30, taken from a CBL Kindergarten volume, and included more pictures of animals during the production of the following presentations. This concludes the findings of phase one, the thesis writer's research in Hong Kong.

Adaptation of the CBL Curriculum in Churches in the Philippines

The second phase of the research towards the thesis product was conducted in the Philippines. It was designed to provide the evaluation and feedback components for following the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model introduced in Chapter One. The second phase had three stages.

At the beginning of February 2018 an initial contact was established by email to inform the District Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, Metro Manila District, about the availability of free Sunday School material. This offer was based on the condition that the congregations would be part of the study. On February 17, 2018 the District Superintendent informed pastors about this opportunity during the Nazarene Missions International meeting of the Metro Manila District and fifteen pastors signed up.

The researcher anticipated that Sunday Schools would need time to implement a new curriculum. Therefore, the implementation of the CBL Primary Year 1, July to December lessons and PowerPoint presentations was to be in two steps.

The first step was to be the implementation of just ten lessons of the CBL Primary Year 1, January to June lesson book. This volume precedes the volume which was selected for this thesis (Primary Year 1, July to December). No PowerPoint presentations were provided for these lessons, but the teachers were supposed to use the printed visual aids according to the instructions given in the teacher's manual. In this way the test group would become familiar with the format of CBL lessons.

On February 24, 2018 during a Sunday School leader and teacher's meeting of the Church of the Nazarene the thesis writer was given the opportunity to explain her research project and introduce the CBL curriculum briefly. She requested the recipients to implement at least ten lessons of their choice out of 26 lessons within the following 18 weeks. She then distributed the CBL sets of Primary Year 1, January to June to representatives of those churches whose pastors had signed up for the research project.

The second step was now to implement the lessons of CBL Primary Year 1, July to December together with the PowerPoint presentations which are the object of this study. To guarantee the timely distribution of this second CBL set to the respective congregations, the researcher supplied hard copies of the CBL lesson book and the accompanying visual aids on March 24, 2018 during another meeting of Sunday School leaders and teachers. She requested their support for the research project by implementing the lessons during the second half of the year and announced the production and dissemination of the PowerPoint files for a later point. A suggested

schedule outlining each Sunday's lesson for July to December 2018 was included in each CBL set (Appendix I). The thesis writer offered training concerning the use of the curriculum and distributed the CBL sets to a total of 18 churches. On April 11, 2018 she added a church of the Assemblies of God in Mindanao, Philippines, in her research project. She provided the representative whom she had met during a Media Communication Course with the hard copies. Another congregation of the Church of the Nazarene received the material and the PowerPoint files saved on a USB flash drive on September 24, putting the plenary number of churches in the test group to twenty. There was no response concerning the offer of teacher training.

In the following weeks the thesis writer was able to observe three Sunday School classes and follow up on the implementation of the CBL curriculum in three more churches. A pastor of one of the participating churches who met some of the pastors frequently accepted the task of a field assistant during the following months while the researcher was out of the country to remind them about the curriculum implementation.

A list of the number and names of the participating churches including the dates of observation of Sunday School classes and the status of implementation as of December 7, 2018 can be found in Appendix D.

On June 25, 2018 the second stage started when the thesis writer sent PowerPoint presentations illustrating the Bible stories of CBL Primary Year 1, July to December by email attachments to pastors and Sunday School leaders on a weekly basis. However, three churches could not be supplied electronically as the thesis writer had not received an email address of those pastors or Sunday School leaders (Churches Number 10, 13, 15).

During the month of August and September 2018 the thesis writer followed up with the test group of churches regarding the implementation of the Primary volume and the usage of the PowerPoint presentations. She used an initial and a second questionnaire, visitations of congregations, phone calls and texts, emails as well as personal conversations with pastors and Sunday School teachers.

As of October 25, 2018, the CBL lessons and PowerPoint presentations were used in only four congregations on a weekly basis. One church had fully implemented the CBL Primary Year 1 July to December using the printed visual aids without the PowerPoint presentations. The pastor of another church had confirmed the implementation however the geographical distance posed a challenge. The writer opted out of making a site visit. Two Sunday School leaders told the researcher that some CBL lessons had been taught using the printed pictures along with other Sunday School materials, but not all. Teachers of another church used a different CBL volume (Primary Year 2) in their Sunday School which the pastor had purchased from the thesis writer in 2016. One church used the CBL Lessons for an outreach program among children during which the technology was not available. The pastor and children's minister of two other churches replied that their Sunday Schools used a different teaching material. Two other churches temporarily did not have a Sunday School class due to the relocation of the worship service venue. The researcher was unable to collect data from six churches due to no responses to text messages and telephone calls as of October 25, 2018. The following table illustrates the results:

Table 4. Implementation of the CBL Curriculum in selected Churches in the Philippines

Result of the implementation of the CBL lessons and PowerPoint presentations until November 12, 2018 in 20 selected congregations	Number of congregations
CBL Primary Year 1 July to December PowerPoint Presentations implemented	3
CBL Primary Year 1 Lessons implemented and printed visual aids used	5
Some CBL Lessons and visual aids used but mainly using other material	2
CBL Primary Year 2 volume implemented	1
CBL lessons used for outreach program	1
Other Sunday School material in use	2
Others:	
a. No responses	2
b. No Sunday School	2
c. Non-implementation	2
Total	20

These findings were sobering for the researcher. She reasoned that several factors had contributed to the lack in implementing the CBL lessons and the PowerPoint presentations. First, the thesis writer initially was unfamiliar with the organizational structure of the Church of the Nazarene of the Metro Manila District in the Philippines and had connections to only three pastors and one Sunday School leader of the Church of the Nazarene. One Metro Manila church pastor commented in an email in September 2018, “In our context, you can't just send any materials even if it is free and expect us to use it. You need to have a personal connection with the churches.” The thesis writer had been aware of the importance of personal contacts in the Philippines’ collectivistic

culture. However, the pastors had signed up for the study and she therefore had hoped that they would comply with her request to pass on the PowerPoint files to the Sunday school leaders or teachers. Those leaders and teachers had personally met her when she introduced and explained the research project during two meetings in February and March 2018. Some other pastors had also met her as she had introduced the CBL curriculum during the first quarter of 2018. In addition, the researcher had requested a local pastor to be her field advisor and follow-up with some pastors during her absence from May to August 2018.

Second, the media of communication in the Philippines are mainly Facebook, text messages, Messenger and Instagram. The use of email as a means of communication is therefore secondary for local pastors, Sunday School leaders and teachers. Only two respondents replied to the weekly emails to which the CBL PowerPoint presentations were attached.

Third, the researcher learned that Sunday School leaders and teachers were hesitant to change to a new curriculum when they had an educational material already implemented in their children's ministry.

Fourth, an initial teacher training on how to use the CBL curriculum would have helped to give the recipients of these CBL volumes a better understanding on how to use them. A pastor mentioned, "We need instructions on how to use it." The researcher had offered trainings, but it was not taken advantage of as during March and April 2018 the congregations of the Church of the Nazarene were occupied with their Vacation Bible School programs. On July 20, 2018 the researcher contacted one of the Sunday School leaders of the Metro Manila District. The person replied to this email, but not to the

second email of the thesis writer concerning a suitable date. However, she met some of the pastors and Sunday School teachers on the compound of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary during September to December 2018. She used these opportunities to explain the project, the lesson outlines and the use of the multimedia on an individual basis. One pastor was responsive, but a two-hour training for three churches in the province of Rizal came about only on November 18, 2018.

Nevertheless, the congregations had ample time (February 24 to August 26, 2018) to implement at least some units of the two CBL Primary volumes ahead of the researcher's observations and interviews. The researcher had anticipated that even without a teacher training the Sunday School teachers would have been able to use the lessons as they are arranged chronologically, and the outlines are clear. One teacher even described them with the term "user-friendly."

However, as a delimiting factor it should be pointed out that the Philippines in itself is a unique context. Some of the issues the researcher faced, she would not be faced elsewhere where LCD projectors are more common in Sunday School classes.

Suggestions and Comments by Sunday School Teachers

This section reports on the feedback component of the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model described in Chapter One that was being utilized to develop this product.

On September 3, 2018 one Sunday School teacher responded to the weekly PowerPoint presentations sent by email and replied, "About the PowerPoint, it is very catchy for kids and they listen to the lesson very well" and "It gives us many ideas about teaching kids." Her concern was, however, that the presentations were too short, therefore she requested to receive the PowerPoint files as presentations (*.pptx) versus PowerPoint

files as show (*.ppsx) so that she could edit the files by adding details. The researcher decided to comply with this request, asking the recipients of the files to respect the copyright of the product and amend and use the files within their churches only.

Thereupon, the respondent replied on September 10, 2018, “I'm very satisfied this time because it's a raw file, I can change or add some details the way I like. Some of these are changing the language from English to Tagalog, adding the reference verse and memory verse ...”. Her amended PowerPoint presentation included not only those features, but she had enhanced the presentation by including a zoom animation.

When the thesis writer observed the teaching of the before mentioned respondent at her church on October 21, 2018, she noticed that the teacher had enlarged the memory verse and put in an additional slide so that the verse was bigger and therefore easier for the children to read. When asked why she had not changed it to Tagalog, the respondent replied, “The Tagalog is too deep. The kids won't understand. So, we teach them in English and explain it to them.” When asked about the advantages of using PowerPoint presentations she commented, “It lessens our time of preparation. We can open and see the lesson and the PowerPoint on our phones, so we can see it anywhere.” Concerning the children, the teachers mentioned, “Children love animations, they love moving objects, they really enjoy it. Because of this they can easily retell the story the next Sunday. They are enjoying how the figures are coming and going.” Regarding the disadvantages of the presentations, the assistant teacher said that some parts of the story were not included. She continued, “they cannot be used when there is a power shut-down because we don't have a generator in the church.” When asked about possible improvements, they wished more slides and more pictures, however they expressed that they were satisfied with the

PowerPoint presentations. The researcher agreed as she was aware that some presentations were illustrating only a few scenes of the Bible story; however she was limited to the original artwork of the CBL curriculum.

Another Sunday School teacher responded in a similar way during an interview conducted on September 30, 2018. She wished the files to consist of more slides illustrating the story step by step and the memory verse to be included at the beginning and the end. In addition, she requested a “code.” The researcher asked what she meant by “code” and she explained it as a summary or “take-away” of the lesson. The researcher, therefore, decided to include one or two slides with a simple animated memory verse. The request for including the memory verse twice as well as a “code” was declined because the researcher wanted the PowerPoint presentations to conform to the CBL lesson outline. In addition, the researcher dismissed such an amendment and left it up to the teacher as “The teacher is the final curriculum” (Armstrong 2018, 28).

One Sunday School teacher expressed satisfaction concerning the PowerPoint presentation, “I think it is good, putting some elements into two or three slides. It is not too heavy, but informative. It’s suitable for kids because the title is short and simple. The slides are full of figures and pictures and capture the children’s attention. It is also not too much to read.” This confirmed the researcher in limiting the PowerPoint presentations to the illustration of the Bible stories (see Chapter One, Scope and Delimitations) and that too much text would distract the children from listening to the teacher’s narration.

When asked about the advantages of using PowerPoint presentations while telling the Bible story he replied: “The children are not just listening, but they can see the characters ... For the teacher it is easy to explain and tell the story.” Concerning the

disadvantages, he commented, “The slides are limiting the interaction with the students. Some scenes are not included in the slides. Besides that, the teacher will rely on the slides, but it is more important to engage with the students.” The thesis writer understood, that on one side the teacher felt that the multimedia eased his teaching. However, on the other side the teacher was tempted to depend on the scenes projected and lose the interaction with the students during the narration. Indeed, the researcher had observed that the teacher heavily depended on the slides, possibly due to lack of preparation.

Another teacher made a similar comment when asked about the advantages. She mentioned that “It is easy to prepare, no need to prepare visual aids, the pictures are colorful, and the teacher only needs to click.” Concerning the disadvantages, she commented, “The children focus only on the screen, they are not listening, but technology, cellphones, internet, laptop, is now so common, even eight-years-old kids have a Facebook account.”

In summary the comments of the respondents revealed that the PowerPoint presentations lessened their time of preparation and that they felt that the children enjoyed the digital presentation of the story. Furthermore, the teachers were also aware of the negative implications of using multimedia which they defined as lesser student engagement and the teacher’s dependence on the PowerPoint slides.

*Technical Features of Local Sunday Schools
and Teacher’s Technology Acceptance*

The thesis writer had met ideal technical conditions when she trialed the PowerPoint presentations in Hong Kong. She anticipated that Sunday School teachers in the Philippines would face more challenging technical conditions. The Sunday School

classroom of Church No. 3 was equipped with a 32-inch monitor installed above the blackboard about two meters high. This was too high according to Getz's standards (Chapter Two). The monitor was connected to a laptop which was placed on top of a pile of books under the blackboard facing the students instead of the teacher. She was confident in operating the technology, showing some music clips before opening the CBL PowerPoint presentation. On one occasion the flow of the story telling was interrupted as the teacher waited for the animation to pass, and periodically she turned her back to the students to press the enter key of the laptop's keyboard to forward the slides. However, the display of the CBL PowerPoint presentation on the monitor was big enough, sharp and the colors bright. When some bubbles appeared, the older students sitting at the back of the classroom immediately read the words aloud. This showed that the students' attention had been captivated by the slides as they connected and responded to the presentation in a positive way. It also confirmed that the font used in the presentation was big enough even for those children sitting in the back row.

The classroom of Church No. 8 was equipped with a desktop computer and an LCD projector affixed to the ceiling. However, the teachers preferred to use the Sunday School leader's new laptop. When the teacher opened the PowerPoint presentation, he chose the mode of PowerPoint Show, so the first slide appeared immediately. Then, he had the children read the unit title (Jacob and His Family) as well as the lesson title (Jacob in Laban's House). While telling the Bible story one of the assistant teachers operated the slides. The projection to the wall appeared clear and bright. The teachers seemed to have no difficulties using the technology.

In Church No. 17 a laptop and monitor were set up on a table at the center front of 28 children. The technology worked well, and the slides were shown at the right time, however the monitor, which was about 29-inch in diagonal length, was too small in relation to the size of the group of children and it was located too low for the boys and girls sitting in the third and fourth row of chairs. While telling the story the teacher suddenly used the hard copy of the picture in addition, holding it up high and moving it closer to the children. When asked about this after the class, she mentioned that she used the picture purposely as the children sitting at the back were too far away from the monitor.

In Churches No. 9 and No. 15 major technical challenges occurred. In Church No. 9 the laptop used had a defective monitor and a loose contact with the LCD projector. The cable had to be fixed with a tape. Finally, when the projection worked, the display was yellow-green. The slides were projected to a whiteboard which worked fine, however the upper part of the image was covered by a bulletin strip of the Filipino Alphabet attached at the top of the whiteboard. In addition, there was some writing and attached illustrations on the whiteboard which interfered with the projected image. At one time the laptop switched off and the projector turned to a stand-by mode, displaying just a blue background with the brand name of the projector. When the connection was fixed, the desktop picture with a lion appeared and the teacher had to enter the password. Thus, it was a major disruption during the lesson. Still, the children aged nine to twelve seemed to enjoy the slides, especially when the fighting shepherds moved (Lesson 34). The children as well as the teacher and her assistants were surprised and laughed at the animation. The researcher felt it was a pity that the slides had not appeared in their original colors but

greenish. The use of the PowerPoint presentation was appropriate as the classroom was quite dark, the group of children was large (18 children) and the size of the displayed image was correct according to Getz's standards although too low. The researcher was impressed by the well-prepared lesson as the teacher had printed out additional visual aids from the internet (three enlarged wells) and a supplemental map of the land of Canaan. This could have worked as backup in case of technical failure.

At Church No. 15 the venue of the Sunday School was the living-room of the pastor with a television of probably 32-inch diameter fixed on the wall. In order to use the PowerPoint Presentation of Lesson 43 one member of the church had to convert the slides on a laptop into twenty-two JPG images as the PowerPoint software was not installed on the TV. This conversion took about twenty minutes of the teaching time, then the JPG images were saved on a USB flash drive and connected to the television. The display of the images was of high quality and, whereas the room was dark, the colors were bright. Since it was the first time that the teacher used the CBL PowerPoint presentations, she had difficulties handling the technology. During the narration of the Bible story, she used the soft copy of the lesson which she had on her laptop. She first placed this device on the armrest of the couch, then she held it in front of her with one hand, while operating the presenter with the other hand. She struggled for some time, then gave the presenter to one girl and asked her to click through the images. However, both did not know when to click, so the slides were forwarded at the wrong time. Besides, the presenter device was too sensitive and when clicked, not only one image was advanced but several. So, the images had to be clicked backwards. Furthermore, the teacher continued to hold her laptop in front of her as she relied heavily on the narration

suggested in the CBL lesson. The thesis writer felt that the computer hindered her from free interaction with the children. Nevertheless, the technology kept the attention of most of the children and was supportive as the room was dim. The lighting of the venue would have been too dark to use the corresponding printed visual aids and to capture the children's attention for almost forty-five minutes of review and storytelling.

Other churches did not use the CBL PowerPoints at all. One reason was the lack of the needed technology to show the presentations during Sunday School. The pastor of a church in the province of Bulacan, located north of Metro Manila, apologetically explained to the researcher on September 29, "We use the CBL lessons, but we don't have the equipment for showing PowerPoints." This, too, was the reason in yet another church, as observed by the researcher on September 16, 2018. The Sunday School teacher used the printed picture of Lesson 36 because the only technical equipment in the room was a television which was obsolete and out of order. Besides that, the teacher mentioned during the interview that she prefers to use the visual aids as they are more interactive. As an example, she told the researcher that during a previous lesson she had distributed the stick figures of the first unit among her students. The children were asked to raise their figure, whenever they heard the name of the figure which they were holding. The researcher agreed that such an interactive method is an important advantage of the printed visual aids.

B. Conclusions

Use of the Multimedia

During four class observations conducted by the thesis writer, she witnessed that the use of the technical equipment and of the PowerPoint presentations was readily

embraced by the Sunday School teachers. Technical problems did not emerge, and the teachers were apparently experienced with using such presentations in contexts outside the church. The teachers of two other congregations struggled with the technology partly because of device settings, partly because of insufficient preparation on the side of the teacher.

Lesson Preparation

Three times the researcher encountered that the teachers had looked at the slides just shortly before the Sunday School class began. From the observations and interviews conducted by the researcher, it can be concluded that it is indispensable that Sunday School teachers take enough time to prepare the scheduled lessons thoroughly and to acquaint themselves with the slides and animations of the PowerPoint presentations in advance. Unless they do so, the presented scenes on the slides might be misinterpreted and forwarded too soon or too late which distracts the attention and the imagination of children during the telling of the Bible story.

The Product

Developing the PowerPoint presentations was doable but time consuming for the thesis writer as almost every picture and figure of the existing artwork had to be refined (Chapter Three). Still, the thesis writer enjoyed the creative process as she discovered more features of the software Microsoft Office PowerPoint and Adobe Photoshop Creative Cloud which were helpful in the process. In contrast to the restraints of printing visual aids, digital visual media offers a much wider range of possibilities through editing and reusing pictures and figures with minimal additional costs. Hence, the thesis writer is committed to further explore the subject area and refine the product through ongoing

development and design interlinked with future evaluation and feedback according to the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model described in Chapter One.

Dissemination of Digital Files

The weekly dissemination of the PowerPoint files through email attachments emerged to be an obstacle for the pastors and teachers. It might have been more effective to develop the CBL PowerPoint presentations, save them on a USB flash drive and distribute the files together with the CBL set of Primary Year 1, July to December at a later point in the year. On the other hand, there seemed to be an advantage to weekly distribution though which was regular contact with the key person in each local setting.

In summary, it can be concluded that there are four variables for the efficient use of CBL digital media in Sunday Schools: (1) it is necessary that the CBL curriculum is implemented for a consistent period, (2) the necessary technology needs to be without technical defects and should be installed according to Getz's standards, (3) Sunday School teachers need to prepare the lesson and make themselves familiar with the slides and the animation thoroughly, and (4) the digital files must be readily provided in PowerPoint or JPG format on a USB flash drive so that they can be used with a projector, monitor or television. Regular weekly contact can still be made for assistance and feedback purposes.

In future, if these conditions were complied with, the CBL PowerPoint presentations could be a well-received medium of teaching by Sunday School teachers. Sun Focus Foundation Limited could offer such presentations for a prize affordable for small- and medium-sized churches as the production cost of such files is considerably

lower compared to the production of videos. Yet, the above-mentioned conditions still pose a serious challenge for many churches.

C. Recommendations

Recommendations for the Publisher

First, it is recommended that Sun Focus Foundation Limited in Hong Kong, who publishes the Creative Bible Lessons curriculum, will continue to improve the CBL PowerPoint presentations according to the Eternal, Synergistic Design Model described in Chapter One through further evaluation and feedback. A new study should, therefore, be conducted as the test group in the Philippines delivered partial results only. To receive more satisfying results concerning the product and its usage the publishers should approach ministry partners in countries where the CBL curriculum has been firmly implemented.

As the curriculum was originally developed in Indonesia and has been widely used in churches in the archipelago, the team of Yayasan Sun Fokus Indonesia could translate and contextualize the presentations. This would not be too difficult since there is minimal amount of text. Subsequent to this process, the team could conduct a research among a test group of churches in Indonesia. This would yield further guidance for the publishers concerning the production of multimedia for other volumes of the CBL curriculum.

Second, Sun Focus Foundation Limited needs to deliberate how to protect its copyrights of the artwork used for the PowerPoint presentations when offering digital files as an additional teaching tool. For this thesis project, the researcher included the organization's copyright in the last slide of each presentation. In addition, she had sent

the digital files as PowerPoint Show (*.ppsx) predominantly to protect the view as the CBL pictures and figures can be easily copied and used for other (including commercial) purposes. For future usage the organization should either find a solution limiting illegal dispersion of the artwork or decide to purposely allow teachers the amendment of the digital files. For the latter, the publisher should be aware of the dissimilarity between “the *official curriculum*, or written curriculum” and “the *operational curriculum* ... of what is actually taught by the teacher” (Posner 2004, 12–13).

Third, the publishers of the different language versions of CBL will need to find avenues of sharing digital files with customers, if they pursue the development and production of digital multimedia. The most feasible solution might be a link to download files from a website in return for payment. However, in some countries or regions this might not be possible due to government restrictions or slow internet connections.

Fourth, the thesis writer recommends that Sun Focus Foundation Limited reviews the findings regarding future training of Sunday School teachers in the area of educational technology.

Recommendations for the Church of the Nazarene in Metro Manila District

Based on the results of this research it is recommended that the leadership of the Church of Nazarene in Metro Manila District will seek to strengthen Sunday School programs for children through a) Sunday School teacher training in the area of the utilization of educational technology b) selecting and promoting additional Sunday School curricula and c) investing into digital equipment such as LCD projectors or monitors in appropriate sizes to include multimedia during their educational programs for children.

Recommendations for Further Research

More research needs to be conducted concerning the usage of educational technology in children's churches and the impact of this medium on the young generation concerning their spiritual formation. Does the medium change the message as Marshall McLuhan stated or does the message remain the same and only the way of delivering the message changes as Rick Warren proposed (Hipps, 2005, 29-30)? Such research could be conducted within churches using different curricula utilizing digital media.

Another research could be conducted using an experimental group and a comparison group applying the CBL PowerPoint presentations in an experimental group and the CBL printed artwork in a comparison group. This might bear results especially concerning the involvement of children during the class and concerning the different learning styles of students.

Though theoretically a field study is not a firm requirement in a production thesis, it gave the thesis writer important and invaluable insight into the real circumstances of Sunday Schools in the Philippines. On the other hand, the validation of the product guided the production process. Hence, time, finances and energy were well invested in the eyes of the thesis writer.

This concludes the work outlined for this production thesis. It was the hope of the thesis writer that the thesis product would inspire teachers and bring joy to children, more importantly, they would grow spiritually. In addition, the thesis writer hopes that this thesis will contribute towards a fruitful discussion of using educational technology in Christian children's ministry.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Overview CBL Primary Year 1, Lessons 27-52 (Dyck and L ufer 2000)

No	Lesson Theme	Reference	Visual Aids	Activities
27	Abraham receives God's Promise	Genesis 12:1-9 Hebrews 11:8-10 Memory Verse: Gen 12:3b	Stick Figures with Picture Background	Making a Wall Picture
28	Abraham and Lot go Separate Ways	Genesis 13:1-18 Memory Verse: Matthew 5:5	Stick Figures with Picture Background	Tearing Sheep and Goats out of Paper Retelling the Story
29	Abraham and Sarah Find it Hard to Wait	Genesis 15:1-6, 16:1-16 Memory Verse: Hebrews 13:5	Flannel Pictures Pictures	Assembling Memory Verse Cards
30	Abraham and Sarah Laugh	Genesis 17:1-2, 15-22; 18:1-15; 21:1-7 Memory Verse: Gen 21:1	Flannel Pictures	Drawing
31	Abraham Loves God More Than Isaac	Genesis 22:1-19 Hebrews 11:17-19 Memory Verse: Gen 22:18	Pictures	Picture Walk While Reviewing Lessons 27-31
32	Isaac Marries Rebekah	Genesis 24:1-67 Memory Verse: Psam 37:23	Pictures for a Poster	Pasting Pictures
33	Isaac and Rebekah's Children	Genesis 25:19-34 Memory Verse: Psalm 100:3a	Stick Figures	Making Stick Puppets Retelling the Story
34	Isaac Loves Peace	Genesis 26:1-6, 12-33 Memory Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:13b	Blackboard Drawings of Four Wells	Assembling Memory Verse Cards in Groups
35	Isaac Blesses Jacob	Genesis 27:1-40 Memory Verse: Isaiah 30:18	Pictures	Making a Bookmark
36	God Speaks to Jacob	Gen. 27:41-46; 28:1-5, 10-22 Memory Verse: Gen 28:16	Pictures	Beginning a Booklet Drawing and Writing
37	Jacob in Laban's Home	Genesis 29 and 30 Memory Verse: Genesis 28:15	Pictures	Drawing and Writing
38	Jacob Leaves Laban's Home	Genesis 31:1-55 Memory Verse: Genesis 28:15	Pictures	Drawing and Writing
39	Jacob Receives a New Name	Genesis 32:1-32 Memory Verse: Isaiah 43:1b	Pictures	Drawing and Writing

No	Lesson Theme	Reference	Visual Aids	Activities
40	Jacob is Reconciled to Esau	Genesis 33:1-20 Memory Verse: Hebrews 12:14	Pictures	Drawing and Writing
41	Jacob Worships at Bethel	Genesis 35:1-7, 27-29 Memory Verse Lamentations 3:41	Pictures	Drawing and Writing, Finishing the Booklet
42	Joseph is Sold to Egypt	Genesis 37:1-36 Memory Verse: 1 John 3:20	Flannel Pictures Objects Related to the Bible Story	Spontaneous Drama
43	God is With Joseph in Egypt	Genesis 39:1 - 40:23 Memory Verse: Psalm 55:22	Flannel Pictures Objects Related to the Bible Story	Spontaneous Drama
44	Joseph Becomes Pharaoh's Assistant	Genesis 41:1-52 Memory Verse: Romans 8:28	Flannel Pictures Objects Related to the Bible Story	Spontaneous Drama
45	Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt	Genesis 41:53 - 42:38 Memory Verse: Luke 11:4	Flannel Pictures Objects Related to the Bible Story	Spontaneous Drama
46	Joseph Forgives His Brothers	Genesis 43 - 45 Memory Verse: 1 Peter 4:8	Flannel Pictures Objects Related to the Bible Story	Spontaneous Drama
47	Jacob and His Family Move to Egypt	Genesis 46; 47:1-12 Memory Verse: Psalm 133:1	Flannel Pictures Objects Related to the Bible Story	Drama Memory Verse Contest
48	Jacob Blesses His Sons and Grandsons	Genesis 48 and 49 Memory Verse: Genesis 26:3b	Pictures	Spontaneous Drama
49	Jesus is Born in Bethlehem	Luke 2:1-7 Memory Verse: Micah 5:2	Visual Aids for Memory Verse Made by the	Making a Christmas Picture
50	The Shepherds Visit Jesus	Luke 2:8-20 Memory Verse: Luke 2:10	Pictures	Finishing the Christmas Picture
51	The Wise Men Present Gifts to Jesus	Matthew 2:1-12 Memory Verse: Matthew 2:4	Pictures from Lesson 50	Worshipping Jesus Together
52	Who Can Celebrate Christmas?	Matthew 2:1-12 Memory Verse: Matthew 2:4	Stick Figures	Giving Thanks at the Close of the Year

Appendix B. Content Analysis of Genesis 12-49

The focal point for this research study was the lessons of the CBL Primary Year 1, July to December which are based on the narratives of Genesis 12 to 49. These are grouped in four units (1) Abraham and his family, (2) Isaac and his family, (3) Jacob and his family, and (4) Joseph, the son of Jacob.

Anni Dyck highlights the key aspects of the lessons in the unit summaries of the volume. In the unit on Abraham's family Dyck opens with her first aspect, "The story of Abraham and Sarah is about a personal relationship between man and God. That relationship came about because God chose Abraham and revealed himself to him" (Dyck and Läufer 2000, 1). She points out the calling of Abraham to leave his country and his obedience and faith according to Hebrews 11:8-10. The second aspect is God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3 which is reaffirmed in the following chapters. According to Keil and Delitzsch (1973, 193) this promise has "four distinct elements ...—1. increase into a numerous people 2. a blessing that is to say, material and spiritual prosperity; 3. the exaltation of his name, i.e. the elevation of Abram to honour and glory; 4. his appointment to be the possessor and dispenser of the blessing." Therefore, God's promise is given special attention not only in each lesson in the unit on Abraham, but also in the lessons about Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. The third key aspect in the first unit is how God revealed himself to Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. In Genesis 16, Hagar has an encounter with God in the desert after fleeing from her mistress Sarah. She "recognized God manifesting Himself to her, the presence of Jehova, and called Him, "*Thou art a God of seeing; for she said, Have I also seen here after seeing?*" Believing that a man must die if he saw God" (Keil and Delitzsch 1973, 221). Sarah experienced God as the one who makes her laugh. She exclaims in Genesis 21:6 NIV, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." In Genesis 22, Abraham experiences God as *Jehovah-Jireh*, the God who sees or provides. The promises of God as well as how he revealed himself will therefore be included in the PowerPoint presentations using bubbles (humans speaking) and stars (God speaking).

The second unit, Isaac and his family, focuses on Isaac who "although an important link in the line of Abraham, as an individual character Isaac is given little attention" (*Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary* 1994, 35) in the book of Genesis. Dyck

writes that Isaac “accepted the circumstances in his life with a willing and gentle heart” (Dyck and Läufer 2000, 26). Blessed by God he sought peace with his neighbors like his father Abraham earlier, and passed down the blessing to the next generation although not to his favorite son.

In the third unit Jacob is the main character and the events unfold in six lessons. Jacob had to run for his life, but God appeared to him at Bethel. “Proclaiming Himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers, He not only confirmed to him all the promises of the fathers in their fullest extent, but promised him protection on his journey and a safe return to his home” (Keil and Delitzsch 1973, 281–82). After twenty difficult years in Haran God fulfilled his promise and brought Jacob back together with his two wives and twelve children. “Seemingly in response to Jacob’s prayer (cf. 32:11), Esau had had a change of heart” (*Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary* 1994, 43) and the two brothers reconciled. Then God told him to go up to Bethel (cf. 35:1) where he had experienced God on his flight. For this reason, Jacob purified his family of all idols. Then at Bethel he built an altar and God appeared to him again. The cleansing from foreign gods and rings is especially pointed out in Lesson 41 of the selected CBL volume. It will, therefore, be emphasized in the PowerPoint presentation for that lesson.

The fourth unit tells the story about Joseph, Jacob’s favorite son. In the unit summary Anni Dyck writes,

The six- to eight-year-old children will enjoy the colorful story of Joseph which is so full of spiritual principles. In seven lessons this story unfolds from a tense beginning to a beautiful conclusion. But God is in the center of this story, not Joseph. The children see God at work in Joseph’s life. They will learn to believe that God is also active in the good and difficult experiences of their lives. They will learn to put their trust in God (Dyck and Läufer 2000, 77).

The unit closes with Jacob passing on the blessing to his children and to his grandchildren, Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph. Once again, the promises of God are put into focus.

Appendix C. Narrations of Lesson 27 to 52

The following narratives are taken from the lessons of CBL Primary Year 1, July–December (Dyck and Läufer 2000, 4-141). They are included with permission by Sun Focus Foundation Limited, Hong Kong, granted in writing on February 6, 2019.

Lesson 27 Abraham Receives God's Promise

The Calling of Abraham

(Slide 2) Abraham lived in the city of Haran. His family was rich, and they lived in a nice house. Abraham was seventy-five years old. He was married to Sarah, but they did not have any children.

One day, something very special happened in Abraham's life. Abraham heard God's voice speaking to him. He could not see God, but he clearly heard God speaking to him. This is what God said, "Leave your country and your family. (Click) Go to the land I will show you. I will make your family into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing and (click) all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Click)

Abraham believed it was really God speaking to him. He believed what God promised him. He also wanted to do what God had told him to do, but it was not easy.

(Click) Abraham went and looked for Sarah, his wife. (Click) Even though she was old, she was still a very beautiful woman. He told her all God had said to him. "What did you say? Go to a faraway country? Never meet my family and friends again? That is very difficult! But since God promised to show us the way, let us follow him." (Click)

Abraham was very glad that Sarah was willing to go with him. Together they would trust God. Together they would make their preparation.

Abraham's preparation was different to Sarah's preparation. Abraham owned many animals: cows, donkeys, goats, sheep and even camels. He asked his servants to gather all his flocks, so that he could take them with him to the new country God would lead them to.

Sarah called all her maidservants. She told them to pack all the things they needed for the life in the new place. What did Sarah's maids have to pack? (Ask the children to make suggestions: kinds of food, clothing, blankets, tents, etc.) Of course, all this could not be carried. They would need transportation. As they had no car, what could they use? They had a very good means of transport.

They used camels. Camels are very strong animals which can carry a lot. Abraham and Sarah would have to travel through deserts, where it was hot and dry. Camels do not get thirsty easily. They drink a lot of water before they leave. Then they can keep the water in their body for a long time.

Abraham and Sarah Leave in Faith

When Abraham and Sarah finished packing, they put all their belongings on the backs of the camels. Then they said goodbye to their family. They did just what God had told them to do. But who is this other person whom Abraham is taking along?

(Click) This is their nephew Lot. His father had died. As Abraham and Sarah had no children of their own, they treated Lot like their own son, and took him along on their journey. Then they began their journey to a land that they had never seen or heard about.

(Slide 3) They left the city of Haran and walked up and down hills and mountains and through the desert. (Click) They walked for many days. When they felt tired, they stopped for several days in a place that had plenty of water and grass for their flocks and herds. Then they continued their journey. Abraham firmly believed in his heart that God, who had called him, would bring them into the land he had promised him.

Abraham and Sarah Arrive at the Promised Land

(Slide 4) After the crowd had travelled about five hundred kilometres, they arrived at a land called Canaan. It was a very beautiful and fertile land where many people lived.

(Click) Abraham with his family and all his possessions entered Canaan. They walked until they reached a city called Bethel. There, God talked to Abraham again. (Click) Abraham built an altar to worship God. At this altar Abraham, Sarah and all their people thanked God. God had protected them on their long journey. God had brought them into the land that one day would belong to them, according to God's promise.

Lesson 28 Abraham and Lot Go Separate Ways

Moving from Place to Place in the Land of Canaan

(Slide 2) Abraham, Sarah and Lot had arrived in the land that God had chosen for them. Even though they did not own any land in Canaan, they were really blessed by God. They were happy because they had obeyed God's word.

However, Abraham's family did not yet have a permanent place to live. (Slide 3) They moved from one place to the other to get to know the land and to find the best place to settle down. When they moved, they had to take down their tents and fold them, so they could take the tents to a new place. They had to pack all their belongings and put them on the backs of their camels.

(Click) In the new place, the grass was still fresh. Abraham and Lot's shepherds liked to take their cows, lambs, and goats to eat fresh grass.

Abraham and Lot's Shepherds Fight Together

One day, Lot's shepherds brought their goats and lambs to the new pasture. The animals began to eat grass peacefully. (Click) Suddenly Abraham's shepherds came with their goats and lambs. (Click) Seeing this, Lot's shepherds began to complain. They shouted, (Click) "Hey, go away! We found this place first. There is not enough grass for your flocks and ours." When they heard this, Abraham's shepherds left.

The next day, Abraham's shepherds found fresh water. Their flocks drank peacefully until they had enough. Suddenly, Lot's shepherds came with their flocks. Their flocks were very thirsty. This time, Abraham's shepherds started to shout. (Click) "Go away! We found the water first. There is not enough for our flocks and yours."

The shepherds argued like this almost every day. Abraham heard about the fighting, and he became sad. Abraham knew that it was God's will for men to live together peacefully. Lot was his nephew. What would their neighbors think if they saw Abraham and Lot's shepherds fighting with each other?

Abraham Seeks a Peaceful Way Out

Abraham realised that the pasture land and the water were no longer enough, because his flocks and Lot's flocks had become very large. What could he do? He thought and thought, and then one day he found a way out.

(Slide 4) That day Abraham walked with Lot to a hill from (click) where they could see the whole beautiful land and the valley far below by the River Jordan. Abraham said to Lot, "Lot, let there be no fighting between you and me, or between your shepherds and mine, because we are brothers. Isn't all the land open for you? It is better if we separate. (Click) You can choose the land that you like best. If you go to the left, then I will go to the right; and if you go to the right, I will go to the left." (Click)

Lot looked around him. Far away, to the east, he saw the whole plain of the River Jordan with its well-watered pasture land. It looked like the garden of the Lord. There was enough room for his flocks. Lot only thought about himself. He did not think about Abraham who was older than him. Quickly, he answered, "I choose the whole plain of the Jordan toward the east." (Click 2x)

Abraham and Lot Separate

Not long after that Lot packed his belongings. He took his wife and his two daughters, his menservants and his maidservants and all his livestock. Lot moved to the plains of the Jordan. He thought that he had made a really good choice. That was not so, because there were two cities in the plain of the Jordan called Sodom and Gomorrah. The people who lived in those cities were very evil. Lot was attracted to the city of Sodom. He let his shepherds care for his flocks, but Lot and his family moved to Sodom. They built their house in that city, amid those wicked people.

(Click) How about Abraham? Even though Abraham had to stay in the hill country which was not as rich and beautiful as the Jordan plain, his heart was at peace. There was no more fighting. Abraham knew that he had done the right thing by letting Lot go his way. He knew that his decision had pleased God.

Not long after that God said to Abraham, "Abraham, look to the north, the south, the west and the east. (Click) I will give to you and your offspring all the land that you can see. Your offspring will be as many as the dust of the earth. If anyone can count the dust, then your offspring too, can be counted."

Abraham believed that God would do what he had promised him, even though he did not yet have a child.

Lesson 29 Abraham and Sarah Find it Hard to Wait

Abraham believes God's Promises

(Slide 2) After Lot's family moved away from Abraham, God gave his promise to Abraham again. (Click) "I will give you all the land you see before you. (Click) I will also give you offspring like the sand of the earth. Nobody can count the sand, nobody will be able to count all the descendants whom I will give you."

(Click) Abraham and Sarah waited and waited. They still did not have a single child. Abraham really became afraid it would never happen. As he sat in his tent thinking and worrying, the Lord spoke to him. "Do not be afraid, Abraham, (click) I am your very great reward." That means, "Abraham, you can really trust me." But Abraham said to the Lord (click), "You have given me no children."

(Slide 3) Then the Lord told Abraham to go out and stand in front of his tent. He looked at the sky, full of many bright stars. As Abraham looked, the Lord spoke to him again, (Click) "Your offspring will be as many as there are stars in the sky." When Abraham saw all the stars and heard the Lord's promise (click), he believed what the Lord promised him. God was very pleased with Abraham.

Stars in the sky and sand on the beach are things that Abraham could see and touch. Every time Abraham felt the sand under his feet or looked up at the stars, he remembered God's word, "Your offspring will be so many that they cannot be counted." And then he trusted the Lord and his words.

Sarah Wants to Help God Fulfill His Promise

(Slide 4) But Sarah, Abraham's wife, became impatient. They lived in the land that God had chosen for them. When would their child be born? Abraham had to have a son before he could have as many offspring as the sand and the stars!

(Click) Finally, Sarah said to Abraham, (click) "I am too old now to have a child. (Click) Take my maid-servant Hagar. You can have a son with her, and that son will then be our son."

During the time of Abraham and Sarah, that was the custom in the land where they lived. A wife could give her maidservant to her husband when she could not have a child. Abraham did not say, "Let us ask God first." They both followed the culture of their land and did not ask God. Sarah thought that in this way she was helping God to fulfill his promise to Abraham.

Abraham slept with Hagar and she became pregnant. This made Hagar become proud. She thought (click), "I am more important than Sarah. I will give Abraham a child." Sarah felt hurt and angry. She began to treat Hagar harshly. Hagar had to work much harder and do the dirtiest jobs. One day she ran away, because she could not stand it anymore.

God Sees Hagar at the Well

Hagar wanted to run away to Egypt, (slide 5) her own home country, but walking through the sand of the desert made her very tired. When she came to a well, she sat down beside it. She felt very sad and lonely. What should she do?

God saw Hagar sitting by the well. God not only cared for Abraham and Sarah, he also cared for each of their servants. He loved every one of them; and he loved Hagar and

wanted to comfort her. He sent an angel to Hagar. The angel asked her (click), “Hagar, where have you come from and where are you going?”

(Click) “I am running away from my mistress, Sarah”, said Hagar honestly. But the angel said to her (click), “Go home to Sarah and serve her well. You will have a son and call him Ishmael. The Lord has heard your crying.”

Hagar was very surprised and happy that God cared for her. She praised the Lord and said (click), “You are the God who sees me.”

Ishmael is Born

(Slide 6) Then Hagar returned to Abraham’s tents. She began to serve Sarah faithfully. One day Hagar’s son was born, and Abraham named him Ishmael, as the angel had told Hagar. What is the meaning of Ishmael? “The Lord hears.”

“Now Ishmael is my son, he will be my heir,” Abraham thought. But he was wrong. God did not reveal himself to Abraham again for many years.

Lesson 30 Abraham and Sarah Laugh

Abraham Laughs

(Slide 2) Years had gone by since Ishmael was born, and now he had become a big boy who was thirteen years old. Abraham was very happy to have Ishmael. He almost forgot about God’s promise that Sarah would have a son. God however, did not forget his promise (click).

(Click) One day, after all those years, God talked with Abraham again. He said to him (click), “I am God Almighty. Walk before me and be blameless.” (Click) When Abraham heard God talk to him, he fell face down and worshiped God. Then God continued to speak (click), “I will bless Sarah and give you a son by her.”

Once more, Abraham bowed before God, but he laughed in his heart (click). He was nearly one hundred and Sarah almost ninety years old. How was it possible for them to have a son? Abraham said to God (click), “Please bless Ishmael and (click) let Ishmael be the promised child.”

(Click) “No,” God answered, “Sarah your wife, will have a son, (click) and you will call him Isaac. What I have promised, I always fulfill. I will also care for Ishmael. I will bless him, so that a great nation will come from Ishmael. But Ishmael is not the promised son. (Click) Sarah will bear you a son and you will call him Isaac.”

Three Special Guests

(Slide 3) Not long after that, Abraham was sitting near the entrance of his tent in the shadow of a big tree. It was noon and a hot wind blew over the plains. Abraham sat there until he almost fell asleep. Suddenly Abraham was startled (click). There were three men standing not far from him. Abraham did not know them, but he quickly got up to welcome them. He bowed respectfully and said, “Please do not pass my place, but stay here to rest. My servants will bring you water, so you can wash your feet. Sit and rest under this tree. I will bring you some food, so that you can eat. Then you will have strength to continue your journey.”

The three guests graciously accepted the invitation. They sat down in the shadow of the big tree. But Abraham got very busy. He asked his servants to bring water for them.

(Click) Then he looked for Sarah inside the tent. He said, “Sarah, get the best flour and make bread for our special guests.”

Next, Abraham went to the pasture, where his herds were grazing. He chose the best calf and asked his servants to prepare a good meal. Even though everybody was busy, they felt happy. They did not have guests very often.

After the meal was prepared, Abraham himself served his guests. While they were eating, he stood respectfully and waited on them. Sarah stayed inside the tent. According to the custom of that time, it was not polite for a woman to be in the presence of men while they were eating. But Sarah stood near the entrance of her tent so that she could hear the conversation.

Sarah Laughs

(Slide 5) After the guests had finished eating, one of them said to Abraham, “Where is your wife Sarah?” “Inside her tent,” answered Abraham. Then the guest gave a beautiful promise, and Sarah heard it, too.

(Click) “Next year around this time I will visit you once again. By then, Sarah will have a son.” Now Abraham knew in his heart that his guests were messengers from God (click).

(Slide 6) But inside the tent, Sarah laughed (click) when she heard that she would have a son. Because she thought, “I am old. My husband is old, too. How is it possible for us to have a son?” (Click) But then Sarah heard the guest ask, “Abraham, why is your wife laughing? Why does she say in her heart, ‘Will I really have a child now that I am old?’

(Click) Is there anything too hard for God? I will come back to you next year. By that time Sarah will have a son (click).”

Sarah was scared and said quietly (click), “I didn’t laugh”. (Click) “Oh yes, you laughed,” the guest said.

Then, Sarah also knew that these guests were no ordinary guests. They were messengers of the Lord. (Click) Could it really be true that she would have a son next year? She began to feel happy. (Click)

Isaac is Born

What the messenger of the Lord had said became true. (Slide 7) In a year’s time Sarah gave birth to a son. Abraham named him Isaac. Sarah was so happy, because what the Lord had promised her had finally happened. (Click 2x)

(Slide 8) Sarah held Isaac in her arms and said, “God has brought me laughter (click), and everyone who hears about the birth of Isaac will laugh with me. I have born Abraham a son in his old age.” Sarah felt that even God was sharing her happiness (click).

Everybody who heard the news, asked, “How can an old man and an old woman have a child?” But all their neighbors were happy for them. Sarah and Abraham laughed joyfully. It was perfect that the little boy’s name was Isaac, which means, “He brings me laughter”, because everyone who heard about his birth laughed with joy.

Isaac grew, and Abraham loved him dearly. He always remembered that Isaac was the promised son. They told Isaac about God who was very good to them. Abraham taught Isaac to love and obey God, and to pray to him. Abraham and Sarah thanked God again and again for giving them Isaac.

Lesson 31 Abraham Loves God More than Isaac

Isaac wants to Go with Abraham

(Slide 2) One morning, when Isaac awoke from his sleep, he heard his father Abraham moving around. It was still early and quite dark. The sun had not yet risen.

“Why is my father up so early?” Isaac wondered. Abraham was looking for his robe, as if he wanted to go somewhere.

Isaac sat up. He rubbed his eyes. Then he got up and looked outside the tent. The morning air was quite chilly. Isaac noticed two servants who were waiting for Abraham. One was holding the donkey, the other had the lantern in his hand. Isaac turned back into the tent and asked, “Father, where are you going so early in the morning? Can I come along?”

“Yes, you have to come along with us,” Abraham answered Isaac with a sad voice. Why was he so sad?

God’s Difficult Command

Abraham was very sad, because last night, God had talked to him. God had said to him, “Abraham, take Isaac, your only son whom you love so much. Take him to a mountain that I will show you. Then sacrifice him as an offering. Give him back to me.”

Abraham was very shocked. Isaac, his son for whom Sarah and he had waited so long! How could he sacrifice Isaac? Wasn’t Isaac the promised son? How could Abraham have a lot of offspring if he had to give Isaac back to God? Abraham’s heart was troubled. But he knew one thing for sure: What God has promised, he will fulfill. Whatever happened, God would be faithful to Abraham, his friend.

That’s why the next day Abraham woke up very early in the morning. He prepared enough wood for the offering. He took some fire with him too, because there were no matches in those days. He took Isaac and two of his servants with him. Abraham rode the donkey (click), because he was over one hundred years old. Isaac and the servants walked.

(Slide 3) After they had walked for three days, Abraham saw the mountain that God meant. (Click) He climbed down from his donkey and said to his two servants, “Wait here while my son and I go there to worship the Lord. Then, we will return to you.”

Abraham was very sure that he would bring Isaac along with him when he returned to the servants later.

Climbing the Mountain

Abraham and Isaac continued their journey (click). Isaac carried the firewood. Abraham carried the knife and fire. They climbed and climbed together.

(Slide 4) Suddenly, Isaac stopped. (Click) There was no goat or lamb for the sacrifice. Maybe his father had forgotten. “Father,” Isaac began.

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “Father, look, we have the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb for the offering?” “My son, the Lord will provide a lamb for the sacrifice,” Abraham replied.

God Provides an Animal

When they had reached the place where God wanted them to go, Abraham built an altar. He laid the wood on the top of the altar. Then, it was time for Abraham to bind Isaac and put him on the altar. Suddenly, there was a voice from heaven (click). “Abraham, Abraham!”

“Yes, Lord.” Abraham answered. “Don’t harm your son. Now I know that you fear God and are willing to give your only son back to me.”

With a joyful heart, Abraham untied Isaac. When he looked around (click), he saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham knew that this was the sacrifice that God had provided. He took the ram and offered it as a sacrifice to the Lord instead of Isaac. When the offering was done, God spoke to Abraham again. “Because you were willing to give Isaac back to me, I will bless you. Your descendants will be as many as the stars in the sky and the sand at the seashore. Through you, all nations on earth will be blessed.”

(Slide 5) Then Abraham walked down the mountain together with his son Isaac (click). They returned to his two servants, just as he had told them (click). They went home (click), where Sarah welcomed them joyfully. After that, for many years Abraham, Sarah and Isaac lived happily together. They loved God and put God before everything else. They truly were a family that was blessed by God.

Lesson 32 Isaac Marries Rebekah

An Answered Prayer

(Slide 2) A big crowd was walking toward the city of Haran. (Click) An old man led the crowd. He was a servant of Abraham. Abraham had told him to find a wife for his son Isaac. They brought ten camels with them loaded with beautiful gifts for the girl who would become Isaac’s bride and for her parents.

After many, many days passing through the desert, they arrived at a well outside the city of Haran. (Click) There they took a rest.

But where is the servant? We cannot see Abraham’s servant in the picture, because he has gone away to pray. This is what he prayed. “Lord, God of my master Abraham, help me to do my task well. We are resting at this well. In a moment the young women from the city of Haran will come to get some water. Help me, Lord. Show me the young woman that you choose for my master’s son. Let it happen like this: When I ask one of these women for a drink, she must answer, ‘Drink, and I will give your camels some water, too.’ If she says this, then she is your chosen one. By this, I will know that you have shown kindness to my master Abraham.” (Click)

The servant hadn’t finished his prayer, when a beautiful young lady walked toward the well, (click) with a water jar on her shoulder. She started to fill her jar with water and then she wanted to leave. (Click) Quickly the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me some water from your jar.” The young woman answered, “Drink, my lord.” She lowered her jar to her hands and gave him a drink (click).

Then she said, "I will fetch water for your camels, too." She poured the water into the trough and went back to the well to draw more water, until all the camels had drunk enough. The servant sat and looked at her, wondering if God had answered his prayer. When the camels had finished drinking, the servant took out a gold nose ring and a pair of gold bracelets and gave them to the woman. He asked her, "Whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

"I am Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel. My grandfather is Nahor. We have plenty of room in our house for all of you to stay. We have straw and fodder for your camels too." When the servant heard that, he knelt and worshiped God. Nahor was Abraham's brother. God had kindly guided him on his journey and led him to Abraham's relatives.

In the House of Laban and Rebekah

(Click) Rebekah ran home to her family and told them everything that had happened. Rebekah had a brother named Laban. As soon as he saw the gold nose ring and bracelets, Laban ran to the well to meet Abraham's servant. He urged him to come and stay overnight in his house. (Click) There the camels were unloaded. Water was brought so that Abraham's servant and his men could wash their feet. Then a meal was served for them.

Before they ate, the servant wanted to tell them his master's message. The whole family gathered together to listen.

"I am the servant of Abraham, a man who moved from here to Canaan a long time ago. God has bountifully blessed my master in that land. When my master reached his old age, he had a son called Isaac. My master sent me to find a young woman who loves God to be his son's wife. Near the well I prayed and asked God to give me a sign. Then Rebekah came, and she did exactly as I asked the sign to be. Now I ask you, do you want to give Rebekah so that she can come with me to Canaan and marry Isaac?"

Laban's family were awed when they heard the servant's story. They said, "All of this comes from God. We cannot hold back Rebekah. We will give her for Isaac to marry." When the servant heard what the family said, he bowed down again and worshiped God. Only then did the servant begin to eat. He also told them about life in Canaan, because they had not heard about Abraham for a long time. They sat and talked for a long time.

Rebekah Goes to Canaan

(Slide 3) The next day, Abraham's servant said: "Today, I must go home."

However, Rebekah's mother and her brother Laban didn't agree. "Why are you in such a hurry? Let Rebekah stay with us for ten more days. Then, you can go home."

But the servant said, "Don't hold me back. The Lord has made my journey successful. Let me go home to my master."

"If so, let us ask Rebekah first," they answered. They called Rebekah and asked, "Do you want to go with this man?" "Yes, I do," she answered.

Hearing her answer, they kissed Rebekah and said goodbye. Her maid, who had cared for Rebekah since she was a baby, was sent with her to that far away country of Canaan.

(Click) Then, Abraham's servant with his whole group went back to Canaan. (Click)

Rebekah Becomes Isaac's Wife

In Canaan, Abraham and Isaac were waiting for the arrival of their faithful servant.

(Click) One night, Isaac was walking out in the fields, meditating and praying. When he raised his head (click), he saw a crowd of people approaching on camels. He knew right away that this was Abraham's servant coming back from Haran. His heart was anxious. Rebekah who sat on one camel, saw Isaac standing and waiting for them. "Who is that man?" she asked. "That's Isaac, my young master," answered the servant.

Immediately, Rebekah climbed down from her camel and covered her face. According to their custom, Isaac was not allowed to see her before the night of her wedding. With a joyful heart, Isaac accepted Rebekah and brought her to his mother's empty tents. Not long after, Rebekah became Isaac's wife. Isaac was happy. He knew that God himself had chosen his wife.

How was Rebekah's life in Canaan? We will hear about it next week.

Lesson 33 Isaac and Rebekah's Children

Review: Slide 2

Isaac and Rebekah Long for a Child

(Slide 3) Isaac and Rebekah lived happily as husband and wife (click 2x). But there was something they were worried about. They had been married for twenty years, but they did not have any children. Isaac remembered God's promise to his father Abraham. God had promised to give Abraham as many offspring as the sand on the seashore and as the stars in the sky.

Isaac knew that God could give him children, just as he had given a son to Abraham and Sarah. Even though they had to wait for a long time, God had fulfilled his promise. "I will pray for my wife Rebekah," Isaac thought. "God is the one who will give us children." So, Isaac prayed for Rebekah and the Lord answered his prayer.

Not long after, Rebekah became pregnant. She was going to have twins. When the two babies struggled inside her womb, Rebekah prayed to God and asked him about her babies. God told her something very special. He said, she would have twin boys. Each of the boys would become a great nation, but the younger boy would be the greater one, greater than his brother.

Esau and Jacob are Born

Soon after, Rebekah gave birth to twin boys. The skin of the one who was born first was red and hairy, so he was given the name Esau, which means the red one. The second baby was born with his hand holding Esau's heel. He was given the name Jacob. Isaac and Rebekah were very happy, that God had blessed them with two sons.

Two Different Characters

Isaac and Rebekah raised their boys well. When they were about your age, Esau liked to play outside. He didn't stay at home with his mother much. He liked to roam through the fields and woods and practice shooting with his bow and arrow. Jacob, on the other hand, was a quiet boy who liked to play around the tents. He liked to sit and listen to his mother's stories. He even learned to cook.

(Click) When Esau grew older, he became a hunter. (Click) He liked to go to the forest to hunt deer. Isaac was proud of his oldest son. He liked to eat the game Esau shot and prepared for him. Isaac loved Esau very much.

(Click) Jacob didn't like hunting. He liked to stay at home and work around the tents. Rebekah loved Jacob very much. She knew from God, that Jacob would become more important than Esau. She told Jacob how he was born holding Esau's heel. She also talked to him about family matters. For instance, about the right of the first son. She explained that the firstborn would receive twice as much as all other children, and that in the end he would become the head of the family.

"If only I was the firstborn and not Esau," Jacob thought. Maybe Rebekah also told Jacob that God had promised her that the firstborn, Esau, would become the servant of the second. Jacob could hardly wait for this to come true. But how could it happen?

Jacob Takes Esau's Firstborn Rights

(Slide 4) One day, (click) Esau came home from hunting. He was very hungry and tired. It would take a long time to clean the deer he had shot and then prepare a roast. Suddenly, he smelled a delicious aroma from the kitchen. He went closer and saw that Jacob had already done the cooking (click). He had prepared a delicious soup from red beans. "I am dying of hunger, Jacob. Please let me have some of your bean soup," Esau said to his brother.

Jacob remembered his wish to have his older brother's birthright. Now was a good time to try for it. Maybe Esau would let him have his birthright, if he gave him some of his soup.

"I will give you the soup, if you promise to let me have your rights as the firstborn," Jacob suggested to Esau.

What was Esau's answer? "Look, I am about to die. What good is a birthright to me?"

"Swear to me that you will really do it," Jacob said.

Then Esau who was so very hungry swore to exchange his birthright for a bowl of red bean soup (click). He ate it greedily and then left (click). In his heart he knew that Jacob had cheated him. But Jacob was happy because he had got the rights of the firstborn (click).

Application and Response

Abraham and Isaac's Family Tree

Place the figures of Abraham and Isaac's family on the poster that was prepared before class. Seeing them in the right order - father, mother and children - will help the children to understand the relationships in these two families (click 3x).

Lesson 34 Isaac and Rebekah's Children

Creating Interest

Talking About How God Reveals Himself to Us

Children, we can know God through many things that happen around us.

(Slide 2) What did Hagar say about God?

Hagar called God (click), "The God who sees."

(Slide 3) What did Abraham say about God on top of the mountain?

Abraham called God (click), “The God who provides.”

God has another name that is beautiful.

Open Romans 15:33. Ask a child to read the verse and find God’s name: “The God of peace.”

God is a God of peace. He loves peace.

He also wants us to love and enjoy peace. This is what Isaac found out in his life.

Telling the Bible Story

King Abimelech Sends Isaac Away

(Slide 4) In the tents of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau and Jacob grew up and became young men. But then something happened that caused them to move. There was a time of famine in Canaan. Crops did not grow in the fields. The grass for the animals got dry. Isaac with Rebekah, Esau and Jacob had no other choice than to leave Canaan and move west, close to the city of Gerar where the Philistines lived. Their king was Abimelech (click).

The Lord blessed Isaac’s family. Whatever they planted, brought a good harvest, twice as much as the Philistines harvested. Isaac also raised herds of cattle and flocks of sheep.

His animals multiplied rapidly too. Isaac became a rich man.

King Abimelech and his people saw that Isaac was getting very rich. They became jealous and said among themselves, “He is a stranger, but he is richer than we are. Soon, he will want to rule over us. This shall never happen. We have to chase him away from our area!” They did not want Isaac and his family to live among them, even though they had done nothing to disturb them. The king himself ordered Isaac to leave.

Abimelech’s Herdsmen Take Isaac’s Wells

(Slide 5) Did Isaac and his family leave? Yes, they left. Isaac trusted God. Maybe it was God’s time for him to leave. Isaac and his whole household left the city of Gerar and moved to a place in the valley. There he erected his tents and let his animals graze. He also ploughed the fields. His father Abraham had lived in this place before, and he had dug wells. However, the wells had all been filled up with earth by the Philistines. Isaac’s servants opened up the wells again. Then they dug a new well, from which flowed good, fresh water. They had enough water for the animals to drink, for the fields to be watered and for Isaac’s household to drink.

(Click) However, when King Abimelech’s herdsmen saw that Isaac had settled down, they followed him into the valley. When they saw their wells, especially the new one with the fresh water, they were envious. They wanted those wells for themselves. They started an argument with Isaac’s servants, saying, “These springs of water are ours, because they are in our land.”

(Click) Isaac heard the arguments and became sad. He said (click), “This well will be called Esek, which means argue, because near this well, the Philistines argued with my servants.”

Isaac knew that God loved peace and he would not want Isaac’s people to fight for the wells (Slide 6). Instead he told them to go and dig another well. It was hard work, but God blessed them. Their new well gave beautiful fresh water. They were happy and reported to Isaac, “We have dug a new well to replace the Esek well.”

However, not long after, Abimelech's herdsmen came (click 2x) and began to fight over that well too. "It is ours," they shouted. "You have dug the well on our ground!" Then Isaac's servants became very angry and shouted back at the herdsmen. They had worked so hard digging the well, and they didn't want to lose this one also (click). But Isaac told them to stop quarreling. He named the second well Sitnah, which means "fight" (click) Why didn't Isaac fight his enemies? He knew that God loved peace and would care for him and his people. Maybe it was time to move right away from the land of the Philistines. Isaac trusted God to lead him.

God Gives Isaac New Wells

(Slide 6) The next morning Isaac told all his household and all his herdsmen, "We are going to leave the country of the Philistines. Take down the tents, load them on the back of the camels. We are moving!" (Click)

God helped Isaac to find a good place to live, far from the Philistines and their herdsmen. His servants dug wells again and God helped them. They got a very good spring of water. Nobody disturbed them now, and the animals could graze in peace. Isaac with Rebekah, Esau and Jacob could live peacefully near that well. (Click) Isaac named the well Rehoboth, which meant: "Now the Lord has given us room, and we will flourish in the land."

But this was not yet the final place. Once more Isaac's family moved to a new place. When they arrived at the new place, they erected their tents. (Click) That night, God said to Isaac, "I am the God of your father Abraham (click). Do not be afraid, because I am with you. I will bless you and I will give you lots of descendants." Isaac was so glad to hear the voice of God. In that new place, he built an altar, where he and his family and all his servants could pray and worship God, who had spoken to him.

King Abimelech Visits Isaac

(Slide 7) One day Isaac had a big surprise. King Abimelech came to visit him with two of his generals. "Why do you come to me?" Isaac asked. "Didn't you hate me and tell me to leave your land?"

But King Abimelech said, "We know that God blesses you. That is why we have come to you. We want to make a friendship agreement with you. We will not do bad things to you anymore and you will not do bad thing to us, either." Isaac was glad. Now there would be peace among them. They promised each other that they would be friendly and not disturb each other anymore. God heard what they promised each other. God was their witness. After that Isaac prepared a good meal for the Philistines. They stayed overnight. The next day they went home peacefully.

That same day Isaac's servants came to him with good news. "We have dug a new well and lots of clear fresh water flows out of it." Isaac was very happy and thanked God for the water. But most of all he thanked God that he had given him peace with King Abimelech. (Click) Isaac named the new well Shibah, because in that place the peace agreement was made, and his enemies became his friends.

Lesson 35 Isaac Blesses Jacob

Isaac Wants to Bless Esau

(Slide 2) Isaac and his family still lived in Beersheba, close to the well “Shibah” which gave such good fresh water. Isaac had become an old man, and he could not see very well. He began to think about the end of his life. Who would be the head of the family after he died? Who would carry on the blessing God had given to Abraham and to him? “I will bless Esau, my first son,” Isaac decided in his heart. He loved Esau more than Jacob and did not consider that God had said earlier, that ‘the older would serve the younger’, meaning that Jacob should receive the blessing. So he called Esau to come into his tent and said to him, “Esau, your father is already old. I do not know how much longer I will live among you. Go and hunt an animal and prepare tasty food for me. Bring it to me to eat. Then I will bless you before I die.”

Esau was very happy to do as his father had told him. He had sold his birthright to Jacob, but now he would still receive the blessing of the firstborn. Therefore, he went to hunt as his father had asked him to. He planned to prepare a really good meal for him.

Rebekah Urges Jacob to Go for the Blessing

After Esau was gone, Isaac was alone in his tent. He did not know that his wife Rebekah had heard everything he had said to Esau. While Isaac waited for his son Esau to return, Rebekah quickly called Jacob, who was her favorite son. She wanted Jacob to be blessed, not Esau. She remembered the words of the Lord, “The older shall serve the younger.” “Jacob,” Rebekah said, “I overheard your father talking to Esau. He sent him to hunt and prepare his favorite meal. Then your father will bless Esau. Go and find a good young goat. I will prepare your father’s favorite meal. Then you can take the meal to him so that you will receive his blessing.”

“But Mother, even though Father cannot see anymore, if he touches my skin, he will know that I am Jacob. Esau has such a hairy skin. If Father finds out that I am deceiving him, he might curse me and not bless me.” “Don’t worry about that. If that happens, the curse will be on me. Just go and do what I say,” said Rebekah.

Jacob Deceives His Father

Some time had passed. Isaac was resting in his tent, waiting for Esau. All of a sudden there was a delicious smell of food in his tent. Ah, it smelled so good. Someone was putting a tray beside his bed. Then he heard a voice greeting him.

“My Father.” “Yes,” Isaac said (click), “who are you?”

(Slide 3) “I am Esau, your first-born son,” Jacob said with a trembling voice. “I have done what you told me. Please sit up and eat the food, so that you can give me your blessing.” Isaac was very surprised and asked, “How is it that you found an animal so quickly and are back already with this meal prepared?”

“The Lord your God helped me,” Jacob lied.

Isaac felt that something was wrong. Therefore, he demanded, “Come closer so I can touch you. I want to know whether you really are my son Esau.”

Jacob’s heart was beating hard. But Rebekah had covered his arms and neck with the hairy skin of the little goat Jacob had brought to her. So, Jacob went over to his father and let him touch him.

“The voice is like Jacob’s, but the hands are hairy like Esau’s,” Isaac said. (Click) “Are you really my son Esau? Bring the food to me. I will eat, and then I will bless you.” Jacob put the meal in front of Isaac. He also served his father wine to drink. After Isaac had finished his meal, he wanted to make sure once more that this man was really Esau. He said, “Come near and kiss me, my son.”

(Slide 4) Jacob went near once more and bent down so that his father could kiss him. Rebekah had put Esau’s clothes on Jacob. So, his father smelled the strong smell of the fields and woods where Esau liked to hunt. Now he was sure it was Esau who had brought him the food. He said, “The smell of my son is like the smell of the field the Lord has blessed.”

Then he blessed Jacob saying (click), “May God give you plenty of rain and good soil. Then you will have plenty of grain and wine. May nations serve you. May peoples bow down to you. May you be master over your brothers. May your mother’s sons bow down to you. May everyone who curses you be cursed and may everyone who blesses you be blessed.”

After receiving the blessing, Jacob quickly left his father’s tent, taking all the dishes along. Isaac was alone again, resting.

Esau Comes Too Late

(Slide 5) But what was this? Again, there was the smell of tasty food. He heard someone greeting him, “Father, wake up. Please eat some of my food, and afterwards, you can bless me.” Esau had come back from the woods with his hunted deer and had prepared a delicious meal for his father. “Who are you?” Isaac cried out.

“I am your firstborn son, Esau, my father!” “But who was the man who came into my tent before you returned? I have eaten his meal and have blessed him with the blessing of the firstborn son.” Isaac answered. “The blessing will always stay with him.”

When he heard that, Esau cried with a loud, wild voice, “Father, bless me, bless me too!” Sadly, Isaac replied, “Your brother Jacob came deceitfully and has taken your blessing.” “He is called Jacob, the deceiver,” Esau shouted. “He has deceived me twice. He took my firstborn right and now he has taken my blessing as well.” Once again, he asked his father, “Don’t you have another blessing for me?”

Isaac answered, “I have blessed your brother with power over you and your brothers. I promised him fruitful soils to produce grain and wine. There is nothing left to give you, my son.”

(Slide 6) Esau began to cry and wail. But Isaac continued, “You will live far away from the rich land, there will be no dew on your land. You will live by using your sword and you will serve your brother. But when you struggle, you will be able to break free from him.”

From that day on Esau hated Jacob. “When our father dies, I will kill Jacob,” he said. These words were told to Rebekah, Jacob’s mother, and she made another plan to save her son.

Lesson 36 God speaks to Jacob

Esau Wants to Kill Jacob

(The figures for this dialogue are not included in the PowerPoint presentation. The teachers should use the figures provided in the visual aid sheets—KW)

Esau: “Huh, I am so angry, so angry! Jacob cheated me out of my birthright, and now he has stolen my blessing. I hate him. I hate Jacob. Maybe our father will die soon. Then I will kill Jacob.”

Rebekah to Jacob: “Jacob, listen! Esau is very, very angry. He is so angry, that he is planning to kill you. Go to Haran, my home town. You can live there with your Uncle Laban. I will send a message to you when Esau is not so angry. Then you can come home again.”

Rebekah to Isaac: “Isaac, my husband, let Jacob go to Haran, to my brother’s home. Over there he can find a young woman who believes and fears the Lord. He can take a wife from Laban’s family.”

Isaac to Jacob: “Jacob, do not marry a Canaanite woman from our place here, because they do not fear the Lord. Go to Haran, to your Uncle Laban, and marry one of his daughters. May God bless you and give you many children and grandchildren. May he bring you back and let you inherit this land that we live in, which God promised to give to Abraham.”

Jacob Flees to Haran

(Slide 3) That same day Jacob said goodbye to his father and mother. But he did not say goodbye to Esau. When he left, he took nothing with him on his journey, because he did not want Esau to know that he had left for Haran.

Jacob walked through mountains, valleys and woods. Occasionally he rested under the trees. Jacob did not have a friend to walk with him, so he had plenty of time to think. “Why have I deceived my father? Why didn’t I wait for God’s timing? Maybe God would have given me the blessing without having to deceive my father.” Jacob also worried about whether his uncle Laban would receive him well when he arrived in Haran. He had not brought any gifts for his uncle!

When it became dark, Jacob looked around. Where would he sleep? There was neither a house nor even a tent nearby. But Jacob was very tired. (Click) He lay down on the ground, put his head on a stone and fell asleep. He thought he was all alone.

Jacob’s Dream at Bethel

(Click) But Jacob was not alone sleeping on the ground. His father’s blessing was with him. And what is even better news, God was always with him, even though Jacob didn’t realize it. That night, God spoke to Jacob through a dream.

In his dream, Jacob saw a stairway from the ground going up into heaven. (Click) There were angels going up and down the steps. On the top of the stairway, Jacob saw the Lord standing and saying to him, (click) “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. You will have many, many descendants and they will be a blessing for all the nations of this earth.”

It was amazing! Now God said to Jacob everything that Isaac had said when he blessed him. Then God added another promise that was only for Jacob: (Click) “Remember, I am

with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” (click)

When Jacob awoke from his dream, he looked around, but the ladder and the angels were gone.

But Jacob knew that God had spoken to him during the night. Full of wonder he said, (click) “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it. This place is the house of God. This is the gate of heaven.”

Jacob’s Promise

Jacob got up. He took the stone that had been his pillow and stood it up. He did not want to forget the place where he met the Lord and his angels. Jacob didn’t have anything to sacrifice. He only poured some oil on the stone. He called the place Bethel (click), meaning “House of God”.

Before this, Jacob had thought that God was the God of his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. Now he knew that God also wanted to be his God. Therefore, he promised, “If God will be with me and watch over me, if he will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father’s house, then he will be my God (click). This stone that I have set up will become a place of worship to God. And of all that God gives me I will give him back one tenth.”

After that Jacob did not feel alone and sad anymore. He felt glad again. He wondered why God was so good to him, even when he had deceived his father. While Jacob kept walking, he always remembered his dream. He also remembered that the Lord would watch over him and never leave him. Now Jacob could walk without fear. God had become his friend. Jacob was no longer alone.

Lesson 37 Jacob in Laban’s Home

Creating Interest

Reviewing the Story through Pictures

Slide 2:

- Who is the man sitting in this picture? (Abraham’s servant)
- Why had he come to the city of Haran? (He tried to find a wife for Isaac)
- Who is the lady giving water to his camels? (Rebekah, Abraham’s niece)
- What was the prayer of Abraham’s servant before Rebekah came?
- How did God answer his prayer? (Rebekah later became Esau and Jacob’s mother.)

Slide 3:

- Where did Jacob go? (To Haran, to the house of his Uncle Laban.)
- Why did his parents send him there? (To find a wife)
- What was God’s promise to Jacob when he was sleeping? (Click 3x)
- (Click) What name did Jacob give to the place where he fell asleep? (Bethel) (Click)
- What did Jacob promise God? (Click)

Telling the Bible Story

Jacob Meets Rachel

Day by day, Jacob walked through valleys and mountains towards the city of Haran. He felt tired, hungry and thirsty. There was still a long way to go. But Jacob thought of God's promise and knew God was near him.

One day, Jacob stood on top of a hill and looked down into the valley. He saw several herdsmen with their flocks (click). Jacob walked towards them and asked, "Where are you from?"

"We are from Haran," answered the herdsmen. Jacob was really happy. Haran! That was where he wanted to go. "If you are from Haran, do you know Laban?" he asked.

"Yes, we do," they said. "Look, that's Rachel, Laban's daughter, with her father's flocks (click). We are waiting for all the flocks to gather, then we will lift the heavy stone from the well and let our animals drink."

When Jacob looked at Rachel, he liked her very much. She was beautiful and had bright eyes. He immediately rolled away the stone which covered the well and let Rachel's sheep drink first. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep with joy that he had arrived. He said (click), "I am Jacob, the son of Rebekah, your aunt." Rachel was very surprised to meet one of her cousins at the well. (Click) She ran home and told her father about it.

Jacob in Laban's House

(Slide 6) When Laban heard the good news, he came out of his house to meet his nephew, Jacob. Even though Jacob didn't bring any gifts, Laban invited him into his house. They treated Jacob well. Meanwhile, Jacob noticed something in Laban's house that could not be found in his parent's home. Laban had idols inside his house. His family worshiped idols. "I will never worship idols," Jacob decided in his heart. "I will only worship the true God who talked to me at Bethel."

Soon Jacob had lived in Laban's house for a month. He helped wherever he was needed. What he did best was care for his uncle's flocks, because he had always done that at home. One day, Laban said to Jacob, "Even though you are my nephew, you don't have to work for nothing. Tell me what I shall give you for the work you do for me."

(Click) Laban had two daughters. Leah, the oldest one, was not pretty. Rachel, the youngest one, was very beautiful. Jacob loved Rachel very much. Therefore, he said to Laban, "I will work for you seven years, in order to have Rachel for my wife."

"That is all right with me," Laban answered.

For seven years, Jacob worked very hard keeping his uncle's flocks. He stayed outside with the sheep and goats. He watched and cared for them day and night. During the day time it was very hot and at night it got very cold. When wild animals caught an animal, Jacob had to fight them. If a sheep was torn up by a lion, Laban made Jacob pay for it. He never accepted an excuse. The seven years did not seem very long to Jacob. He loved Rachel and longed for her to become his wife.

Jacob is Deceived by his Uncle

At last the day came when Jacob was to be married to Rachel. Laban invited all his relatives to the wedding feast. The bride was hidden under a beautiful veil. But when the

night was over, and morning came, Jacob saw that he had married Leah instead of Rachel. Jacob was very angry and disappointed. He had worked so hard, and now his uncle had deceived him.

Jacob ran to his uncle and shouted angrily, “I have worked hard for seven years to have Rachel. Why did you give me Leah instead? You have deceived me!”

Laban only answered, “It is not our custom to let the younger daughter marry before the older one. I will give you Rachel also, if you will work for me for seven more years.”

In this way Jacob got two wives. He loved Rachel more than Leah and his family was not a happy one.

The Lord saw that Leah was not loved by Jacob. Therefore, God helped Leah and she was the first one to give birth to a son. Later she had five more sons and a daughter. This made Leah very happy. But Rachel did not have any children for a long time. That made her jealous of Leah. After waiting for a long time, God remembered Rachel and she also had a son. His name was Joseph. This was the son that Jacob loved the most. “How happy my father Isaac would be to see Joseph,” he thought. “I wish I could go home. I do not want to be in Haran any longer working for Laban.”

But his mother had not sent him any news about whether Esau was still angry with him. Jacob didn’t know that his mother had already died.

The Lord Blesses Jacob in Laban’s House

Jacob felt he could not wait to go home any longer. So, he went to Laban and said, “Give me my two wives and my eleven children, I want to go back to my home country.” But Laban did not want to let him go, because from the time Jacob had come to him the Lord had blessed Laban’s family.

“Stay with me a bit longer,” Laban pleaded. “Tell me what I should give you for the work you will do for me.”

Jacob said, “Very well then, let me go through all your flocks and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark colored lamb and every white, spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages. All newborn lambs that are speckled or spotted and dark colored will belong to me, and the speckled, white and spotted goats. You will have all the white sheep and the dark colored goats. In this way our flocks can be told apart by their color.” Laban agreed to Jacob’s request.

In the coming years, God blessed Jacob. There were a great number of dark lambs born and white, speckled and spotted goats. So, Jacob had a bigger flock than Laban. He had come with empty hands, but God had blessed him bountifully.

God had also given him eleven healthy sons and a beautiful daughter whose name was Dinah. God had kept his promise to Jacob that far. But when would he allow Jacob to go home as he had promised? Next week we will hear about it!

Lesson 38 Jacob Leaves Laban’s Home

Jacob Prepares to Leave Haran

(Slide 2) One day, God spoke to Jacob (click), “Go home to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you.” How wonderful! This was the message Jacob had been waiting for. It did not come from his mother, it came right from God.

But - would Laban let him go? What do you think? Jacob was sure that Laban would not let him go!

Should he just run away? But would Leah and Rachel want to follow him? Or would they rather stay in Haran with their father? The best thing was to talk to them.

Jacob was in the fields taking care of the flocks. He sent a servant to Leah and Rachel with the message, "Come out to the field. I have something important to tell you." (Click) When they came Jacob told them (click), "The Lord has told me to return to my home country. Let us leave secretly, when Laban is not at home. If we don't do it this way, we will never be able to leave."

(Click) "We will go with you," Leah and Rachel agreed. "We don't want to stay with our father. He is not treating us well. He keeps everything for himself. He doesn't give anything to us and our children."

Jacob Flees from Haran

One day, Laban went to shear his sheep in a place which was far away from home. He would not return for three days.

That was an ideal time to pack up and go. Leah and Rachel with their servant girls did most of the packing. Jacob and his servants and his older sons drove all the sheep and goats together. The camels were very useful. They could carry heavy loads. People could ride on them. Jacob loaded all he owned on the backs of the camels. Then he lifted Leah on to one of the camels.

But where was Rachel? She had gone back into her father's house once more. Her father kept household gods. "I had better take them along," Rachel thought. "They can protect us on our long journey and in the foreign country we are going to."

Jacob did not know what she was doing. For sure he would not have allowed her to take the gods, because God, the living God, protected them. So, Rachel did not show him the idols. When Rachel came out of the house again, Jacob lifted her up on another camel and Joseph after her. He was too small to walk a long way.

Then Jacob and his whole family with his large flocks left Haran as fast as they could. They hoped to be far away before Laban returned (click).

Laban Chases After Jacob

(Click) After three days, Laban came back from shearing his sheep. Where was Jacob? Where were Leah and Rachel? Where were his grandchildren? "Where are they all?" Laban shouted.

"They left for Canaan some days ago," a servant told him. Laban was very angry. He quickly gathered his relatives and followed Jacob.

"Jacob has lots of livestock with him. He has the women and children. He cannot be too far away yet," Laban thought. He was right. Seven days later, when he had reached the hill country, he saw Jacob's tents in the distance. "My men and I will stay here overnight," Laban thought. "Then, tomorrow, I will catch them all. Just wait!"

But that night God spoke to Laban in a dream. He said: "Be careful that you do not speak harshly to Jacob."

(Slide 4) The next day Laban went to Jacob's tents. Right away he asked, "Why did you leave secretly without saying goodbye to me? If only you had told me, I would have let

you go with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps. You didn't even give me a chance to kiss my grandchildren goodbye."

Jacob answered, "I was afraid that you wouldn't let us leave."

"Yes, I understand that you miss your home. But why did you steal my gods?" asked Laban. "I didn't steal them," Jacob answered angrily. "Search all our belongings and take everything that is yours!"

Laban went into Jacob's tent and started to look for his gods. Then he went to Leah's tent. In the meantime, Rachel had time to hide the gods inside her camel's saddle and was sitting on it. So, Laban did not find his gods.

"I told you that we have not stolen your gods," Jacob said. "You have searched our private tents, and what did you find? Nothing! What have I done wrong that makes you so hard on me? Twenty years I have worked for you. During that time, you have taken advantage of me. If my God had not watched over me, I would have had to leave you without anything. God has seen my hard work, and he has made me rich."

The Promise Between Jacob and Laban

Laban felt ashamed. He wanted to part with Jacob in a good way, because the fear of God had come into his heart. Therefore, he suggested, "Let us build a pillar of stones so we will always remember this day."

After that the men got busy building the pillar (click). They all helped to heap many stones around it. They were happy doing it, and there were no more harsh words between them. In the evening they all gathered around the pillar. Jacob had invited them for a delicious meal. They feasted, sang and danced. And afterwards Laban and Jacob promised that they would not do any harm to each other.

The next morning, Laban kissed his daughters and his grandchildren goodbye and went back to Haran. Jacob and his family continued their journey home to Canaan.

Lesson 39 Jacob Receives a New Name

Slide 2 to 5 are for reviewing previous lessons.

Jacob is Afraid of Esau

After Laban returned home to Haran, Jacob continued his journey. He was so glad, that after all, they had said goodbye in a friendly way. God had helped this to happen. Now Jacob could finally go home and live peacefully in the land that God had promised to Abraham and Isaac, and to him.

But as soon as Jacob thought of home, there was a new fear in his heart, because there was another problem. (Click) Esau! Jacob knew that very soon he would have to meet his brother, Esau. Would he still be angry with him? Would he want to kill him and his family? Jacob didn't know. God knew Jacob's fearful thoughts, and God encouraged him. As Jacob walked, what was that? Jacob looked up! (Click) He saw angels all around him and his family. God was very near to him as if he wanted to tell him, "I helped you with Laban, I can and will help you to meet Esau." O, how Jacob thanked God!

Then he thought, "It is better that I let my brother know I am coming home. Then he will not be taken by surprise." He sent several of his men to meet Esau. They had to speak politely with Esau and tell him that Jacob was returning home from Haran with his family

and his flocks. They tried to find out about Esau. And what did they find out? When they returned to Jacob, they told him, “Esau is on his way to meet you with four hundred of his men.”

Four hundred men? Jacob became even more afraid. Four hundred men! What was Esau trying to do? Quickly Jacob divided his group in two, including his livestock. If Esau should harm one group, there would still be the other one left.

In his fear, Jacob prayed to God (click), “O God who has said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper.’ I am not worthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown me. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. Save me from the hand of my brother Esau. I am afraid he will come and attack me, with the mothers and their children.”

Jacob Sends Gifts for Esau

(Slide 6) The next day, Jacob prepared gifts for Esau, to make him happy: Two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, twenty female donkeys, and ten male donkeys. He put them in the care of his servants, each group by itself. Jacob instructed his servants. “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you going, and who owns all these animals you have with you?’ Then you are to say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are gifts sent to you, my lord Esau, and Jacob is coming behind us.’”

Jacob Receives a New Name

Jacob had now arrived at the River Jabbok. When night came, Jacob helped Leah and Rachel to cross the stream. On the other side, Jacob erected tents for them. Then he went back to the other side to pray. God reminded him of all the wrong he had done to Esau. He prayed that God wouldn’t leave him.

Then suddenly, Jacob felt that he wasn’t alone. There was a man wrestling with him (Slide 7). Jacob didn’t know the man. He used all his strength to overcome him. Finally, the man grabbed Jacob’s hip, so he had to stop wrestling. But Jacob still held on to the man. He was certain that the man was a messenger sent by God.

When the sun began to come up, the angel said to him (click), “Let me go. It is daybreak.” Jacob answered (click), “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

“What is your name?” asked the angel. “Jacob” answered Jacob. He knew that his name meant, deceiver. The angel replied, “Your name will no longer be Jacob. From now on your name will be Israel (click), for you have struggled with God and with men and have won.” Then he blessed Jacob and left him.

When Jacob got up from the ground, he walked with a limp. “I have won?” wondered Jacob. But he was no longer afraid. God had changed him. He would no longer be a deceiver, he would truly be a man of God.

Jacob crossed the River Jabbok again to meet his family. When he went to greet them, they saw that he limped. They also saw that Jacob’s face shone, and that he was no longer afraid. Something special must have happened to him. They took down their tents and loaded them on the camels. Then they walked on. They were close to home now.

Lesson 40 Jacob is Reconciled to Esau

Slide 2 is for reviewing the previous lesson.

Jacob Gets Ready to Meet Esau

(Slide 3) “Father has come back, Father has come back!” Joseph shouted. He had been waiting anxiously for his father who had spent the night on the other side of the river. Now Joseph saw him coming up toward the family tents. Joseph ran to greet him. But when he got closer, he suddenly stopped. His father walked with a limp (click). “Father, you are limping! Where did you hurt yourself?” Joseph asked. Jacob took Joseph’s hand. “It doesn’t matter, Joseph. Father does not feel pain (click). Last night Father was praying. God touched me. After getting up from prayer I walked with a limp. But I am not sad. God is very good. He loves me, and he loves you, Joseph. Now let’s go and find the others.”

Jacob was glad to see Joseph and the other children. Even though he had not slept the whole night, his face looked happy. He was no longer afraid to meet Esau. But there were many preparations to be made. So, he said to his children, “Today we will meet your Uncle Esau. He is older than I, so we will really have to honor him. Now everyone of you go to your mother and stay close to her. Later, when we see Uncle Esau, I will go first to meet him, and you will all follow me with your mothers. Do as I do, bowing to the ground seven times.” Jacob ordered Leah to go first with all her sons, and Rachel to come behind Leah, leading little Joseph by the hand.

Jacob and Esau Make Peace

After everything was arranged, they began to walk again. Jacob, who walked ahead of his family, lifted his head. He saw a cloud of dust in the far distance (click). That must be Esau with his four hundred men! Yes, it was Esau. As they came closer Jacob recognized his brother. Jacob and his family walked to meet him, just as Jacob had told them to. Now Jacob was close enough to see his brother’s face. It did not look angry anymore. Esau came running to meet Jacob. Jacob bowed down to Esau. He bowed down to the ground seven times. That was his way of saying, “Sorry, please forgive me!” to Esau. But Esau had already reached Jacob. He threw his arms around him and kissed him. Then they both started to cry (Slide 4).

They did not cry because they were sad. They cried because they were so happy. It was such a long time since they had met or shown love toward each other. God had changed Jacob, but he had also changed the heart of Esau who had wanted to kill Jacob. Now they could forgive each other and love one another.

Then Esau looked around at all the people whom Jacob had brought and asked, “Who are all these people?” “This is my family, and these are all the children God has given me,” Jacob said.

Then Leah and her children and Rachel and Joseph bowed down to the ground as they had seen Jacob do. “And what were all those herdsmen with their camels and sheep and goats who met me?” Esau asked.

“That was my gift for you,” Jacob said. “I gave them to you, so you would show me love and receive me back as your brother”. “But I have many flocks. You do not have to give me so many animals,” Esau said.

“No, brother, please keep them,” Jacob pleaded. “The Lord has blessed me. Please keep the animals I sent for you. I am so happy to see you and know that you have forgiven me.” So, Esau kept Jacob’s gift with a glad heart. He did not want to leave his brother again.

“Let’s walk home together,” he suggested. But Jacob said, “You go ahead, Esau, and I will follow more slowly. Some of my children are still small. In my flock there are little lambs which still drink from their mothers. They cannot walk fast. Later we will meet at your place.”

And that is what happened. Esau with his men went home ahead of Jacob and his large family. Jacob took his time and followed slowly.

Jacob Builds an Altar at Shechem

With a light heart Jacob continued his journey with his family. God had answered his prayer. God had saved him and his family. God was so good to him. How could he thank him? Jacob knew.

When Jacob and his family and all his flocks arrived at the border of Canaan, they stopped at the city of Shechem. There they erected their tents to stay for a while. Then Jacob built an altar to God. His whole family was present when he brought a sacrifice, several of his good animals, to thank God for all he had done for him.

Do you remember that after Jacob had woken from his dream at Bethel, he had promised God, “If God will be with me and watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father’s house, then the Lord will be my God.”

Had God been with him and watched over him? Had God given him food to eat and clothes to wear? Had God brought him back safely to the land of Canaan?

Yes, God had done all this for him. Because of this Jacob named this altar, “Mighty is the God of Israel.” He did not say the God of Abraham, or the God of Jacob. He said, “Mighty is the God of Israel”, using the new name which the Lord had given him. He acknowledged God to be his own God, the God of Israel. And he was a mighty God. This was the way Jacob said thankyou to God.

Lesson 41 Jacob Worships at Bethel

Creating Interest

Review (Slides 2 to 6)

Let the children enjoy the five pictures on the wall. They will remember the stories and could say a few sentences about each picture.

Talking About Idol Worship

Open the conversation by asking the children (Slide 7):

Can you point out something in the third picture that does not belong in Jacob’s family? (Click - The idol in Rachel’s hand.)

Why do you think Rachel took her father’s idol along? (Maybe she had seen her father honor this idol and believed it could protect her.)

God hates idols and idol worship. God hated this idol in Rachel's hand. God does not want us to have idols in our house and serve them. The more we love God, the more we will hate idols. God provides us with all we need. He protects us. He wants us to love him and serve him only.

Today we will hear what happened to Rachel's idol.

Telling the Bible Story

God Speaks to Jacob

The people in the city of Shechem were really surprised to see Jacob and his family settle outside their city. Jacob and his family lived in tents, as if they would not stay long in this place. But they had bought the piece of land where their tents stood. When the children sneaked close to Jacob's tents, they saw something they had never seen in their city. It was an altar of rough stones, put together to make a sort of table with a flat stone on top. But they could not see any figure of a god or any other symbol. Just the stones. Could you explain to the children of Shechem what the altar was for? Do you remember the name of the altar? Yes, "Mighty is the God of Israel".

With this name Jacob wanted to say, that his God was the only God, a mighty God.

But would Jacob always stay in Shechem? Had he not promised to go to Bethel? Did he not want to go home and see his father?

(Slide 8) One night, Jacob awoke from his sleep. He heard a voice calling him. "Jacob, Jacob!" (Click) "Yes, Lord," Jacob answered.

"Go up to Bethel and stay there. Build an altar to God who appeared to you there when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

As soon as Jacob had heard the voice of the Lord, his heart was at peace. Yes, he would return to Bethel, as he had promised the Lord, to build an altar. Then Bethel would be a place where people would worship God.

Jacob's Family Throws Away Their Idols

(Slide 9) But before Jacob and his family could go to Bethel, something else needed to be done. Jacob knew that the Lord was holy. He was the only God and did not allow people to worship any other gods beside him, the living God. Only those with pure hearts and clean hands could come to pray to him and worship him.

Jacob had found out that Rachel had stolen the gods of her father and still had them in her tent. Surely there were others who had brought idols and fetishes from Haran to Canaan too. God hated all those idols and fetishes, which prevented Jacob's family from praying to God alone and trusting fully in him.

The next evening Jacob called all the members of his family, Leah and Rachel with their children, as well as their servant girls and the herdsmen. When they had all gathered, Jacob began to speak to them.

"Listen to me, all of you! Very soon we will fold up our tents and move on to Bethel.

That is the place where I rested the first night after I had fled from my brother Esau. God talked to me there. In Bethel I will build an altar for God, who helped me when I was in great trouble. I promised God that I would build a place for the worship of God, if he brought me back to Canaan safely. God is a holy God who does not allow us to have any foreign gods with us. He hates idols and will not bless our family if we still hide idols in our tents. Therefore, before we go, throw away all foreign gods, all idols and everything

else that you keep protecting you. You don't need them anymore, because God is able to protect you, as you have seen. Bring all your idols to me, I will bury them under that big oak tree over there. You must also clean yourselves up and change your clothes, before we go to Bethel."

That was a long speech Jacob made. If you had been Joseph that evening, what would you have remembered? Jacob's family understood. They returned to their tents to get the things they had brought from Haran to protect them. Rachel brought the gods she had stolen from her father's house. The women also took off their golden earrings and brought them all to Jacob. Jacob had a hole dug under the oak tree, and he buried all those things.

The next morning, they washed themselves and changed their clothes, as Jacob had told them to do. They already felt so much cleaner after throwing away their idols. Now they wanted their bodies and their clothes to be clean too. Yes, God was a holy God. They could now worship him with all their heart, without fear.

Jacob and His Family Worship God at Bethel

That same day the tents were taken down and loaded on the camels' backs. The flocks were driven together. Jacob and his family left Shechem to go to Bethel. They were eager to see the place where God had spoken to their father in a beautiful dream. When they came through a village or a settlement, the people would stand at the side of the road. Nobody did them any harm, because all those people knew in their hearts, that a mighty God protected the strangers passing through their area.

Finally, they all came to Bethel. The stone Jacob had set up as a pillar was still there. Jacob used it to build the altar.

Then once more, he told them the story of his long journey from the beginning to the end. Leah and Rachel listened. All the sons of Jacob listened and learned from their father, how to trust God. Then they all worshiped God.

At Bethel, God came to Jacob again and spoke to him. He promised him once more, that all the land around him would one day belong to him and to his children. I will read God's words from the Bible (click 2x).

Read Genesis 35:10-12.

Jacob Comes Home to His Father

After worshipping at the new altar Jacob had built in Bethel, it was finally time to go home to Isaac. But before they got there, when they were close to the city of Bethlehem, something very sad happened. Rachel expected her second baby. After she had given birth to a little boy she died. How sad this was for the whole family. Little Joseph had a baby brother whom his father named Benjamin. But he no longer had a mother. They stopped to bury Rachel. Jacob built a beautiful gravestone so that Rachel whom he had loved very much would be remembered for a long time.

Finally, they came home to meet Isaac, the grandfather. That was a wonderful, joyous meeting. Rebekah had died, and that made Jacob sad. But his father comforted him. Isaac enjoyed all his thirteen grandchildren. He took on his lap little Benjamin, whose mother had just died. We can be sure he blessed him and Joseph in a special way. Isaac lived for twelve more years and Jacob lived close to him. Then one day the Lord called Isaac

home. Together Esau and Jacob buried him in the same tomb where Abraham, Sarah and Rebekah had been buried.

Lesson 42 Joseph is Sold to Egypt

Joseph and His Brothers

(Slide 2) Jacob's family lived in Canaan, near the city of Hebron. They did not own a house or any land. They were still strangers. Although God had promised Jacob that one day Canaan would be given to his children and grandchildren, the time had not yet come. So they still lived in tents just outside of Hebron.

Jacob's family had herds of cattle, and many flocks of goats and sheep. Sometimes the flocks had to be taken far away to new fresh grazing places. The grownup sons took care of them, because Jacob had become an old man. Only two of his sons were still young. Joseph was seventeen years old by now, and there was his younger brother Benjamin.

Even though Joseph was still young, sometimes he was sent out with his brothers to watch the livestock. But Joseph didn't like his brothers very much. They had harsh manners and they liked to fight. At night, Joseph told his father of the bad things that he saw and heard from his brothers. This made the brothers angry with Joseph.

Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons. He was one of his youngest sons. You remember, that he was the first son of Rachel whom Jacob loved so much. One day, Jacob gave Joseph a beautiful colorful robe. Joseph looked more like a rich man's son than a shepherd boy, wearing the new robe. Joseph liked his coat very much. But his brothers did not like it. Their father had never given them such beautiful clothes, so why should Joseph have this colorful robe? His brothers were becoming more jealous of Joseph. They hated him, because his father loved him more than them.

Joseph's Dreams

One night, Joseph had a dream. The next day he told his dream to his brothers.

(Click) "Listen," Joseph said. "Last night I dreamt that we were binding sheaves of grain in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

Joseph's brothers were not happy to hear about this dream. Look at their faces! They remembered Joseph's colorful robe and said angrily, "Do you think you will be our king?" The brothers hated Joseph even more because of the dream. But God gave Joseph that dream.

Then, Joseph dreamt for the second time. Even though his brothers were furious after hearing his first dream, Joseph still told them the second dream.

(Click) "I dreamt again," Joseph said. "I saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars bow down to me." This time, even Jacob was not pleased to hear about Joseph's dream. "What kind of a dream is that?" he said. "Do you think that your mother and I and your brothers will come and bow down before you?" But Jacob could not forget that dream. He wondered if God was trying to speak to Joseph of his future?

Joseph is Sent to Look for his Brothers

One day, Joseph's brothers were tending the flocks far away from their father's tents in Hebron. They had gone to look for a good place for the flocks to graze. After the brothers had been gone for several weeks, Jacob called Joseph and said, "Joseph, go and look for your brothers and see if they are all right. Then come back and tell me."

(Slide 3) Quickly, Joseph left. He walked by himself, wearing his beautiful long robe. But when he arrived at Shechem, his brothers weren't there.

A man asked him, "Who are you looking for?"

"I am looking for my brothers," Joseph said. "Have you seen them?"

"Yes, I have. They said that they were going to Dothan."

So Joseph kept on walking until he saw his brothers with their flocks. They were resting near a well close to the city of Dothan.

Joseph is Sold to Egypt

The brothers saw Joseph coming.

"Hey, look! Here comes the dreamer wearing his noble robe," they said to each other.

"Let's kill him and throw him in this well. Then we'll see what comes out of his dreams."

But Reuben, the eldest brother, didn't agree. "Let's not kill him," he said. "Let's just throw him into the well. There is no water in it." Reuben said this because later he wanted to take Joseph out of the well and send him back to his father.

(Slide 4) The brothers did as Reuben had suggested. When Joseph arrived, they grabbed his coat and tore it off him. Then they threw Joseph into the dry well. The well was deep, Joseph could not escape. He cried and asked his brothers to take him out again. But they ate their lunch without paying attention to Joseph's fearful cries.

While they were eating, a group of traders came towards them (click).

They were taking goods and spices to Egypt. Seeing them with their camels, Judah, one of Joseph's brothers said, "What good is it to kill our brother Joseph? Let's sell him to those traders." Everybody agreed. At that moment, Reuben was not there to protect Joseph. Quickly the brothers pulled Joseph out of the well. Joseph thought that they were releasing him. But, what happened? He saw Judah bargaining with the traders. They paid twenty pieces of silver to the brothers.

Joseph was shocked. He realized that his brothers were selling him to the traders. He cried and begged to be sent home. But they closed their ears to their brother's cries. Joseph's hands were tied. He had to go with the traders to Egypt. He looked around again and again. Soon he could not see his brothers anymore.

(Slide 5) Day after day Joseph had to follow the traders. In his fear and loneliness, he suddenly remembered his father's words that God would always be with him. Thinking of God comforted Joseph. God would never leave him, even though his brothers had sold him to strangers. God would always watch over him, even in a country as far away as Egypt!

And then, one day, when Joseph looked up, this is what he saw. It was the pyramids of Egypt, which had been built as burial sites for the old Egyptian kings, named Pharaoh.

Jacob Deceived by his Sons

When Reuben came back, he saw that Joseph was no longer in the well.

“What have you done with him?” he asked. “What are we going to say to our father?”

Reuben shouted. However, the other brothers had already made a plan. They killed a goat and dipped Joseph’s long robe into its blood (Slide 6). “We will tell father that Joseph was killed by a fierce animal,” they said.

But they would not say it themselves. They called a servant and told him to take the coat to their father. They told the servant to tell Jacob, “We found this cloth near our place. Examine it and see if this is your son’s coat or not.”

What a sad day it was for Jacob when the servant came to him with the message from his sons. Jacob was very sad when he saw Joseph’s coat covered in blood.

He cried, “My son, my son, some fierce animal must have devoured him.”

When his sons came home later, he did not want to be comforted. And even though the sons saw how sad their father was, they didn’t tell him that Joseph was still alive. They didn’t tell him that they had sold Joseph as a slave to traders going to Egypt.

Lesson 43 God is With Joseph in Egypt

Joseph is Sold in the Slave Market

In Canaan Jacob thought that a wild beast had killed Joseph. But Joseph had not been killed. He was still alive. Where was he?

(Slide 2) Joseph was on his way to Egypt. The traders were very happy that they had bought a young man as healthy and clever as Joseph. They would surely get a good price for him at the slave market.

When you hear the word market, you will imagine vegetables, meat, fruit or flowers. Sometimes birds and animals are sold in special markets. But have you ever heard of a market that sells people?

In Egypt there was a market where people were sold as slaves. A slave is different from a household helper. Household helpers receive a wage and can choose the people for whom they work. But slaves were people who were bought with money and became the possession of the one who bought them. Their masters could do whatever they wanted with them. A slave had no freedom.

(Slide 3) Joseph now stood in the slave market together with many other people who were to be sold. People came and touched his muscles to see how strong he was and how hard he would be able to work for them. Finally, a rich man came. He was an official who worked for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. That day he was looking for a slave who could work in his household. When he saw Joseph, he liked the look of him and bought him from the traders who had brought him to Egypt.

Joseph in Potiphar's House

Potiphar took Joseph to his rich and beautiful house. Joseph was very surprised when he saw the house, because he had always lived in a tent. There were many other slaves who worked for Potiphar besides Joseph.

Joseph's life had really changed. Before he came to Egypt, he was the spoiled son of his father Jacob who loved him so much. From time to time he had helped his brothers tend the livestock. Now he was a slave in a very rich household. Nobody prayed with him, because the Egyptians did not know the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom Joseph prayed. They prayed to idols, and they worshiped the sun. But Joseph did not follow their idol worship. He kept on praying to the living God and did not forget what his grandfather Isaac and his father Jacob had taught him about God.

God did not forget Joseph. He was with Joseph in that strange land, far away from Canaan and the tents of his father. God loved Joseph and he had a very good plan for his life. God also helped Joseph to do his work well. Some things which Joseph was told to do he had never done before. But he did them as well as he could and in a good spirit. Potiphar watched Joseph work and he was really amazed. He worked so well, he did not grumble or make a face, and all his work was done very well. Potiphar felt that Joseph was different from his other slaves.

(Slide 4) Joseph had been working for his Egyptian master for several months. One day Potiphar called him and said to him, "Joseph, I have watched you and seen that you are honest and work well. Now I am making you the overseer over my household and all I own. From now on you tell the other slaves what to do. Here are the keys for all the rooms of my house. I trust you, Joseph."

From that day on God blessed the household of Potiphar, and even his fields, because of Joseph. God was with Joseph in everything he did.

Joseph is Tempted

Joseph was a handsome young man, and the wife of Potiphar liked him very much. She often tried to invite him into her bedroom, but Joseph did not want to go. He told her, "Your husband trusts me. How can I do anything that is wrong in the eyes of the Lord?" Joseph knew that God did not allow people to disturb the wife of another man. He wanted to be obedient to God. But she kept on inviting him.

(Slide 5) One day there was no one in the house besides him and Potiphar's wife. All of a sudden, she grabbed him by the robe he wore and said, "Come with me to my bedroom and sleep with me!"

But Joseph refused to go into her room. He let his coat go and ran out of the house. Now Potiphar's wife really hated him.

(Slide 6) When her husband came home, she cried, "Joseph is a bad man. He wanted to come into our bedroom and sleep with me. Here is his coat. He left it in my room!" She showed her husband Joseph's coat as proof of what she said.

Potiphar believed his wife more than Joseph. (Slide 7) He threw Joseph into prison. There he sat in a little cell locked up like an evildoer.

Joseph Serves in Prison

Joseph was so sad.

“Lord, I did not do anything wrong to the wife of Pharaoh,” he prayed.

“I know,” God seemed to whisper in his heart. “Don’t be afraid. I am also with you here in prison.” After that Joseph was calm again.

Then God moved the heart of the overseer of the prison, so that he really liked Joseph. He gave work to him to do. Joseph’s task was to visit the other prisoners and help them when they needed something. When he helped others, he could forget about himself and then he was not sad any longer.

(Slide 8) Two of Pharaoh’s high officials were in prison. One was his cupbearer, who had to pour drinks into Pharaoh’s cup. The other was his baker, who had to see that the bread and cakes on Pharaoh’s table were always fresh and tasty. They had both done something wrong and Pharaoh had ordered that they be thrown into prison. One morning both of them looked quite sad.

Joseph asked them, “Why are you so sad this morning?”

“Last night we both had dreams”, answered the cupbearer and the baker. “But there is no one who can tell us the meaning of our dreams.”

“God is the interpreter of dreams,” Joseph said. “But tell me your dreams.”

The cupbearer was the first one to tell his dream.

(Click) “In my dream last night, I saw a vine before me that had three branches. I saw buds, then blossoms, and then there were ripe grapes on the three branches. Pharaoh’s cup was in my hands, and I put the cup in his hand.”

“This is what your dream means,” said Joseph, because God had shown him the meaning. “The three branches mean three days. In three days time, Pharaoh will let you out of prison and you will again be his cupbearer.”

Then Joseph added, “When all goes well with you, remember to tell Pharaoh about me. I have been taken away from my home country, and here in Egypt I have done nothing wrong. I wish so much that he would get me out of this prison.”

When the baker heard the good meaning of the cupbearer’s dream he said, “I too had a dream. (Click) In my dream, I carried three baskets full of bread on my head. In the top basket there were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh. But the birds came and ate out of the basket on my head.”

“This is the meaning of your dream,” Joseph said. “Three baskets mean three days. In three days Pharaoh will give the command for you to be put to death.”

What Joseph had said came true. Three days later Pharaoh celebrated his birthday. On that day the cupbearer and the baker were released from prison and had to stand before Pharaoh. He pardoned the cupbearer, so that he could serve Pharaoh again, but the baker was condemned to death.

(Slide 9) Even though the cupbearer was close to Pharaoh each day, he forgot to tell him about Joseph.

Lesson 44 Joseph becomes Pharaoh's Assistant

Pharaoh's Dream

Near the jail where Joseph stayed, there was a beautiful building called a palace. The king of Egypt lived there. He was called the Pharaoh.

(Slide 2) Late one night everything was silent inside the palace. The guards and the servants who were on duty had to walk quietly so they didn't disturb the Pharaoh's sleep. In his bedroom, the Pharaoh slept peacefully. On that quiet night, the king of Egypt had a dream (click). In his dream, he was standing on the bank of the Nile, the biggest river in Egypt. Suddenly, he saw seven cows, sleek and fat, coming out of the river and grazing among the reeds.

It was a happy sight to see those fat cows grazing peacefully. But all of a sudden seven other ugly thin cows came out of the Nile. These cows swallowed the fat ones. But the ugly, thin cows did not get any fatter after they had eaten the fat cows.

The king awoke and wondered what that dream meant. But when he fell asleep again, he had a second dream (click). This time he saw seven heads of healthy, good grain, growing on a single stalk. After that, the king saw another seven heads of grain, thin and scorched by the east wind, growing on a single stalk. The thin heads of grain swallowed the seven full healthy heads. But they did not look any fuller afterwards. Then the king woke up. He could not sleep for the rest of the night. He kept thinking about the dreams. What did the dreams mean? (Click)

The Cupbearer Remembers Joseph

(Slide 3) Very early in the morning, Pharaoh went to sit on his throne (click). He called together all the wise men in his kingdom. He asked them to tell the meaning of his dreams. But none of them could tell him what the dreams meant.

(Click) The cupbearer, who served at the king's table, saw that Pharaoh was troubled. He heard about his strange dreams. Then, suddenly, he remembered! Two years ago, he himself had had a dream and Joseph had told him the meaning of his dream. Therefore, he said to the king, "Do not be troubled. I know a man who can interpret your dreams." "Who is he? What is his name?" asked the king.

"His name is Joseph, a man from Canaan. I met him in jail, and he told me the meaning of my dream. He asked me to tell you that he has not done anything wrong."

"Bring Joseph from the jail. He has to come before me," ordered the king.

(Slide 4) Quickly the servants followed the king's order. Joseph was told to shave. Then new clothes were put on him instead of his prison clothes. The door of his cell was opened. Joseph saw the sun and smelled the fresh air again, after being locked up for so

long. As he was led to the king's palace he passed through the beautiful garden. "Thank you, Lord!" Joseph whispered. God had caused the cupbearer to remember him and now he was released from jail.

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

(Slide 5) Joseph was led to a big room in the palace where the king sat on his throne. Joseph bowed to the ground to show his respect to the king.

"Are you Joseph, the slave from Canaan?" asked Pharaoh. "I was told that you can tell the meaning of a dream."

"I cannot do this," said Joseph. "But God can give you the answer you desire." Then the king told his dreams to Joseph.

When Joseph heard the dreams, the Lord told him what they meant. Then Joseph could explain them to the king.

(Click) "The two dreams have the same meaning. God has shown the king what He will do. The seven sleek and fat cows and the seven healthy and good heads of grain mean seven good years. For seven years, there will be a wonderful harvest in Egypt. The seven ugly and thin cows and the thin and scorched heads of grain mean seven bad years of famine which will come after the seven rich years. God will do this very soon, that is why the king dreamt two very similar dreams." "What should I do?" asked the king.

Joseph gave very good advice to the king (click). "The king should appoint a wise man to be responsible for the rich harvest which will come for seven years", Joseph said. "He should build storehouses in all the cities of Egypt and collect grain during the seven years of abundance. This grain should be kept in the storehouses so that when the famine years come, there will be enough food for the people. Then the country will not be ruined by the famine."

Joseph is Appointed as Pharaoh's Assistant

When Pharaoh heard Joseph's explanation he said, "Joseph, I will make you the man who will look after everything in Egypt (click). For the spirit of God is guiding you." Then, the king took the ring off his finger and gave it to Joseph. (Click) "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." Joseph was dressed in fine linen and a gold chain put around his neck.

(Slide 6) Afterwards, Joseph had to ride in a chariot all around Egypt. Everybody bowed down to honor him as Pharaoh's new assistant who would help the people of Egypt. Soon after, Joseph started to work. As the king's assistant, he commanded that a storehouse should be built in every city to store grain.

Joseph's Family

The time came when Joseph could marry. The king gave him the daughter of a priest to be his wife. Together they had two sons. Joseph was so happy that he had his own family. He did not long for his family in Canaan so much. He expressed this in the names he gave to his sons. The first son was named Manasseh, which means, "The Lord has made me forget my suffering." The second son was named Ephraim, which means, "The Lord has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

Lesson 45 Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt

Joseph's Brothers go to Egypt

(Slide 2) When Jacob and his sons got up in the morning, they did not like what they saw. There were hardly any fresh green leaves on the trees, because it had not rained for a long time. The grass was brown, the rivers had dried out. They could hear the animals crying out because of hunger and thirst. When they sat down for breakfast, the family did not have much to eat. In Canaan there were no storehouses like Joseph had built in Egypt. They could not buy food anywhere. Since all the brothers were married and had children, there were 70 people all together who had to be fed.

One day, Jacob heard that there was enough grain in Egypt and the grain was being sold. Even people who were not Egyptians could buy food there. Father Jacob called his sons together and said (click), "All of you have to go to Egypt and buy some food there. If you don't go, we will die because there is hardly any food left. Take enough money with you in your bags and go immediately."

(Click) "I want to go along," said Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother.

(Click) "No, my child," answered Jacob, "I'm afraid something bad could happen to you like what happened to your brother Joseph, who was killed by a wild animal. You stay with me, while your brothers are gone" (click).

Joseph Tests his Brothers

(Slide 3) The next day Joseph's brothers left for Egypt. They took along donkeys to carry back the grain sacks. It was a long journey. On the fifth day, the brothers finally saw the pyramids, the burial place for Egyptian kings in the distance. They had to walk one more day before they reached the capital city in Egypt.

"Where are the storehouses of grain?" they asked. The Egyptians didn't understand their language, so they were brought to the palace of the king. In the palace they were brought before the king's assistant. Who was he? Yes, he was Joseph. But his brothers did not recognize him. Joseph was no longer the teenager whom they had sold to Egypt. He was now a grown man dressed like a wealthy Egyptian. Even his hairstyle looked Egyptian.

(Slide 4) The brothers bowed deeply before the king's assistant. They did not know that he was their brother Joseph whom they had sold to Egypt.

But Joseph recognized his brothers. He felt like crying for joy, because in his heart he had forgiven them. But he tried to keep calm.

(Click) When his brothers bowed down before him, Joseph remembered his dreams in his father's house. Now the dreams were fulfilled. Joseph knew that God had brought his brothers to meet him. Were they still mean like before? Joseph wanted to find out, so he tested them.

"Where are you from?" he asked with a harsh voice.

"We are from Canaan," they answered honestly. (Click) "We are all brothers and we have come to buy food in Egypt."

(Click) "That's a lie!" said Joseph to them. "You are spies and have come to find out where our country is unprotected."

"No, master," they answered fearfully. "We are honest men!"

“No, you are spies, that’s what you are,” said Joseph.

How could the brothers convince Joseph? They told him the whole truth.

“There were twelve brothers in our family,” they said. “We left the youngest brother with our father who is very old, and there was another one who ... who ... has passed away.”

“You are telling me lies,” Joseph said. (Click) “I will not believe you unless you bring your youngest brother to me. Choose one among you to go home and bring your youngest brother here.” Then Joseph had all of his brothers locked up for three days (click).

Joseph’s Brothers Go Home Without Simeon

(Slide 5) On the third day, the brothers were released and brought to Joseph again.

Joseph said (click), “I fear and obey God; therefore, your lives will be spared. But to prove that you are telling the truth, one of you must stay in jail, until you come back here with your youngest brother. The rest of you can go home with enough food supplies (click).”

Then Joseph’s brothers said to each other in their own language (click), “Now, we are being punished because of what we did to our brother before. He asked us for help, but we ignored him and sold him (click).”

Reuben, the oldest brother added, “Didn’t I tell you not to harm Joseph? But you did not listen to me. That’s why all this trouble is happening to us.”

They thought Joseph couldn’t understand them, but he did. Now he knew that his brothers did regret what they had done to him. Their hearts were changed. Joseph was so moved that he went outside and cried. But he still did not tell them that he was Joseph. When Joseph came back, he had his brother Simeon bound and sent back to jail. The others could go home.

Their bags were filled with grain. But the money they gave as a payment for the food was put back into their bags. That was Joseph’s order, but his brothers did not know about it.

(Slide 6) In the evening when they came to the place where they wanted to rest, one of the brothers opened his bag. He wanted to feed his donkey. And what did he find in his bag? He found the money he had given for the grain (click). “How did this money get back into my bag?” he asked full of fear. (Click) “What is God doing to us?” they all asked (click).

Joseph’s Brothers Report to Their Father

When the nine brothers arrived in Canaan, they told their father Jacob all about their journey.

When they opened their bags of grain, they all found their money. But they still didn’t know that Joseph had ordered the money to be returned.

When Jacob had heard all about Egypt and that Benjamin had to go to Egypt, he said, “Benjamin will not go to Egypt. Joseph died and Simeon is in jail. I will not let Benjamin go to Egypt.”

Lesson 46 Joseph forgives His Brothers

Returning to Egypt with Benjamin

(Slide 2) “Reuben, (click) do we still have enough wheat left in the sacks you bought in Egypt?” Jacob asked his oldest son (click).

“There’s only a little left, Father. It will not last until the end of this month.”

“Then go back to Egypt. Surely, you do not want us all to starve to death.”

“Of course not, Father,” Reuben answered. “But we have told you before that we cannot go back to Egypt without Benjamin.”

Jacob was really troubled when he heard this. He thought that Joseph had been killed by wild animals and Simeon was in jail. Now, Benjamin was being taken away from him.

(Click) “Benjamin is not allowed to go,” he said.

Then, Judah stepped forward. “Our food supply is almost gone, Father. Please let Benjamin come with us, so our family will not starve to death. I will be responsible for my brother. I will bring him back to you, Father, I promise!” (Click)

“All right then, Benjamin can go if Judah takes responsibility for him,” Jacob answered.

“Go now, and do not forget to take gifts for the young king, some spices, nuts and honey.

You must take back the money that was put back in your bags, and you have to take money to buy more food. May the Almighty God soften the young king’s heart and let you find mercy. May he give all of you a safe journey. Be sure to bring back Simeon and Benjamin.”

Benjamin was very happy when he learned that he was allowed to go to Egypt. He waved to his father, and then they all left.

Dinner in the House of Joseph

“Judah, tell me about the king’s assistant in Egypt,” begged Benjamin. His big brother Judah was always close to him.

“He is very powerful, he is a mighty man in Egypt, just below the Pharaoh.”

“Do you think he will accept us kindly?” Benjamin asked anxiously.

“Of course! Because he is waiting for you.”

Judah was speaking the truth. When Joseph recognized Benjamin among the brothers, he was really happy. He asked his steward to take them to his house for dinner. But before the brothers went into Joseph’s house, they told the steward, “When we went home last time, we found our money in our sacks. Here it is.”

“Do not worry,” said the steward. “Your God, the God of your father, has given you a treasure in your sacks. I received your silver for the food you bought.” Then he brought Simeon to them. How happy they all were. They were given water to wash their feet, and their donkeys were fed. Then they prepared their gifts for the king’s assistant.

(Slide 3) When Joseph came home at noon, the brothers bowed to the ground to show their respect. His brothers gave him their gifts from Canaan. Joseph accepted them happily. He asked how they were and how their father was.

(Click) “Is this your youngest brother?” asked Joseph, looking at Benjamin.

“Yes, this is our youngest brother, Benjamin.”

Because Joseph had missed his brother so much, he went into his room and cried. Not because of sadness, but for joy. Then Joseph washed his face and came out again. (Click)

Then dinner was served. The brothers were told where to sit. They were so surprised. Reuben had to sit at the head of the table, and then all the other brothers according to their age. How could this king’s assistant know their ages? Benjamin was given five times as much food as his brothers. But none of them was jealous. Everybody was happy and enjoyed the good dinner.

Who Stole the Silver Cup?

After the meal Joseph called one of the guards and instructed him, “Fill their sacks with as much food as you can and put my silver cup in the sack of the youngest.”

Early in the morning the brothers left. They were already on their way home, when they heard loud calling behind them. “Stop! Stop! You are thieves. Why have you stolen my master’s silver cup?”

“We didn’t steal anything. If you find the silver cup in one of our sacks, you can kill the person in whose sack it is, and the rest of us will be your slaves.”

“No, only the person who stole the cup has to go back to Egypt. The rest of you may go home,” said Joseph’s guards.

Quickly, they unloaded the sacks from their donkeys. One by one the sacks were opened. But they could not find the cup. At last, the guard came to Benjamin’s sack. (Slide 4) When he opened it, he found the silver cup in it. They couldn’t speak a word. They could not think how the cup had gotten into Benjamin’s sack. But the brothers did not let Benjamin go back to Egypt by himself. They all went with him. They had really changed!

Joseph Forgives his Brothers

Joseph was waiting in his house. The brothers all fell to the ground before him.

“What have you done?” Joseph asked firmly.

Judah answered, “We cannot say anything. God has uncovered our sins. We will be your servants.” “That is not what I intend. Only Benjamin shall stay in Egypt, because the silver cup was found in his sack.”

Now Judah could not hold back anymore. He told Joseph how he had promised his father to bring Benjamin back. He said, “Master, our brother Benjamin is loved the most by our father. If he does not return to Canaan, our father will be very troubled. Let me stay here and be your servant in Egypt, but please let Benjamin go home.”

Now Joseph knew for sure that his brothers were changed. He could no longer hide that he was their brother. He began to weep loudly, so that the Egyptians outside could hear him. He cried and said, “I am your brother Joseph!”

Now the brothers were really shocked. They did not dare to look up or go near. But Joseph spoke kindly to them. “Come close to me. You used to hate me and sold me to Egypt. However, God guided me and made me the king’s assistant, so that I can help our family in this time of famine. Go back to Canaan.

Tell our father that Joseph is still alive and has become the king's assistant. Bring him here and all of your families, because the famine will last five more years.”

After Joseph comforted his brothers, he hugged Benjamin. Then he hugged and kissed his brothers, as a sign that he loved them and had forgiven them.

Pharaoh heard that the eleven men from Canaan were Joseph's brothers. He said to Joseph, “Have your brothers' sacks filled with food before they go home to your father. Let them bring your father to Egypt. I will give them the best land in Egypt to live in. Let them take carts from here so that your father, your brothers' wives and their children can ride in carts.”

How good of Pharaoh! He did this because Joseph had served him faithfully. Moreover, each of the brothers got a set of clothes. But Benjamin received five sets of clothes. Then, Joseph released his brothers and said, “Do not quarrel on the way!”

Jacob is Told that Joseph Lives

Joseph's brothers left Egypt and went back to Canaan. Jacob was waiting for them.

“Did you bring Benjamin and Simeon?” he asked Judah.

“Yes, Father, and we have some very good news to tell you. Joseph is still alive, and he has become Pharaoh's assistant in Egypt.”

Jacob could not believe what he heard. Joseph was still alive! How could that be? He could only believe it when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent. He said, “My son Joseph is alive. I must see him before I die.” Then they prepared to move to Egypt.

Lesson 47 Jacob and His Family Move to Egypt

Jacob's Family Moves to Egypt

It was really strange to watch Grandfather today. He looked very happy, but he was crying. He constantly had to wipe away his tears.

“Grandfather, what is wrong?” asked one of his grandchildren. “Why are you laughing and crying at the same time?”

“I am so very happy, that my son Joseph is still alive,” Grandfather said.

Who was this grandfather? Can you guess?

Yes, it was Jacob. His sons had come home from Egypt and told him that his son Joseph was still alive. They also said that the king of Egypt, the Pharaoh, had invited Jacob and his whole family to come to live in Egypt, where there was still food to eat. Because of all this Jacob was so very happy. He could hardly wait to see Joseph again.

“Pack up all our belongings,” he said to his sons and their wives. “In a few days we will go to Egypt.”

(Slide 2) From that day on everyone in Jacob's family was very busy. The flocks had to be brought in from the pastures. Clothes had to be packed and all the pots and pans. It was so good to have the carts from Pharaoh. Some things were loaded onto the carts, the other things were carried by donkeys. On the day they left, the women and children were

allowed to ride in the carts, and of course Grandfather Jacob. The others walked and drove the flocks. Others drove the donkeys with their loads. Altogether seventy people were on their way to Egypt.

Jacob Builds an Altar for God

One day Jacob and his large family arrived at Beersheba at the border of Canaan. Jacob remembered how his father Isaac had once dug a well in Beersheba. It was still there, and they all decided to take a rest.

Jacob wanted to pray to God at this place. He wanted to ask God if it really was all right to leave Canaan, the country God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He wanted to know if God really would go with him to Egypt, as he had done when Jacob went to Haran to his Uncle Laban. Therefore, Jacob built an altar at Beersheba and offered sacrifices to God.

That night God comforted Jacob who was already very old.

“Jacob, Jacob!” God called him. “Yes, Lord,” said Jacob.

Then God said to him, “Don’t be afraid to go down to Egypt, because in Egypt you will become a large nation. I will go with you to Egypt, and I will bring your children back from there. You will die in Egypt, but Joseph will be close to you at that time. So, do not be afraid.”

When Jacob heard what God said to him, he did not worry anymore. God would make everything well. Now he was ready to leave Canaan and go down to Egypt.

Jacob and Joseph Meet

The next day Jacob and his family were on their way again. Jacob so longed to see Joseph that he told Judah to go ahead of them. He should tell Joseph that his father was coming to Goshen.

When Joseph heard that his father was coming, he had his chariots prepared and asked to be given the swiftest horses. He made them run hard, because he could hardly wait to meet his father. When he came close to Goshen, he saw all the carts in which his family had travelled to Egypt.

(Slide 3) “Father, Father!” Joseph called out as he ran to meet his father. He threw his arms around him and they wept for joy.

(Click) “Now I am ready to die,” Father Jacob said. “Because I have seen for myself that you are still alive.”

“Don’t think of dying,” Joseph said. “Now you have to see how much God has given me here in Egypt. You have to meet my wife and my two sons. You and all my brothers and their families will live here in Goshen, in the nicest part of Egypt.” “Why are we allowed to live here?” the brothers asked.

“Because you take care of livestock, and there is much pasture land here,” Joseph explained. “The Egyptians do not like shepherds, they are not used to keeping livestock.”
(Click)

Jacob is Brought Before Pharaoh

(Slide 4) Then Joseph went back to his palace in the capital of Egypt. He reported to Pharaoh, that his family had arrived. He took his father and five of his brothers with him. He went in first and bowed deeply to Pharaoh.

“My father and all my brothers and their families have arrived,” he reported.

“Bring them in, I want to see them!” Pharaoh answered.

So, Joseph went out again and called his brothers first to present them to Pharaoh.

“What kind of work do you do?” Pharaoh asked Joseph’s brothers.

“We are shepherds, just as our fathers were,” they answered. “We have come here to stay awhile, because there is no more pasture for our flocks in our land. Please let us settle in Goshen.”

Pharaoh turned to Joseph, who could speak Egyptian and said, “Your family has come to you. Settle them in Goshen. If one of them is a real clever herdsman, put him in charge of my livestock.”

After that Joseph brought his old father Jacob to meet Pharaoh.

“How old are you?” Pharaoh asked him.

“I am one hundred and thirty years old,” Jacob said. Before he left, Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Then Joseph brought his father and his brothers back to Goshen. There they built houses for themselves and lived in peace. They thanked God with all their hearts that they now had enough to eat, and their flocks had good pasture land. Joseph had to stay in his palace close to the palace of Pharaoh, with his wife and his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. But he often went out to Goshen to visit his father and his brothers.

Lesson 48 Jacob blesses His Sons and Grandsons

Review (Slide 2)

Manasseh and Ephraim Visit their Grandfather

Joseph had two sons. They were both born before the years of the long famine and before Joseph’s brothers came down to Egypt. When Joseph’s first son was born, he gave him the name Manasseh and said, “God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” At that time, Joseph did not believe he would ever see his father and his brothers again.

When his second son was born, he named him Ephraim and said, “God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.” God had let Joseph become the most powerful man in Egypt except for Pharaoh. He took care of the rich harvest during the fruitful years in Egypt.

But then the years of famine began. Finally, Jacob and his family moved from Canaan to Egypt, to the province of Goshen. Manasseh and Ephraim were glad that they had many cousins to play with when they visited their grandfather in Goshen.

One day a messenger came from Goshen who told Joseph, “Your father is ill. He wants to see you.” Joseph called his two sons and said, “Tomorrow we will go and visit Grandfather. He is sick and wants to see us all.”

The next day Joseph and his sons got into a beautiful royal chariot, which only Joseph could use, because he was the representative of Pharaoh. Manasseh and Ephraim were proud to ride with their father. But they were also worried about their grandfather. “What is wrong with Grandfather? What sickness does he have?” Ephraim asked. “Grandfather is very old. He was an old man when he came to Egypt and now, he has lived with us in Egypt for seventeen years. I am sure that God will call him home pretty soon.”

“Is he afraid?”

“No,” Joseph said, “I am sure Grandfather is not afraid. He has had a long life and he loves God. I am sure he is ready to go to heaven, where Abraham and Isaac have gone before him.”

Jacob Blesses Manasseh and Ephraim

When Jacob heard that Joseph had come to see him, he sat up in his bed. He talked to Joseph about the events of his long life and how God had fulfilled all his promises to him. He again told Joseph how his mother, Rachel had died on the way home from Haran and how he had buried her. But then he remembered that Joseph had brought Manasseh and Ephraim with him.

(Slide 3) “Bring your two sons closer to me,” he said. When they came to him, Jacob embraced them and kissed them and said to Joseph, their father: “I did not believe that I would see you again, Joseph. I thought you were dead, and now God has even let me see your children.”

After a while Joseph told his sons to kneel down, because he wanted Jacob to bless them. He put his oldest son Manasseh close to Jacob’s right hand and Ephraim close to his left hand, because he was his second child. But Jacob knew in his heart, that God wanted Ephraim to have the blessing of the firstborn. Therefore, Jacob crossed his hands. He put his left hand on Manasseh’s head and his right hand on Ephraim’s head. Then he blessed the boys and prayed.

(Click) “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has delivered me from all harm, may he bless these boys. (Click) May they be called by my name, and by the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly on this earth.”

Joseph saw that Jacob’s right hand rested on Ephraim’s head and thought he had not understood. (Click) “My Father,” Joseph said. “Manasseh is my oldest son. Put your right hand on Manasseh.” But Jacob refused and said (click), “I know. But God wanted to give his special blessing to Ephraim.” From that day on when people talked about the boys they no longer said, Manasseh and Ephraim, but always said, Ephraim and Manasseh. (Click)

Jacob Blesses his Sons Before He Dies

When Jacob had finished blessing his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, he had all his sons called close to his bedside. Reuben, Simeon and Levi, Judah, Zebulun and Issachar, Dan, Gad and Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. He blessed them one after the other and talked about what would happen to them and their children in the future. When he blessed Judah, he became very glad, because God allowed him to see something very wonderful. Out of the family and tribe of Judah one day Jesus our Savior would be born.

After Jacob had blessed his grandsons and his sons, God called him home. It was a sad day for his family, especially Joseph who cried for his father. Pharaoh ordered that all people in Egypt should mourn seventy days for Jacob, because he had been the father of Joseph, whom they highly respected. Then in a large procession the Egyptians and all the sons of Jacob brought Jacob's body back to Canaan and buried him in the grave, where Leah, his wife was buried.

Joseph Comforts His Brothers

When Jacob was buried, Joseph's brothers were anxious again. Now that their father was gone, would Joseph repay them all the evil they had done to him? It was so hard for them to believe, that Joseph had really and truly forgiven them. But Joseph had forgiven them! God had helped him to forgive all that they had done to him. Therefore, Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. You wanted to harm me, but God intended good to come out of it. Because I went to Egypt, you all could come here and stay alive through the long famine. Do not be afraid. I will care for you and your children."

Lesson 49 Jesus is Born in Bethlehem

Creating Interest (Slide 2)

(Slide 3) In the town of Nazareth lived a couple, whose names were Joseph and Mary. They kept a secret in their hearts. One day, an angel had come to Mary. This angel had also spoken to Joseph in a dream. He told them that Mary would give birth to a son who would become the Savior of the world and forgive sins. He would be a king, and everyone would obey him. That is the secret that Mary and Joseph knew. Since then both of them waited for the birth of their promised child. The angel had said, this child would be born in Bethlehem. But Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth. How could their child be born in Bethlehem?

An Order from Emperor Augustus

At that time there was a very powerful emperor who governed many countries in the world. His name was Emperor Augustus. He lived far away from Nazareth, in the city of Rome, where he gave his orders. What Emperor Augustus ordered had to be done.

Emperor Augustus wanted to know how many people lived in his great empire, so he sent his officers to all the cities in his empire with this command. "Everyone must go back to the place, where they were born, to have their name written in the register of the Emperor.

Joseph was born in Bethlehem. He was a descendant of King David, who had also lived in Bethlehem. Therefore, Joseph had to go there and take Mary with him. This is how God arranged for them to be in Bethlehem for the birth of their child.

Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem

Joseph and Mary prepared food and drink and all they needed to take for their journey. They took some cloth to wrap a baby in. Then they left Nazareth to go to Bethlehem. Their journey was slow because Mary should not become too tired. Every evening they looked for a place to rest. The following day they walked again. The journey was quite long, but one day, when Joseph looked up, he saw the houses of Bethlehem. How happy they were. The journey was over. Now Mary could rest for sure!

A Place in a Stable

But they soon found out that they were too late. All the houses were full, because many people had come to Bethlehem to have their name written in the register of Emperor Augustus. Joseph knocked at the door of many houses. Now he knocked again. "Sir, have pity on us. My wife is going to give birth. Please give us a place to stay." "There is no room, my house is full," said the owner. But when he saw Mary's condition, he pitied her and added, "Behind the house there is an empty stable. The sheep are in the fields. You may stay there."

A stable? Joseph felt heavy hearted. Would God's Son be born in a stable, in a place for animals? But they followed the owner of the rest house to the stable. Quickly Joseph arranged it, making a place where Mary could lie down, even though it was on the floor. He made the manger, where the cattle were usually fed, into a cradle for the baby.

Jesus is Born

(Slide 4) That night, when everyone was asleep, baby Jesus was born in the stable in Bethlehem. The Son of God had been born. He looked just like an ordinary baby, but Mary and Joseph knew that he was not an ordinary baby. Mary and Joseph accepted him joyfully. They wrapped the baby in the cloth they had brought and laid him in the manger.

God had kept his promise. That was a very special and holy night!

Lesson 50 The Shepherds Visit Jesus

Yez, a Shepherd Boy of Bethlehem

I am a ten-year-old boy, my name is Yez. I live with my family in a village just outside of Bethlehem. Have you ever heard the story about that town? In my country it is well known, because a king by the name of David came from that town. He became the greatest king in Israel. When he was a boy, David worked in the fields around Bethlehem as a shepherd. A shepherd became a king! That is why David became my hero. My father is a shepherd who works in the fields around Bethlehem. As his son I often help him keep his sheep. Sometimes I can even stay out at night with my dad. We go out to the field on the hill with the other shepherds. I'm not afraid if my dad is with me. We sit near the fire.

Covered by a thick blanket we guard the sleeping sheep until dawn. Sometimes I fall asleep, and before falling asleep I like to look at the sky and watch all the stars.

Yez Hears the Joyful News of the Angels

One night something happened that I will never forget. That night I went to the field with my dad to look after his sheep. The air was cool. I held a lamb under my thick blanket to keep it warm.

(Slide 2) Suddenly I saw a great big light, even brighter than the full moon at night. My dad, who sat beside me hid his face with his hands, the light was so bright. My friend who lay to my right woke up and rubbed his eyes. Where did that light come from? Suddenly I saw a very bright man in shining white clothes. The light came from him. It surrounded us and made us afraid. That man must be God's angel. He talked to us, the shepherds in Bethlehem's field, saying, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which is for all people. For on this night is born to you in the city of David, the Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign for you. You will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Then all of a sudden, I heard a beautiful song. The praise song came from above; from thousands of angels, as many as the stars in the sky. They were all shining, the same as the man who stood close to us. I had never seen anything so beautiful or heard a song as melodious as theirs. They all praised God by singing, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

I forgot about everything else and just watched the thousands of angels and listened to their praise. But suddenly the angels went further and further away. Their voices became softer and softer, then we couldn't hear or see anything. The light that was surrounding us was gone.

Yez Went to Find the Baby in the Manger

I felt like someone who had just woken up from a dream. But others still remembered what the angel had said. My dad said, "That is very important news. The Savior is born in Bethlehem." I looked down at Bethlehem. The light from the houses could be seen in the valley.

"Dad, the angel said that we should go and find the newborn baby," I said. I longed so much to see the baby. Would it be difficult to find it? Would it shine like the angels? My friend remembered the other clue. He said, "The angel said that the baby is lying in a manger. So, we must look for it in a stable."

All the shepherds agreed that we must go and look for the child. We left the sheep and goats in the field. We were sure that on this special night God would guard and keep them, because we had been told to go and find this newborn baby.

I held my dad's hand as we went down the hill towards Bethlehem. Even though it was dark, we knew our way. We also knew who kept sheep in Bethlehem, and where we could find a stable. But my dad wanted to look in the rest houses first. Maybe the mom and dad of that child came from a far place to register in Bethlehem. We were sure that if

they were Bethlehem residents, they would have their own house and their baby wouldn't be laid in a manger!

We stopped in front of a rest house with a stable close to it. Was that the place? A man went to see ... He crept close to the door and looked inside. Then he gave us a sign, to come quickly. My heart beat faster when I remembered what had happened in the field. (Slide 3) What would we find? I saw a small oil lamp was still burning. A man opened the door and let us see his baby boy. It was true! The baby was lying in the manger. His mother was resting beside him.

There was no special light, like I had expected. But I could not stop looking at the little boy. The angels sang because of him. He is a king, the angels had said. The Savior who is born to the world. I believed it, I really did, even though his birthplace was so humble. We all knelt down near the manger. We thanked God who had sent this child to us.

“Who told you that our baby is born in this stable?” asked Joseph, the father of the baby.

(Slide 4) “The angels told us,” we answered. “They told us to go and find the baby in the manger. (Click) They said that this baby would bring joy to all the nations in the world. Everyone would rejoice because of him.” That is what we told Joseph and Mary, who came from Nazareth a place far away from Bethlehem.

Then it was time for us to go back to the fields to our sheep. Mary and the baby needed some rest. Actually, I still wanted to stay in the stable. I was so happy! I wanted to sing like the angels. God had told the Christmas secret to us poor shepherds! Once again, I looked at the baby who had fallen asleep. How lovely he was!

Outside the stable I saw the sky becoming red in the east. We climbed up the hill to go back to the fields. We told the angel's news to everyone we met, because the angels had said that the news was for everyone. We told them that we had visited the stable in Bethlehem and seen the little baby of whom the angels sang. Everyone who heard our story, was very surprised. We went back to our sheep and could not stop praising the Lord. The sheep were all safe!

Lesson 51 The Wise Men Present Gifts to Jesus

The Wise Men Come to Jerusalem

(Slide 2) After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there weren't many people who knew that he was born. Actually, the shepherds had told the people about the angel's words and their song. They told them that they could find the child in the manger. But so far, the news had only been spread in Bethlehem.

Not too far from Bethlehem was the city of Jerusalem, the capital of the country. It was built high on a rocky plateau and bustled with life. King Herod's palace was in that city. One day, the people of Jerusalem had a big surprise. Through the east gate many people riding on camels entered the city. Their clothes showed that they were foreign men. What were they looking for in Jerusalem? They asked the guard politely, “Where is he, who

has recently been born the King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

“The King of the Jews?” the guard asked very surprised. “Our king is King Herod. There isn’t another king who has been born.”

“But we saw his star, and we are sure that he has been born!” the strangers said.

“If that is so, you’d better go to King Herod’s palace and ask him,” the guard said. Then he asked somebody to accompany them to King Herod’s palace.

When the wise men from the east stood before King Herod, they asked, “Where is he, the King of the Jews who has just been born? We saw his star in the east and we came to worship him.”

King Herod answered, “I am the king of this country, I don’t know anything about the birth of a king.” Then King Herod remembered! The Jews had been promised a king and Savior and had been waiting for him for many years. Could it be him who had been born?

King Herod secretly called the scribes who knew the books of the prophets very well. He asked them, “Where will the promised king of the Jews be born?”

They opened their books of the prophets and found the prophecy of Micah which we learned last week. Let us say it together. (Recite Micah 5:2.) So they said to the king, “It is written by the prophet Micah, that he will be born in Bethlehem.”

When King Herod knew the answer, he called the wise men to find out from them when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young child, and when you have found him, bring back word to me, so that I may go and worship him too”.

Did Herod really want to worship Jesus? No! He wanted to kill him, so that he alone would be king and sit on the throne in Jerusalem. But the wise men didn’t know that.

The Star Guides the Wise Men to Bethlehem

That same day they left Jerusalem and rode their camels toward Bethlehem. It was already getting dark. Looking up to the sky, what did they see? There was that bright star again that had led them to the land of the Jews. Now that star led them to Bethlehem and stopped above a certain house. They climbed down from their camels. (Slide 3) Then they went into the house, into which Joseph and Mary had moved. There they found Mary and the baby Jesus.

The Wise Men Worship Jesus and Present Gifts

The wise men had finally arrived. Their journey was over. They looked at the baby. Although it looked just like any other baby, they were sure in their heart that it was the new king for whom they had been searching. They knelt down and worshiped him. Then they opened their gifts and gave the baby Jesus three precious gifts. Gold that shone like the sun, incense which gave a sweet smell, and myrrh.

That night when they slept, God warned them in a dream. “Don’t go back to Jerusalem and tell King Herod about the baby Jesus. Go back to your country by another road.” The wise men obeyed God. The next morning, they took leave from Mary and Joseph and

returned to their country with hearts full of joy. They obeyed God and did not pass through Jerusalem again.

Lesson 52 Who Can Celebrate Christmas?

(Slide 2) Yono is a 10-year-old boy. He lives in a small village in Indonesia. Yono's father died when Yono was five years old. Yono's mother takes care of him. Yono walks to school barefoot, because there is no money to buy shoes. Every day after school, Yono and his mother go to the forest to look for wood. They sell the wood to cover their living expenses.

Once when Father was still alive, he had taken Yono the town about one hour away. But Yono had never been there again. One day Yono asks his mother. "Mom, may I go for a walk to town?" His mother is surprised and says, "Yono, you might get lost if you go to town alone."

"No, Mom. I will go with some of the people from our village who take their crops to town to sell," Yono explains enthusiastically.

"Why do you want to go to town, Yono?"

"I just want to go and look around the town," Yono answers.

His mother keeps silent for a while. Then she says, "If you want to go so badly, I will allow you to go. You must promise me that you will come back with the people when they have finished their business."

Yono is very happy and that night Yono sleeps soundly.

(Slide 3) The rooster crows. The sky looks red in the east. Yono quickly takes a bath. After finishing his breakfast, Yono says goodbye to his mother.

"Don't forget to come back with the others," Mother says. "Yes, Mom," Yono answers.

Yono leaves with some people whom he knows, carrying his noon snack and a small sum of money.

(Slide 4) Now the group has arrived in town. Yono is so surprised to see the crowds, that he is side tracked and loses sight of his group. But Yono is not afraid. He walks from shop to shop. There are some shops which have beautifully decorated trees. What does it mean?

(Slide 5) Yono sees and hears such a lot of new things, he doesn't realize how the time passes. Now Yono is standing in the yard of a big tall building. There must be many children inside, because Yono can hear them singing. (Slide 6) Slowly he moves closer and looks through the open door. He sees a woman conducting about twenty children singing, "Welcome, Lord Jesus."

After they finish singing, she says, "We have practiced enough. Tomorrow we will celebrate Christmas. We will start at 6 o'clock in the evening, so do not be late, and invite your friends also." Then they close their practice with a prayer, and the children come running out of the building to go home.

Suddenly Yono remembers his promise to his mother. He quickly walks back to his village before it is getting dark.

(Slide 7) When he arrives back at his home Yono apologizes, “Sorry, Mom, I am late. I was separated from the group. But I have to tell you something!”

“What is it, Yono?” Mother asks.

“I saw children gathering in a tall huge building. They will celebrate Christmas tomorrow. What is Christmas, Mom?”

“Christians celebrate Christmas, Yono. They usually wear new clothes, new shoes, and eat delicious food. They decorate their houses beautifully and put up a Christmas tree.

“So, Christmas is just for wealthy people?”

“Yes, poor people can’t afford to celebrate Christmas.”

“But Mom, I want to see the celebration. Would you come with me to town tomorrow?”

“Ok, Yono. Tomorrow we will go there,” Mother answers gently. “But now we must look for wood to sell.”

Yono is very happy. On the contrary, his mother is sad because she cannot buy new shoes and clothes for Yono.

(Slide 8) The next day Yono and his mother travel to the town. They see many beautiful shops. They hear Christmas songs everywhere. The atmosphere of the town is very special. At last, Yono and his mother arrive in the church yard shortly before six o’clock. The children have made a queue and are ready to enter the church.

(Slide 9) After they have gone in, Yono and his mother bravely move closer to the entrance of the church. Not long after that, they hear the song the children practiced yesterday, “Welcome, welcome Lord Jesus.”

Yono sees some children going to the front to light the candles on the Christmas tree. He is so amazed by what he sees, that he does not realize that there is a woman coming toward him. She puts her hand on Yono’s shoulder and asks, “What is your name?”

Yono answers bravely, “I am Yono, and this is my mother.”

“Why don’t you come inside instead of watching from the outside?” she asks.

“We are poor people, we can’t celebrate Christmas,” Yono’s mother answers.

But the woman explains, “Christmas is for all people, including Yono and you. Two thousand years ago, God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to the world. Jesus was born in a stable, among poor people. He came to forgive us our sin and to help us in our suffering. Therefore, Christmas is celebrated by everyone. Everybody can come to him. The Lord Jesus loves Yono and you. That’s why he brought you here tonight. Let’s celebrate together and rejoice because he came to us.”

The woman’s words make Yono and his mother glad. Now they know that they may celebrate Christmas even if they don’t have new clothes, new shoes, and delicious food. They are not afraid to follow the lady into the church. They feel so happy. The beautiful lights, children singing joyfully, and many other things touch Yono’s heart and the heart of Yono’s mother.

After the Christmas service has ended, the pastor greets Yono and his mother: “Come back again. We gather here every Sunday.”

(Slide 10) “Mom, do you see?” Yono says on the way home.

“See what?” Yono’s mother asks.

“They are all happy, and they didn’t push us away.”

“Yes, you’re right, Yono.”

“Mom, the Baby Jesus didn’t have new clothes and looked poorer than us. He was lying in a manger, in the stable.”

“I have also thought about that. What did the pastor say? Jesus can be invited to come into our hearts and stay there. Jesus was born so poor. There is hope for us, who are full of sin.

“Let’s go back to church next Sunday,” begs Yono.

“Ok, Yono, we will go back next Sunday,” Mother promised.

Appendix D. List of Participating Churches

No	Name of the Church	Location: City and Province	Date of Observation	Usage of the CBL Lessons	Usage of the CBL media
1	Grace Community Fellowship CON	Antipolo, Rizal	Aug 26	Very often	Not at all
2	Antipolo First CON	Antipolo, Rizal	Sep 16	Very often	Not at all
3	Bethany CON	Antipolo, Rizal	Sep 30	Fairly often	Fairly often
4	Water of Life CON	Angono, Rizal	none	Not at all	Not at all
5	Pililla CON	Pililla, Rizal	Nov 18	Seldom	Not at all
6	Cainta CON	Cainta, Rizal	Sep 9	Not at all	Not at all
7	Victory CON	Cainta, Rizal	none	Not at all	Not at all
8	International Christian Fellowship CON	Taytay, Rizal	Aug 26 Oct 14	Very often	Fairly Often
9	Taytay First CON	Taytay, Rizal	Nov 11	Often	Not at all
10	Mapayapa Dream CON	Taytay, Rizal	Nov 11	Very often	Not at all
11	World Carissa CON	Teresa, Rizal	none	Not at all	Not at all
12	Tanay CON	Tanay, Rizal	Nov 25	Seldom	Seldom
13	Harvest CON	Mandaluyong, Metro Manila	April 25	Not at all	Not at all
14	Central CON	Cubao, Metro Manila	Nov 4	Seldom	Not at all
15	Diliman CON	Quezon City, Metro Manila	Oct 28	Seldom	Not at all
16	Batasan CON	Quezon City, Metro Manila	none	No data	No data
17	Novaliches CON	Quezon City, Metro Manila	Oct 21	Very often	Often
18	Harmony Hills CON	Bulacan	none	Very often	Not at all
19	Bacolod CON	Bacolod, Negros Occidental	none	Not at all	Not at all
20	Assemblies of God	Digos City, Davao del Sur	none	Not at all	Not at all

Appendix E. Observation List for Site Visits

Observation Checklist

Date: _____ Time: _____
 Church: _____ Place: _____
 Teachers: _____ Number of Students: _____

Sketch of the venue and set-up: Equipment, electrical outlets, seating arrangement

Hardware used:

A. Laptop: _____ Desktop Computer: _____ Other: _____
 B. Monitor: _____ TV: _____ LCD Projector: _____
 Other: _____

Software used:

Microsoft Office Version: _____ Mac Product: _____

Projection:

1. Size of the display compared to size of audience (Getz's Standards)

too small _____ good _____ too big _____

2. Distance of the Monitor (Getz's Standards)

A. Front chairs: too far _____ correct _____ too close _____

B. Back chairs: too far _____ correct _____ too close _____

C. 80° semicircle of seats too big _____ correct _____ too small _____

3. Quality of the display

poor _____ good _____ excellent _____

4. Height of the display (Getz's Standards)

too low _____ good _____ too high _____

Teacher's Use of the Technology

1. The technology works

all the time _____ most of the time _____ not at all _____

2. The slides of the PowerPoint presentations were forwarded correctly

all the time _____ most of the time _____ not at all _____

3. The PowerPoint presentations were amended

yes _____ no _____

4. Observed ease of use of the technology: Teacher has

few difficulties _____ moderate difficulties _____ major difficulties _____

5. The technology is used for

singing _____ story telling _____ for other uses _____

6. My impressions during the observations:

Appendix F. Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Interview

Thank you for your availability for this interview. It is part of my thesis and helps me improving the PowerPoint presentations. I will keep your full name confidential.

Date, time and place: _____

Name of the interviewee: _____

Age of the interviewee:

15-29 years old 30-44 years old 45-59 years old 60+ years old

Church: _____

Position in the church: _____

Years of teaching in Sunday School: 0-2 years 3-7 years 8+ years

1. Can you tell me about one lesson during which you used the CBL PowerPoint presentations?
2. Please tell me about the children's response to the PowerPoint presentations.
3. What would you say are the advantages and disadvantages of using the CBL PowerPoint presentations during your Sunday School?
4. How could the PowerPoint presentations be improved?
5. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for the further development of the presentations?

Appendix G. Questionnaire No. 1

Questionnaire No. 1

Dear Sunday School Teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a study of teaching with the CBL PowerPoint presentations during children's Sunday school. Your honest response will contribute towards future development of multimedia for children's ministry. Please read the questions and provide or check one answer to every question. The information you provide will be treated as confidential.

Part I. Information about yourself

1. Name of the church where you teach: _____
2. Your position in the church: _____
3. Your age: _____
4. Years of teaching children's Sunday School: _____

Part II. Use of the Creative Bible Lessons (CBL) Resources

5. Did your church conduct Children's Sunday School during the last two months?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
6. Is your church using the lessons of the CBL Primary Year 1 July-December?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
7. Did you receive the PowerPoint presentations for the CBL Primary Year 1 July - December?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
8. Could you open the PowerPoint files?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
9. Did you use the CBL PowerPoint presentations during your teaching?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
10. Did you have the necessary technology to show the PowerPoint presentations?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
11. Did the technology work during your teaching?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
12. Did you change the slides of the PowerPoint presentations?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
13. Do you use other multimedia during your teaching of children in church?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all

Thank you for your participation.

Kathrin Woehrle, MARE student at APNTS, Taytay, Rizal.

Appendix H. Questionnaire No. 2

Questionnaire No. 2

Dear Sunday School teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a study of teaching with the Creative Bible Lessons (CBL) PowerPoint presentations during children's Sunday School. Your honest response will contribute towards future development of multimedia for children's ministry. Please read the questions and check one answer to every question. The information you provide will be treated as confidential.

Part I. Information about yourself

1. Name of the church where you teach: _____
2. Your position in the church: _____
3. Your age:
 15-29 yrs old 30-44 yrs old 45-59 yrs old 60+ yrs old
4. Years of teaching children's Sunday School:
 0-2 years 3-7years 8+ years
5. How often do you teach in Sunday School?
 weekly bi-weekly monthly other
6. Do you have any teaching experience outside of the church? _____

Part II: Your experience with PowerPoint presentations and other multimedia

7. Do you have access to a computer ?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
8. Have you used PowerPoint to create general presentations in offices, schools, or other places?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
9. Have you created your own PowerPoint presentations for your teaching in Sunday School?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all
10. Have you used other multimedia during your Sunday School teaching (video clips, emojis, websites, Lego Bible, podcasts, various apps, etc.)?
 very often often fairly often seldom not at all

Part III. Use of the Creative Bible Lessons (CBL) PowerPoint presentations

11. How often did you receive the PowerPoint presentations for the CBL Primary Year 1?
 ___ very often ___ often ___ fairly often ___ seldom ___ not at all
12. How often could you open the PowerPoint files?
 ___ very often ___ often ___ fairly often ___ seldom ___ not at all
13. How often did you use the PowerPoint presentations during your lesson preparation?
 ___ very often ___ often ___ fairly often ___ seldom ___ not at all
14. How often did you use the PowerPoint presentations during your teaching?
 ___ very often ___ often ___ fairly often ___ seldom ___ not at all
15. How often did you have the necessary technology to show the PowerPoint presentations?
 ___ very often ___ often ___ fairly often ___ seldom ___ not at all
16. How often did the technology work during your teaching?
 ___ very often ___ often ___ fairly often ___ seldom ___ not at all
17. How often did you edit the slides of the PowerPoint presentations?
 ___ very often ___ often ___ fairly often ___ seldom ___ not at all
18. How often might you use the CBL PowerPoint presentations during the next three months?
 ___ very often ___ often ___ fairly often ___ seldom ___ not at all

Herewith I give the researcher, Kathrin Woehrle, the permission to use the information provided above for her master's thesis at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

(Signature)

Thank you for your participation.
 Kathrin Woehrle, MARE student at APNTS, Taytay, Rizal.

Appendix I. Plan for the Distribution of Primary Year 1 Lessons in 2018

CREATIVE BIBLE LESSONS Primary Year 1, January - June 2018 Theme of the Year: The Family of God				
Date	Lesson	Lesson Theme	Teacher	Assistant
Jesus and the family in Bethany				
Feb 25	11	Jesus visits Martha and Mary		
March 4	12	Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb		
March 11	13	Jesus is anointed by Mary		
Jesus gives his life for us				
March 18	14	Jesus prays in Gethsemane		
March 25	15	Jesus dies for us - Palm Sunday		
Apr 01	16	Jesus is risen - Easter Sunday		
Apr 08	17	Thomas believes that Jesus is risen		
Parables of Jesus				
Apr 15	18	A sower		
Apr 22	20	Two Sons with Different Attitudes		
Apr 29	19	The rich man and Lazarus		
May 6	21	A house on the rock		
May 13	22	Three Men and Their Talents		
God creates a new family				
May 20	23	Loving each other as the family of God		
May 27	24	Healed in the family of God		
June 3	25	Witnessing for Jesus with boldness		
June 10	26	Two families in Philippi believe in Jesus		
The first families in the world				
June 17	6	Noah builds the ark		
June 24	7	Noah and his family give thanks to the Lord		

<p style="text-align: center;">CREATIVE BIBLE LESSONS Primary Year 1, July - December 2018 Theme of the Year: The Family of God</p>				
Date	Lesson	Lesson Theme	Teacher	Assistant
Abraham and His Family				
Jul 01	27	Abraham receives God's Promise		
Jul 08	28	Abraham and Lot go separate Ways		
Jul 15	29	Abraham and Sarah find it Hard to Wait		
Jul 22	30	Abraham and Sarah Laugh		
Jul 29	31	Abraham loves God more than Isaac		
Isaac and His Family				
Aug 05	32	Isaac marries Rebekah		
Aug 12	33	Isaac and Rebekah's Children		
Aug 19	34	Isaac loves Peace		
Aug 26	35	Isaac blesses Jacob		
Jacob and His Family				
Sep 02	36	God speaks to Jacob		
Sep 09	37	Jacob in Laban's home		
Sep 16	38	Jacob leaves Laban's home		
Sep 23	39	Jacob receives a new name		
Sep 30	40	Jacob is reconciled to Esau		
Oct 7	41	Jacob worships at Bethel		
Joseph, the Son of Jacob				
Oct 14	42	Joseph is sold to Egypt		
Oct 21	43	God is with Joseph in Egypt		
Oct 28	44	Joseph becomes Pharaoh's assistant		
Nov 04	45	Joseph's brothers come to Egypt		
Nov 11	46	Joseph forgives his brothers		
Nov 18	47	Jacob and his family moves to Egypt		
Nov 25	48	Jacob blesses his Sons and Grandsons		
The Savior is born				
Dec 2	49	Jesus is born in Bethlehem		
Dec 9	50	The Shepherds visit Jesus		
Dec 16	51	The Wise Men present Gifts to Jesus		
Dec 23		Christmas Celebration		
Dec 30	52	Who can celebrate Christmas?		

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