

INTERMEDIATE SHELL BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

THE TEACHING MINISTRY IN EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

In the words of the Baptismal Covenant, we promise to “continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers” (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 304). Holy Eucharist, the central act of worship for Christians, unites us with Jesus. Again and again as we partake of this sacrament, we remember and celebrate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

We are called to follow Jesus, the Son of God, who lived among us as teacher, preacher, and healer. Through his powerful example, Christians have come to understand that teaching is fundamental to our faith.

No precise definition or set of rules governs teaching in the Church. For all ages, as teachers and learners come to know one another, a special relationship develops. What transpires between them becomes a kind of “spiritual staff of life”—organic, dynamic, wonderful, and meaningful.

The *Children's Charter for the Church*, developed by the Office of Children's Ministries and a number of dioceses, calls for three responses to the children in our care: Nurture of the Child—to treasure each child as a gift from God; Ministry to the Child—to recognize and foster children's spirituality and unique gifts; and Ministry of the Child—to appreciate children's abilities and readiness to represent Christ and his church. All three responses will have an impact on relationships between teachers and students.

Teaching Is a Ministry

All Christians are teachers. Our daily lives bear witness to what we believe and treasure. Students and teachers in the church share a singular experience that goes beyond the facts and strategies of the moment. Every encounter between teachers and students is important—a possibility for connection and meaning. Teaching is a ministry involving:

- *Hospitality*—Teachers and learners share time and activity. There is a mutual sense of satisfaction in being together at this time and in this place.
- *Presence*—Teachers and students listen to and care about each other. Not only do we hear each other speaking, but also we feel the underlying emotion, tuned in to the meaning of conversations.
- *Participation*—Teachers and learners engage each other in a mutual spirit of inquiry, an interactive relationship. Roles are flexible.
- *Imagination*—For teachers and students, the choreography of the “dance of learning” is nourished by spirit and grace. Teaching and learning change those who teach and those who learn.

Christian formation is a lifelong process. Often the metaphors of journey or pilgrimage are used to describe these formations. The facts of our faith will be encountered again and again. From this perspective, intermediate-age students are just beginning a lifetime quest. Consider, for example, how—over the course of a lifetime—we renew our acquaintance with the stories of the nativity and Passion of Jesus Christ. The details become familiar, but the emotional power of the events touches us again and again. Age and experience enrich us with new meaning.

A Tool for Teachers

The aim of the Episcopal Children's Curriculum (ECC) is to sustain and strengthen the ministry of teaching in the Episcopal Church. The curriculum's focus on classroom-based efforts does not deny the importance of other Christian education in a local congregation. It does reflect an intentional decision to affirm the act of teaching and spotlight the respective roles of teachers and learners.

The curriculum is a tool for teachers. It serves as a resource to help teachers formulate answers to three pivotal questions:

- ***What do I teach?***

The curriculum offers a reasonable embodiment of the “data of our faith.” Teachers using the materials are expected to pursue actively an adult-level understanding of the content of the session outlines, taking seriously their own roles as learners.

- ***Whom do I teach?***

At every age level, teachers are challenged to adapt to both the developmental characteristics of the group as well as the particular interests of each individual. The ECC addresses issues of developmental differences from two important perspectives. Content is approached differently at each of the three age levels—preschool/kindergarten, primary, and intermediate. Then, within each session outline at every age level, provision is made in activity suggestions for varying degrees of skill and learning styles among students.

- ***How do I teach?***

The curriculum was written for teachers by teachers. Workability is essential. Options and guidelines to help teachers make adjustments to fit local circumstances are invaluable. In addition to a variety of activity suggestions for every session, there are practical comments and specific tips to guide learning.

It is hoped that teachers who use the ECC will be nurtured, inspired, and enriched personally as they prepare to teach and learn, and reflect on their efforts.

Teachers will find that the session outlines in this guide provide support and structure for the inexperienced, and challenge and flexibility for the more confident. It is highly recommended that every teacher have access to a Bible (NRSV), *The Book of Common Prayer*, and *The Hymnal 1982*. The *Access Bible* (NRSV) provides commentary, study tips, maps, and a concordance. At every age level, teachers can expect to find support for their preparation and planning. Every Intermediate session outline includes the following:

- *Unit Introduction*, to show how the sessions relate to the unit theme. This is presented in a letter format that can be reproduced for parents/guardians of students in the class.
- *Focus statement*, to state the concepts along with objectives.
- *Getting Ready*, to provide factual background and personal inspiration.
- *Teaching Tip*, to offer useful information about working with this age group.
- *Teacher's Assessment*, to prompt thinking back over the session.
- *Looking Ahead*, to preview upcoming concepts.

The Episcopal Perspective

The theological foundation of the Episcopal Children's Curriculum is set forth in a *Foundation Paper* (January 1990). This document is reproduced on the last pages of this Teacher's Guide. Teachers are urged to read the complete statement. Repeated below are the first few lines:

“The aim of Christian education in Episcopal Church parishes and congregations is to assist every member in living out the covenant made in Holy Baptism (BCP, p. 304). Hence the common ministry of teachers and learners focuses on matters of both faith and practice.”

Baptism confers full participation in the Episcopal Church. The ECC sets forth a framework for helping all who teach and learn to grow in their understanding of the meaning of sacramental experiences. At every age, we are people of faith whose lives offer legitimate testimony to our baptismal promises. At every baptism, we are called to renew our commitment to these promises, in an unending, ever-enlarging circle of affirmation and action.

In describing ECC, these terms are key: “biblically based” and “liturgically oriented.” The curriculum is designed to follow the Bible in ways understood by young students. But the presence of biblical material does not mark the ECC as distinctively Episcopal. Like all Christians, we look to Holy Scripture for the content of our faith and practice. We view the Bible as the written Word of

Background--

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God.

Our Episcopal liturgy, set forth in *The Book of Common Prayer* and supported by *The Hymnal 1982*, invites each of us to enter into a relationship with God's Word. The three-year cycle of the Eucharistic Lectionary (appointed readings) and the seasons of the Church Year provide the pattern for worship. For Episcopalians, the Lectionary cycle ensures two things—fullness and context. Every year we hear the biblical witness to our salvation history.

Liturgy, defined as “the work of the people,” brings us together as a congregation. We are invited to be active, not passive. In a deeply personal way, we encounter God's Word. We listen, seeking to hear God speaking to us through Scripture. As we hear—at whatever level of understanding—we are touched, informed, instructed, healed, and transformed. The liturgy provides a structure for this life-changing encounter. It is worship that establishes the “Episcopal” affirmation of Scripture.

Conscious of this role of liturgy, the editors and writers of the ECC have structured classroom experiences based on the general pattern of our Episcopal liturgy. We come together; we hear the Word, along with an explanation; and we go forth to live in the world. In ways appropriate for each age level, the curriculum sessions prescribe a parallel pattern. At the intermediate-age level, the three essential activities are titled: Gathering, Introducing the Story, and Going Forth.

Students are encouraged through exposure and experience to learn words and actions for participation in worship and liturgy. The illustrations used in the ECC are specifically appropriate for Episcopalians. Clergy, churches, liturgical actions, text, and language are all used and portrayed as young people in Episcopal settings are most likely to experience them.

Selections from *The Book of Common Prayer* are incorporated into every session. Collects, prayers, and thanksgivings are included in every session. The music used in the ECC is found in *The Hymnal 1982*, and frequently appears also in the children's hymnal, *We Sing of God*. As students learn or listen on the *Children Sing!* tape to the suggested hymns, they will be acquiring words and melodies to help them participate in the Church's worship.

The Episcopal Children's Curriculum

The curriculum uses a cumulative framework of age levels, years, units, and sessions. The three age levels of the curriculum are Preschool/Kindergarten, Primary, and Intermediate. At each age level, there are three separate years of material. A total of nine years' worth of material is provided—three years at each of the three age levels.

Within each age level, the three years of material are designated by symbols linked to the Sacrament theme of each year: Shell (Baptism); Chalice (Eucharist); Cross (Worship).

Unit I	Unit II	Unit III	Unit IV
Old Testament Themes	New Testament Themes	Sacraments SHELL - Baptism CHALICE - Eucharist CROSS - Worship	Church Themes

The use of symbols to identify years at each age level is a deliberate attempt to move away from a designation (such as grades or numbers) that would signal a particular order for the sequence of the years of material at each age level. Symbols also avoid confusion with the A, B, or C designations

for Lectionary years.

The content of the Episcopal Children's Curriculum focuses on four areas: Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures), New Testament, Sacraments, and the Church. The basic building block of the curriculum is the unit. Each year's 36 sessions of curriculum materials are written in four units of nine sessions each, representing the four areas.

The organization is intended to be sequential, cumulative, and consistent over the scope of the curriculum. In the overall ECC framework, the content focus broadens and deepens as students advance through the curriculum. A child beginning the Episcopal Children's Curriculum at the age of three, and proceeding forward for nine years will revisit unit themes but will not actually repeat any material. Each level is a blend of the familiar and the new.

The accompanying three age-level charts provide an overview of the unit themes within an age level, and help to explain how each of the four content areas unfold. We can see how the students are immersed, over and over, in the content of our faith and practice in ways most appropriate for their age levels. The approaches to teaching are different at each level.

Preschool/Kindergarten — Stories

Shell	Creation	Jesus: Son of God	Baptism: Belonging	We Are the Church
Chalice	Promise	Jesus: Storyteller	Eucharist: Sacred Meal	The Church Prays
Cross	Shepherd	Jesus: Teacher	Worship: Environment	The Church Sings

Preschool/Kindergarten. Written for three- through five-year-olds, this level of the curriculum emphasizes stories as the principal experience for teaching and learning. This is consistent with what we know about how children this age come to know more about their world. The Old Testament thread focuses on the stories of a few key figures in the Bible. We move in Unit II to stories of Jesus' birth and ministry. Unit III looks at Sacraments in the context of stories of personal participation and experience. Unit IV recounts some of the great stories of the early church.

Primary — People in Relationship

Shell	Pentateuch	Jesus: Healer	Baptism: People in Covenant	The Church in the New Testament
Chalice	Judges/Kings	People in Parables	Eucharist: People in Communion	The Church in the Prayer Book
Cross	Stories	Sermon on the Mount	Worship: People in Community	Saints of the Church

Primary. Planned for children in Grades 1-3, the curriculum continues the focal emphasis on stories with particular attention paid to people and relationships. The great goal is to make the

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people of the Bible and the Church come alive for young learners. This is consistent with our belief that the Christian faith is not nurtured apart from relationships. Each of the foundational themes involves a revisiting and expansion of the stories first encountered at the Preschool/Kindergarten level. The Unit I, Old Testament sessions all focus on specific people, their families, their actions, and the events in their lives. In each Unit II, we look more broadly and deeply at Jesus' life among us, the people he taught, preached to, and healed. The Sacrament units consider people in relationship to the sacrament and to one another. The Church units (IV) emphasize people—stories from the Bible, the history of the Church, and the Church at prayer.

Intermediate — Symbols

Shell	Covenant	Miracles	Baptism: New Life	The Apostle Paul
Chalice	Prophecy	Parables of Promise	Eucharist: Shared Life	The Catechism
Cross	Psalms	The Reign of God	Worship: Mission	Church History

Intermediate. Students in Grades 4-6 are increasingly able to use and manipulate symbols for the ideas and events they encounter. The stories, people, and relationships first met at earlier levels are recalled and examined through the increasing symbolic complexity of their perspective on the world. The Old Testament units focus on the concepts of covenant, prophecy, and psalmic praise to God. Jesus' life and ministry are approached through miracles, parables, and the coming reign of God. The sacraments are examined in relationship to living out the gospel and creeds, and in Unit IV, Church history is recounted with continual reference to the great figures, events, and traditions as each has affected our life today.

Themes and the Calendar

The unit organization of the Episcopal Children's Curriculum allows considerable flexibility for scheduling in local congregations. All sessions within a unit are undated. Sessions within each unit develop the thematic focus. However, there is an explicit connection to the liturgical Church Year in the measured patterns of sessions within units. Attention to major feast days is balanced with thematic development. In an important way, the curriculum is seasonally compatible with our liturgy. Planning calendars for each year are available in the spring; visit www.vts.edu/icfl/center/ to download one at no charge.

Scheduling Units and Sessions

The four Units are most appropriately used during specified Church Seasons. The chart below displays the pattern of seasonal connections for each Unit. Across all years and all age levels of the curriculum, a clear, consistent pattern of Unit/Session connections to the Church Year has been preserved. Note that examples in the chart below are from the Intermediate Level—Shell Year. The unit titles are from this Teacher's Guide.

Scheduling Sessions

Unit Title Intermediate Shell	I Covenant	II Miracles	III Baptism: New Life	IV The Apostle Paul
Church Calendar	Late Weeks after Pentecost	Advent/Christmas/ Epiphany	Lent/Easter	Easter/Early Weeks after Pentecost
Probable Months	September- November	December-February	February-April	April-May
Session Detail	#1-8—Old Testament Themes #9—All Saints	#1-4—Advent/ Christmas #5—Epiphany #6-9—New Testament Themes	#1-5—Sacramental Themes #6-9—Lent, Holy Week, Easter	#1-8—Church Themes #9—Pentecost

In order to take advantage of the thematic and liturgical sessions, church school leaders and teachers should plan a schedule that fits both their particular congregation's calendar and the yearly fluctuations in the liturgical calendar. Factors affecting scheduling variations are:

- different starting dates for local church schools;
- substitution of other parish activities for church school;
- rotation of class sessions with chapel or worship;
- and the yearly variations in the lectionary cycle that result in an “early” or “late” Easter, affecting the lengths of the periods after the Epiphany and after the Day of Pentecost.

Within any given unit of nine sessions, some sessions should be coordinated with the current Church Year calendar. Other sessions can be more flexibly scheduled. It is expected that users will rearrange the numerical order of sessions within a unit to accomplish scheduling requirements. Referring to the session patterns in the chart above, consider the scheduling decisions to be made within each unit.

Unit I—Old Testament Themes. Designed to be used during the period from September (start of church school) through November (but not into Advent), Unit I coincides with the late Sundays after Pentecost. The nine sessions should be scheduled for use during this time period.

In those places where church school begins the first Sunday in September and meets weekly without interruption until Advent, the first unit may need to be spread out over 13 or 14 weeks. Enough suggestions are provided in any session outline to make it possible to expand the activities over two class meetings. Teachers can choose which sessions to extend or, if need be, to combine as local needs demand.

Session 9 is always an All Saints' session. Depending on the local schedule, teachers could plan to use this session on the Sunday nearest to All Saints', the week before, or perhaps the week after if no classes are held on that principal feast day. The other eight sessions of the unit can precede or follow the All Saints' session.

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Unit II—New Testament Themes. Sessions 1-4 are for Advent/Christmas and Session 5 is an Epiphany session. Teachers should look at the focus statements for these sessions and match the most appropriate ones with the available dates for class meetings. Many congregations have traditions of plays, pageants, and other seasonal events that take precedence over focused class work at this time of year. Teachers may see a need to combine or compress material from Sessions 1-5.

Sessions 6-9 of Unit II are developed around the theme in the unit title. These sessions will likely be used during the Epiphany season (January-February). Once again, the calendar can result in a long or short Epiphany season, requiring teachers to adjust sessions accordingly. Another option is to consider “borrowing” the first or second sessions from Unit III.

Unit III—Sacrament Themes. Schedule this unit for use during Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and for one session into the Easter season. The sacramental focus of each year's material (Shell—Baptism; Chalice—Eucharist; Cross—Worship) is developed fully in Sessions 1-5. The material in Sessions 6-9 extends the year's specific sacramental focus, in connection to the liturgical events surrounding Easter.

Use the outlines related to sacraments in Sessions 1-7 before Easter Day, mainly during the weeks of Lent. Session 8 can be used for classes that meet on Easter Day or the next class meeting. Session 9 is for the early Easter season. Extend, combine, or compress session outlines to fit the calendar for your congregation.

Unit IV—Church Themes. Plan to begin this unit during the latter weeks of the Easter season and into the weeks after Pentecost. Sessions 1-8 focus on church history and traditions. The themes for this unit are: Shell Year—Bible; Chalice Year—*The Book of Common Prayer*; Cross Year—*The Hymnal 1982*. Session 9 is always about the Feast of Pentecost. Plan to use it on the most appropriate date for your classes, even if it means interrupting the order of the other eight sessions.

The Intermediate Curriculum Materials

The Episcopal Children's Curriculum provides materials for both teachers and students. At each age level of the curriculum, distinctive materials for students are designed to appeal particularly to that age group. Teachers' materials, while similar in format and function across age levels, reflect noticeably the changing characteristics of the classroom situation at each age level. At the Intermediate level, five different pieces of material are available.

For Directors

- *Director's Guide*

Provides a comprehensive overview of all levels and years of the curriculum.

For Teachers

- *Teacher's Guide* (this volume)

Contains 36 sessions of material organized into the four units of the year. The Intermediate Shell Year units are: Unit I. Covenant; Unit II. Miracles; Unit III. Baptism: New Life; and Unit IV. The Apostle Paul. The Teacher's Background includes helpful general descriptive material and suggestions for additional resources.

- *Supplemental Guide (Intermediate)*

Provides additional activities and alternative approaches for teaching at this age level.

- *Teacher's Packet* (posters and patterns)

Offers 24 large sheets of color posters, black-and-white pictures, instructions, and patterns mentioned in the session outlines. Intended as a classroom resource.

- *Music Tapes*

Background--

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Contains all the music for each year recorded by a children's choir.

The Guide, Supplemental Guide, Packet, and Music Tapes are sufficient for an entire year and can be reused. We recommend that congregations have one Teacher's Guide for each teacher along with one Supplemental Guide, one set of Music Tapes, and one Teacher's Packet for each class group.

For Students

- *Covenant Times* (student newspaper—36 issues, one for each session)
Carries the content for every session. Numerous references are made to material from the newspaper throughout the activity suggestions in each session outline. We strongly recommend that a set of 36 newspapers be purchased for each teacher and made available for each student in the class group. In an attractive, colorful format, each newspaper has a mixture of feature stories, news articles, illustrations, puzzles, memory tasks, Scripture, maps, and more—all tailored to support a particular session. Feature stories are used in the Introducing the Story section.
- *Symbol Cards* (one to correspond to each of the 36 sessions)
Appeal to students of this age and can be the beginning of a collection. These are small, full-color cards. Each has a symbol illustration, a Scripture verse, and an explanation on the back. They are designed to be collectible, shared with parents, and even traded. Across the three years of the Intermediate level, students can accumulate 108 symbol cards.
- *Shell Year Treasurebook* (one book for the year)
Serves as a student resource and reference book. Each year's *Treasurebook* has four parts that correspond to the four unit themes of that year. Session outlines suggest ways to encourage student reading. The books will also be useful for teachers' preparation.

The student materials are intended to be distributed for personal use by students. As noted above, we consider it helpful for all students to have copies of the newspapers. The set of 36 symbol cards and the *Shell Year Treasurebook* have the potential to provide important bridges between classroom and family/home. If at all possible, congregations should plan to purchase cards and books to give to each student.

UNDERSTANDING INTERMEDIATE-AGE STUDENTS

Who are the children we teach? The key to understanding intermediate-age students—ages nine, ten, and eleven—lies in a respect for children as individuals. This respect, accompanied by the knowledge of the differences among us, shapes all our efforts as teachers.

Look closely at any group of intermediates, and it is apparent on physical appearances alone that there is considerable diversity in the group. Reflect on the impact of the different social and ethnic backgrounds, economic circumstances, educational opportunities, skills and interests, and it becomes clear that general descriptions do not reflect the variety of social and cultural diversity among children of the same chronological age. Teaching children requires that we see them as individuals. There are, however, many sources of information to help us understand more about students in this age group.

Developmental theory offers insight for teaching. Educators look primarily to such theories for help in understanding the growth and development of children in the areas of physical, emotional, social, moral, and faith development. However, no single viewpoint is adequate by itself.

Experience of teachers themselves can contribute reliable information, including memories of their own journeys as students and participants in the educational process.

Theory and experience contribute to a multi-dimensional perspective on the lives and learning experiences of children. This blend of insights will be especially helpful in church school settings.

Theory

Developmental theories help us see the expected patterns of change from birth through maturity. All theories of development hold that increasing maturity brings a general increase in the complexity of behavior. Children move from being centered on the self to social interaction with others. Whether or not a theory uses ages or stages, the emphasis is on general expectations. No theory will predict the behavior of an individual child.

Most of the mainstream theories were formulated without particular regard for gender. Today, we have a much greater sensitivity to the differences in development of boys and girls. (See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*.)

Ages and Stages. Ages are convenient ways of classifying behaviors that change as the student matures. A six-month-old can sit up; a six-year-old can skip; a nine-year-old can throw a ball accurately. With maturity, the range of different behaviors within an age group increases: Many two-year-olds can say a few words, but eleven-year-olds can vary from the ability to speak several languages to functional illiteracy. There are numerous books that describe the physical growth and behaviors of children in this manner.

Thinking. The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget has helped us understand that children simply do not think in the same way adults think. Using cognitive stages, loosely associated with chronological ages, Piaget has identified the ways of knowing that we pass through from birth (sensory motor learning) through about age eleven (symbolic learning). According to Piaget, children ages nine to eleven are capable of increasingly complex thought processes and are no longer limited by what they can see, hear, or touch. They can think about situations from more than one perspective, deal with several ideas at once, and think across time—past, present, and future. Around age eleven they begin to think abstractly—that is they think about thoughts and ideas.

Understanding the ways in which children think is useful for teachers. However, cognitive theories do not specify what we should have children think about. And, perhaps more critically, Piaget's stages of knowing do not uniformly apply to children growing up in different socio-cultural environments. Many people feel that the variety of life experiences dramatically change the ages at

which the various types of thinking abilities emerge. In relation to teaching in church schools, cognitive functioning has no direct relation to the development of faith. It only helps us understand how children think about the stories we teach.

Social context. During the intermediate years, children increase their social group of family, friends, and community. Personal interests dictate much of what children are likely to do and who they will encounter. Influence on the child moves from the parents to peers and others.

Erik Erikson's work suggests a view of development that interweaves the power of social interaction with ongoing biological maturity. According to Erikson, at each of eight stages of life a psychosocial crisis must be resolved in order for development to proceed normally. The dominant concern of intermediate-age children is that of industry versus inferiority. Children achieve competence as they focus on work that requires skill. It is a period of cooperation, competition, and learning information. All children have gifts to succeed and all have a sense of failure at some point in their development. Helping children to discover their gifts and deal with their struggles of inferiority is a major task of the teacher of this age student.

Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan have given us ways to think about the moral development of children. With maturation, experience, and expanding ways of thinking, children and adults approach and resolve moral issues in more complex ways.

Each of these theorists has given us a broader view of the complicated process of development. While none of them specifically addresses the growth of religious thought, their work has been the basis for those theorists who have explored faith development.

New Ways of Approaching the Educational Process

In recent years, researchers have begun to explore the learning process within the classroom. How teachers teach and how students learn have come into a sharper focus.

Learning Styles. Some researchers have concentrated on the different ways individuals take in information and process it in order to learn. Auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles are those most easily identified in classrooms. Auditory learners are those who listen carefully and are better able to retain what they hear. Since this is the dominant teaching style in many classrooms, auditory learners perform well. Visual learners must be able to connect what they are learning either with real pictures or ones they create in their imagination. Pictures and objects that students can see strengthen the educational experience for this type of learner. Kinesthetic learners need to be able to use their bodies to move, touch, or manipulate items related to ideas in order to fully remember what they learn.

All students use some form of all three styles in the early years of learning; later one style becomes more dominant based on school and other experiences. Teaching that incorporates a variety of opportunities to see, hear, and touch will be more successful and enjoyable for both teachers and students.

Multiple Intelligences is another approach to the classroom experience developed by Howard Gardner. Gardner has proposed that humans have eight different ability areas, or intelligences. Since most educational materials and experiences focus on only two, many students are left out of or are not using their potential for learning. Teachers who provide activities that enhance the different intelligences are able to engage more students in the learning process more of the time.

The eight intelligences are Linguistic (Word Smart), Logical-Mathematical (Number Smart), Musical, Visual-Spatial (Picture Smart), Bodily-Kinesthetic (Body Smart), Intrapersonal (Self-Smart), Interpersonal (People Smart), and Natural or (Nature Smart). Each of the intelligences can provide an entry way into the learning experience for different students. Using the biblical story of Noah, linguistic students would write poems; mathematical students could measure the ark and build a scale model; musical students could write a song; visual students would paint pictures; bodily-

Background--

kinesthetic students would dance the story; interpersonal students would interview each other about the experience of being on the ark; intrapersonal students would reflect on their own feelings about the story and perhaps compose a prayer; and natural students would be concerned about the species of animals that were brought on board.

Using the multiple intelligences in the classroom provides all individuals with an entry point into a particular story. For most classrooms, time and space don't permit all eight intelligences to be in operation at one time. However, keeping the variety of experiences in mind as we plan for teaching and learning can help to make church school more exciting and meaningful for all involved.

Developmental Resources

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Faith in the Classroom

Faith is a gift from God.
Children are people of faith.

These two premises underlie all that we say and do in church school classrooms. They are also basic to the Children's Charter. It is faith that gives church school its unique mission. We do not teach faith. We hope that our work as teachers will nurture faith in the hearts and minds of our students.

Structure of Faith

Knowing that faith is personal, understanding the structure of faith, and realizing that faith changes over time are important concepts for teachers. Knowledge of the faith process will help teachers interpret the actions and responses of their students.

Background--

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According to James Fowler's formulation, intermediate-age students are literalists looking primarily to others for the concepts and beliefs of their faith. Another educator, John Westerhoff, uses the image of concentric rings to portray how faith grows and matures within the web of relationships in a faith community. In this latter model, the beginnings of faith come from meaningful experience and belonging to a faith community.

Content of Faith

Faith derives its content from the Holy Scriptures and the preserved traditions of the Church. Episcopalians also turn to The Baptismal Covenant for guidance on the content of our faith and practice. In this Covenant, the first three questions and responses (the “faith” questions) incorporate belief statements found in the Apostles' Creed. The second part of the Covenant (the five “practice” or “action” questions) lays out standards for a Christian life. At every age, people of faith—children included—share responses to the questions of the Covenant. We have a marvelous opportunity to nurture the faith of intermediate-age students and to strengthen their ties to the Church.

Intermediates and the Baptismal Covenant

By drawing on information from developmental and faith theories and observing children's lives, we can use the questions of The Baptismal Covenant as a structure for a composite description of the faith and practice of a “typical” intermediate-age student.

Faith: Threefold Affirmation

Do you believe in God the Father? Intermediates perceive God as the supreme being and creator. Generally confident in their relationships and competent with their daily tasks, they are more appreciative and less awestruck by God's power than they were in earlier childhood. Characteristically, they have a comfortable “I and Thou” relationship with God.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Jesus is known as a teacher, leader, and authority figure. Students of intermediate-age accept Jesus' relationship with God—Son and Father, child and parent—but do not yet fully appreciate the far-reaching theological implications of his divinity and humanity. They know that Jesus was loved and hated, and they can identify the actions and feelings of his friends and disciples. Most are quite interested in the details and facts of Jesus' life and have a sense of the sequence of events in his ministry.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit? Images of the dove and the wind are seen as plausible manifestations of the Holy Spirit. For students who are regular participants in a faith community, expressions of personal spirituality may begin through prayer or conversation with trusted adults.

Practice: Five Questions About Living

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers? Regular and full inclusion in the sacramental life and worship of the congregation is essential for intermediate students. Faith is nurtured through interactive participation in the corporate liturgical life of the Church. Their contributions as choir singers, acolytes, junior altar guild members, and ushers are genuinely helpful. To parents and friends they will readily acknowledge ties to their church and communicate a sense of satisfaction from taking part in group activities.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? Students at this age are aware of right and wrong, fairness and injustice, good and evil. They may be fiercely unyielding regarding the boundaries between any two sides of an issue. Firm judgments about where someone else stands are candidly advanced. Nine-, ten-, and eleven-year-olds are social creatures, engaged in many activities. Hence, the opportunities to offend others arise

Background--

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fairly often. Their words can be vicious, and their actions wounding. Trying something new, making mistakes along the way, and even failing, are a part of gaining new skills. Forgiving and forgiveness are practiced realities among friends and families.

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Jesus Christ? Many students this age enjoy reading Bible stories. They are involved with Scripture, and can be very active within their local church community. Within this sphere they may be aware of the Christian example of their words and actions.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? Service to others is a feasible option for intermediate-age students. It can be a natural outgrowth of participating in community-wide activities. Their stamina, skills, and social astuteness combine to make them willing workers. A growing sense of responsibility to others stems from fulfilling commitments for chores, homework, and practicing with teams or performance groups. Best friends, strong group loyalties, and self-sorting into boys' groups and girls' groups characterize this age. These factors will at times set limits on intermediates' ability to embrace "all" persons with love, as the Covenant requires.

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? Global awareness is a positive by-product of the television and Internet age. Knowing and seeing people all over the world is the first step. The daily images of people in all parts of the world, the ordinary and the not so ordinary, strengthen students' understanding that people everywhere are more alike than different.

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Sawyers, Lindell, ed. *Faith and families*. Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1986.
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Episcopal Resources

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Lift every voice and sing II: An African-American hymnal. New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1993.
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Roth, Robert N., & Nancy L. Roth, eds. *We sing of God*. New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1989.
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The story of Anglicanism: Part 1-Ancient and medieval foundations; Part 2-Reformation and its Background--

consequences; Part 3-Creating a global family. Westlake Village, CA: Cathedral Films and Video, undated.

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Wall, John S. *A new dictionary for Episcopalians.* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985.

Westerhoff, John H. *A people called Episcopalians.* Atlanta: St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 1993.

Wonder, love, and praise: a supplement to The Hymnal, 1982. New York: Church Publishing, 1997.

USING THE CURRICULUM

The three age levels of the Episcopal Children's Curriculum correspond to traditional school groupings for children: Preschool/Kindergarten (ages 3-5); Primary (Grades 1-3); and Intermediate (Grades 4-6). The curriculum supports both single-grade and broadly graded class groups.

Church schools with small numbers of children may wish to group students of similar ages together in broadly graded classes to correspond to the three levels of the curriculum. Students could stay in each broadly graded group for three years, progressing through the Shell, Chalice, and Cross year materials for that group. When a student moves into the next age group, another set of Shell, Chalice, and Cross material is offered. While content themes are always a blend of the familiar and the new, no material is ever exactly repeated.

Where numbers and circumstances permit, church schools may be organized into nine single-grade groups (ages three years through Grade 6). In this situation, each class group can be assigned a different level and year of the curriculum—beginning with Preschool Shell for three-year-old children and ending with Intermediate Cross for Grade 6. As students move through the grades, they will encounter new material each year.

Mixed-Age Groups

For many congregations, the decision about church school groupings cannot always be neatly handled. There may be only a few families with children of church school age. Or a growing parish or mission may find that the numbers of children are unevenly distributed across age levels—with many preschoolers and only two or three learners in Grades 4-6. Mixed-age groups are a practical necessity in these situations.

When a class group spans one or more age levels of the curriculum, which level should be used? Consider both the teacher and learners in making the decision. Count and group the learners. The most desirable groupings for mixed ages combine children whose developmental capacities and learning styles are similar. If most are preschool-, primary-, or intermediate-age, purchase the ECC Level that matches the developmental/age level of the majority of the group. If this does not result in a clear-cut decision, consider choosing the Primary Level materials and adapting them for preschoolers and intermediates. Remember that most teachers will find it less complicated to simplify material for younger learners than to locate and design more sophisticated activities for older learners.

Mixed-age groups offer special opportunities as well as challenges for both teachers and learners. Two key concepts for teachers to consider when working with children of varied ages in the same group are:

- **the learners' emerging skills and capabilities:**

Students themselves are aware of the varying levels of skill present among the groups to which they belong. Teachers can set the tone in a group by recognizing the value of every learner's effort and contribution. Teachers who praise learners truthfully affirm for children the value of their work. The message to be conveyed is simple: It is quite all right to be growing and trying and learning in different ways.

When teaching, think about how the youngest and oldest within the group handle various activities. Note the wide variations in the students' interests and gifts. With this range in mind, plan varied approaches to the class meetings. Ask: What is likely to have maximum appeal with this particular group?

For example, an art activity may appeal to all ages if there is latitude for process, product, and interpretation. Placemats can provide preschoolers with a canvas for fingerpainting; primary-age learners with a project/product they can take home and use at dinner with their families; and

Background--

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intermediates with a doodle page on which to add symbols, phrases, or pictures they have created.

- **the necessity for family-style social interaction:**

Probably the most effective approach for handling group interaction for students of widely varying ages is to assist them in learning to be helpful to one another. At times, older children can assume leadership roles—sharing their skills with younger ones. At other times, they will work individually, or rotate personal time with teachers. Give-and-take with siblings and parents provides a familiar and accessible model for managing group living in small, mixed-age groups.

Intergenerational Groups

Under the label Intergenerational Activities, church educators and program planners have rediscovered the virtues of “one-room” education. Potluck suppers, hymn-sings, Pentecost parties, storytimes, movie showings, greening the church, meal preparation for soup kitchens, house repairs, and outings for senior citizens—all these invite the participation of people of all ages.

For small congregations, intergenerational activities offer a workable solution to the question of allocating leaders' time and resources, and the sometimes perplexing problems of meeting the needs of varied groups of learners. Large parishes, where age-group numbers dictate closely graded classes, may have to work hard to replicate the cross-age and cross-community linkages that occur naturally in small parishes. Meticulously planned, intergenerational activities at regularly scheduled intervals can foster a very desirable sense of community in large parishes.

Celebrations of major feast days and special parish days are most successful when all ages are involved in the activities. The seasonal liturgical plan of the Episcopal Children's Curriculum is compatible with congregational plans for intergenerational celebrations. Within each Unit, the session outlines that are keyed to principal feast days and celebrations contain activity suggestions that can be adapted and incorporated easily into intergenerational programs. Each year's material, at all age levels of the curriculum, includes one or more sessions targeted for use at particular points in the Church Year: All Saints (1), Advent/Christmas (4), Epiphany (1), Lent/Holy Week (3), Easter (2), and Pentecost (1). See the Intermediate Supplemental Guide for suggestions for intergenerational activities.

Intergenerational Resources

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Griggs, Donald, & Patricia Griggs. *Generations learning together*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981.

Nelson, Gertrud Mueller. *To dance with God: Family ritual and community celebration*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.

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Planning Intermediate Class Sessions

Planning sets the stage for teaching and learning. In preparation for meeting with students, teachers need to *select* a set of activities, and then put these activities into an *order* for each class meeting. The session outlines of the Intermediate level of the Episcopal Children's Curriculum offer three sets of activity categories that can be used to compose a class session. These are:

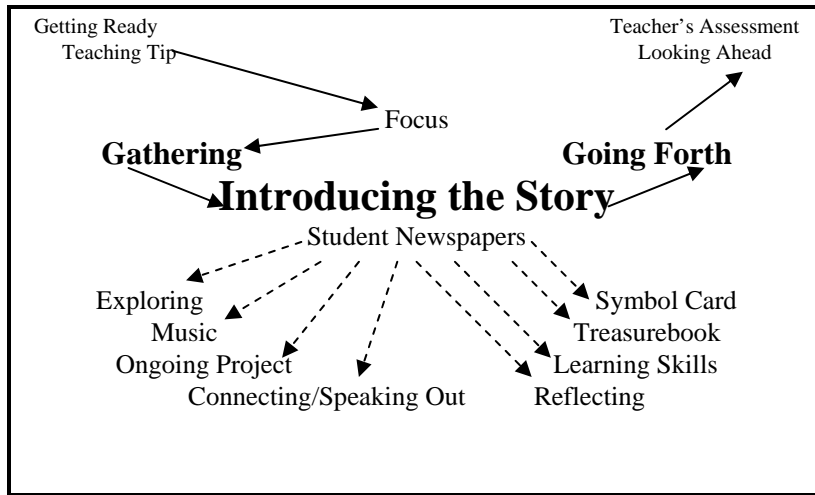
Teacher Supports—five sections directed at helping teachers prepare.

Essential Activities—Gathering, Introducing the Story, and Going Forth are the three core

experiences for each session.

Optional Activities—about ten different suggestions of activities teachers may choose to do in a given session. *No teacher or class is expected to use every optional activity in any session outline. The emphasis is on choice.*

The following illustration shows the overall relationship of the Intermediate activities. The three essential activities are shown in green type. Flexibility and adaptability are evident. Time estimates are included to aid in choosing activities to fit class needs. (Teachers who have used either the Preschool/Kindergarten or Primary materials will notice certain similarities in the design of session outlines and specification of session categories.)



Composing a Session

Church school sessions in congregations across the country vary greatly in length—typically ranging from 20 minutes to 90 minutes or more. The ECC was designed with a “core” of just three essential activities to accommodate this time variation. At the Intermediate level, for example, the core steps are called Gathering, Introducing the Story, and Going Forth. Classes with 20-minute sessions can expect to accomplish these, and not much more. Teachers of classes with longer meeting times may choose from a variety of additional activities offered in each session outline.

The session categories function as the building blocks for planning. There is no single “right” way to plan a class session. Teachers can construct an activity/time schedule for each class session that fits the time available, builds on their own skills, and meets students' needs and interests. Activity blocks for the sessions can be selected and sequenced in a variety of ways. All the examples given below are based on use of the three essential categories.

Illustration 1. A way to proceed when session time is short and time schedules are tight. A different optional activity may be chosen for each session—thus providing a variety of ways over a period of time to examine the session themes.

Gathering, Introducing the Story, Exploring (Option 1), and Going Forth

Illustration 2. This plan balances active and quiet activities, and gives students both directed and imaginative ways to approach themes.

Gathering, Music, Introducing the Story, Exploring (Option 2), Exploring (Option 3), Reflecting, and Going Forth.

Illustration 3. This is a full class session with a number of different types of activities and a comfortable flow for the session.

Gathering, Introducing the Story (incorporating questions from Connecting/Speaking Out), Exploring (Option 1), Exploring (Option 2), Music, Reflecting, Ongoing Project, Going Forth.

Illustration 4. This two-session plan illustrates how the material from one session outline can be extended over two class meetings. Fluctuations in the Church Year calendar may require teachers to extend or compress the nine sessions of a unit in order to accommodate the current calendar.

First session. Gathering, Introducing the Story, Exploring (any option), Going Forth.

Second session. Connecting/Speaking Out, Exploring, Ongoing Project, Going Forth.

Centers

One approach to using the options in each session is to arrange the classroom into Learning Centers. Learning Centers are planned activities where all instructions and materials for a specific subject are provided for students to work independently or with others. Intermediate students particularly enjoy this opportunity to work with others and the change from traditional classroom activities. The advantage to Learning Centers is the chance to use more of the activities provided during one time period.

To begin, review the options in the session and choose the ones you think will interest the students you work with. Decide on the key concept for each option and ask what the student needs to find out. Design the learning task with clear directions and enticing titles. Choose the number of centers needed for the size of the group. Enough choices should be available to permit the last arriving student to choose among at least three options. Provide a list of the centers for the students to help them keep track of which ones they have completed.

Learning Centers have optimum impact when the class period begins and ends with a group time. Introducing the Story could be followed by time in the centers and a gathering for the Closing activity.

Supplies

The Episcopal Children's Curriculum assumes that teachers will have access to a reasonable variety of standard supplies—including pencils and markers, paper of various kinds, paints, tape and glue, modeling materials, “elegant junk,” miscellaneous office supplies, and tools such as scissors and staplers.

Activity suggestions in the session outlines describe the materials needed and how they are to be used for a given activity. A list of materials is provided in the Director's Guide.

TEACHING STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES

Organized church school and other classroom-based activities are indispensable for students. The particular challenge for teachers working with intermediate-age students is to balance the pragmatic requirements of teaching preparation with the swiftly moving reality of classroom activity. Respecting the individuality of students, and honoring their genuine capabilities as leaders means sharing *authority* and tolerating *ambiguity*. What does it mean to be a teacher in a church school classroom for intermediates?

Teacher and Student Roles

Five broad areas of competency characterize teachers in the Church. A summary of these universal functions follows, with descriptions tailored specifically to the nuances of classroom situations.

Teachers orchestrate learning. *Students are dependent on teachers for the provision of materials, sufficient opportunities for choices, and orderly management of learning situations.*

In the classroom, the teacher sets the stage. Teachers are responsible for preparing themselves, the room, the materials, the session plans. Clearly, there is an element of control in this function of a teacher, but with preparation, planning, and structure comes the freedom to focus on students.

Teachers facilitate classroom activities through interactive planning with students. Intermediate-age students will be able to exercise leadership roles in choosing and implementing projects. Students' interests will strongly affect the direction of discussions.

Teachers understand their students. *Students deserve attention, affirming experiences, and reasonable challenges.* To nurture and guide the faith journey of another person demands a personal relationship. Bonds of trust, respect, and affection grow when caring and understanding prevail.

Appropriate sources of information for teachers of intermediate-age students include developmental theory, thoughtful observation of local community culture, sensitive appraisal of popular trends, and a sympathetic openness to each child.

Teachers are interpreters. *Students can expect honest answers to their questions—including the response, “I don't know.”* In classroom situations, what students talk about, question, explore, and wonder about reflects their teachers' ability to mediate and interpret faith and heritage. Often the simplest of questions can evoke profound discussion.

Intermediate-age students can be intensely interested in wrestling with ethical issues. As teachers and students engage in conversations of faith, they are sharing feelings and values as well as words and facts. In a very real sense, teachers expose their beliefs when they engage in conversation with learners.

Intermediates' increasing skills enable them to be critical thinkers, although most still work best with concrete ideas. They are many-sided thinkers, able to handle dimensions, perspectives, possibilities, and conditions. Teachers have a responsibility to be equally open and flexible.

Teachers are links with the Christian community. *Students come to know and trust a community of adults.* Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders spend much of their time with close age-mates. Peers are a dominant force in the life of most intermediates. Parents, other family members, and neighbors increasingly occupy a background role. Teachers function as a bridge between the familiar early childhood world of home and family and the beckoning allure of various church, school, and community groups.

Teaching in church school is an opportunity to make an enduring friendship with a group of boys and girls. It is a chance to cross generations in friendship, and meet the friends of one's own children. Having taught a group of children, a teacher can continue to observe their growth and involvement

in the church. Over the years, students can come to know and be known by an ever-increasing number of adult members of the congregation.

Teachers are part of a team of ministers. *Students' experiences will include many teachers in many different settings.* Teachers, especially volunteers in church schools, may work in teams to share time and talents. Teachers also work in partnership with parents, clergy, and church staff in helping to guide the faith journeys of students. The perspective of a teaching team is not confined to what happens in a particular classroom, but includes all the programs and events in the church. Teachers, therefore, do not work alone or in a vacuum.

Adults make church school happen. Critical decisions on time, schedule, budget, space, and program policy define the Christian education classroom-based program in a local congregation. When teachers work with students they are transmitting the particular vision of a particular congregation. Meaningful classroom experiences are most likely to occur when intermediate-age students are included in congregational worship and programs. They can serve as acolytes, ushers, choir members, bellringers, and in other capacities. Full participation in the congregation sets the stage for classroom-based explanations.

Teaching Resources

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Cohen, Elizabeth G. *Designing groupwork: Strategies for the heterogeneous classroom.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1986.

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Strategies for Essential Categories

Gathering Introducing the Story Going Forth

These three categories are the core experiences of the Episcopal Children's Curriculum at the Intermediate level. The conceptual integrity of the curriculum is best preserved by consistent use of these core experiences.

Throughout all levels of the curriculum, students are introduced to and given opportunities for practical rehearsal of the words and actions of the church. Teachers come to appreciate the combined power of *ritual* and *word* as they pursue the goals of awakening and nurturing faith in young students.

Gathering

Planned in two parts to provide a dependable structure to begin each session, the initial Gathering activities are orderly, of short duration, and designed to entice the interest of the group. When all students are present, the group deliberately shifts to a more formal mode for an opening ritual. The teacher leads the group in prayer using a designated Collect from *The Book of Common Prayer*. A student lector then introduces and reads a Scripture selection (NRSV) keyed to the session theme.

Background--

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This two-step process of Gathering follows our congregational pattern of coming together for worship and hearing the Word.

The goal of the Gathering activity is to make holy the coming together of teachers and students. We acknowledge that when Christians are together, it is a special time. Teachers will find their confidence grows through the use of Gathering rituals and may be surprised at the energy with which students enter into such activities.

Hospitality and welcome. Teachers should view the Gathering activity as an occasion for offering hospitality and conversation. Words and gestures can communicate a sense of welcome and pleasure at being in this particular company. This opening informal time is prime time for “community-building.” At every session, use students' names, introduce and re-introduce them, and inquire about activities and events in their lives. Try to connect students with one another, just as a good host/hostess would do at a party. Do not assume that all students share the same neighborhoods and schools. Best friend pairs and tightly knit groups will be more inclusive of others when their teacher models hospitality.

Since all groups require time to gather, slowly or quickly reaching the expected class size, the first part of the Gathering is an activity that anticipates in modest form the theme of the session. This activity helps students “settle in” and encourages students' interest and involvement.

Participation. Praying and hearing the Word are central components of our worship. The second, more formal part of the Gathering activity for intermediates provides for direct involvement of students. The teacher calls the group to prayer saying, “Let us pray.” A relevant Collect from *The Book of Common Prayer*, or other appropriate prayer is used. (In time, older students may choose to take turns at calling the group to prayer and reading the selected Collect.) Next, a “student lector” reads from the Bible. The suggested Collect and the NRSV version of the suggested passage appear in the Teacher's Guide in every session outline.

Teachers can take some simple steps to enhance an attitude of reverence at the Gathering. Consider obtaining a special “class Bible” to be used for the readings. Mark the reading each week with a ribbon, direct the reader to a particular spot in the room, and post responses on large paper until all have memorized the words. Teachers should expect that fourth- through sixth- grade students will vary in their ability (or desire) to read aloud. Respect students' feelings. Ask for volunteers, or provide support with paired readings if necessary. In some situations it may be possible to schedule “student lectors” several sessions ahead, giving them ample time to practice. Encourage students to regard these class readings as a privilege. Perfection is not the only acceptable result; teachers should make it clear that all worthy efforts are to be praised.

Introducing the Story

This is the heart of the session for teachers and students. The goal is to engage the students' interest in the story. Students are asked to locate key passages in the Bible and respond critically to questions. This provides the group a communal base of information for subsequent session activities. The expectation is that both teachers and students will be mutually engaged with the material during this time. Each session outline proposes a creative strategy for teachers and students to employ. Practical suggestions are offered, including interactive storytelling, role plays and dramas, guided discussions, group interviews, reports, projects, and presentations. Articles and illustrations in the student newspaper, *Community Times*, are considered indispensable for this work. Wherever possible, all students and teachers should have their own copies of each session's issue. All subsequent, optional activity categories are keyed to both the *Focus* statement and the material explored in *Introducing the Story*.

Covenant Times, the Shell Year Intermediate student newspaper, helps students to examine the stories or concepts introduced in the sessions in a fresh way. The stories are written as if reporters had interviewed the participants directly. Issues or other significant information are presented for the student to think about and explore. Memory Challenges include Canticle 9, the First Song of *Isaiah*, Gospel citations for the parables of Jesus, the Nicene Creed, and a general outline of the contents of *The Book of Common Prayer*. There are also opportunities for learning Scripture verses. A puzzle that reinforces the vocabulary for the theme is included. Original artwork, maps, and diagrams are used to enhance the students' understanding.

The colorful, attractive design of the paper is matched to students' interests and reading levels. The newspapers serve as an important bridge linking church school classroom and family activities. It is beneficial for all students working with the ECC to have copies of the newspaper. Activities frequently refer to material from the newspaper.

Activity suggestions for Introducing the Story assume that teachers and students will interact with one another. Consider each session's suggestion not as a fixed recipe for what to do but as a set of ingredients to prepare and set out. Prepare yourself, prepare your classroom, and expect the students to produce a dynamic, spirited exchange of views and roles.

Consider very carefully how to proceed. Either begin with the content or with students' experiences. This fundamental strategy decision will determine the shape of the learning experience for students and teachers. Use these two strategies as patterns of working.

Telling. The emphasis is on the content, or subject matter, of the session. The most familiar approach is for teachers to “tell” students about the subject, emphasizing the important details. Telling does not always mean the teacher lectures and students listen. Clever telling strategies might involve illustrations, dramas, and conversations. Teachers are responsible for identifying the scope of content. Students follow with questions. Projects and activities allow them to explore and create as they examine and apply the content to their daily experiences. This *deductive* strategy is efficient and precisely targeted. It begins at a specific point and ends by opening out to broader involvement.

Discovering. Students begin to approach the session's content through observation and investigation. Inquiry, speculation, and experimentation characterize these early activities. With guidelines and teacher support, the students look for ways to generalize and to form tentative conclusions. Together, students and teachers narrow their efforts to focus on the “key” discovery. This *inductive* strategy is free-formed and casts a wide net. It begins with an array of data and ends by clarifying a specific idea.

Teachers and students compose anew the learning process in every encounter they have. Teachers will find it helpful to visualize the shape of the process, selecting those “moves” and “resources” that seem best for their particular students.

STORYTELLING

Storytelling is a principal action in the teaching ministry. As part of the *Introducing the Story* activities at the Intermediate level, teachers will frequently employ storytelling techniques as a means of weaving together presentations and discussions. Indispensable ingredients for effective storytelling are:

Telling skills. Some “telling” skills to practice:

- *Inviting your listeners.* Suspend ordinary time and enter a special place together. Consider the setting—the gathering place, the mood—the sights and smells; and the expectations—the ritual invitation to open the imagination and join together on a story journey.
- *Knowing the facts and order of a story.* Storytellers shape their stories, pacing and punctuating to captivate their listeners. Imagine a shape for every story, and let that shape guide the telling. Listeners expect a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- *Describing people, places, and events from the “eye” of your imagination.* As the story unfolds, describe these details so that the listeners will “see” them just as you do: faces, ways of speaking, clothing, towns, roads, interiors of houses, and the like.
- *Capturing the climax or high point of an event in words that evoke a response from listeners.* Consider gestures and facial expressions that will best serve your intent. Convey reactions of joy, sorrow, surprise, or disappointment with specially chosen words and phrases.

Knowledge of the Bible. Session outlines give an orderly presentation of thematic material, noting highlights to emphasize. Teachers are urged to read the Bible. Instinctively, storytellers share their personal beliefs and understandings; this is what makes stories such a powerful tool for transmitting the Christian heritage. Biblical stories are for a lifetime, truly multi-generational. The students in your class will hear them again and again, listening with new awareness and broader life experience each time.

Presentation/Storytelling Resources

- Bausch, William J. *Storytelling: Imagination and faith*. Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1984.
Griggs, Patricia. *Using storytelling in Christian education*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981.
Maguire, Jack. *Creative storytelling*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985.
Mellon, Nancy. *Storytelling and the art of imagination*. Rockport: Element, 1992.
Moore, Robin. *Awakening the hidden storyteller*. Boston: Shambhala, 1991.
Russell, Joseph P. *Sharing our Biblical story*. Rev. Ed. Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow, 1988.
Ward, Elaine M. *The art of storytelling*. Brea: Educational Ministries, 1990.

Bible Study Resources for Adults

- Bach, Alice & Cheryl J. Exum. *Miriam's well: Stories about women in the Bible*. New York: Delacorte, 1991.
Bach, Alice & Cheryl J. Exum. *Moses' ark*. New York: Delacorte, 1989.
Brownrigg, Ronald. *Who's who in the New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
Charpentier, Etienne. *How to read the New Testament*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.
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Comay, Joan. *Who's who in the Old Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
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Roberts, Jenny. *Bible facts*. New York: Dorset Press, 1990.

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Sayers, Dorothy L. *The man born to be king*. London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1969.
Teringo, J. Robert. *The land and people Jesus knew*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1985.
Williams, Michael E., series ed. *The storyteller's companion to the Bible* (Multi-volume series). Nashville: Abingdon, 1992-1995.
Woodrow, Martin & Sanders, E. P. *People from the Bible*. Wilton: Morehouse Publishing, 1987.

Going Forth

For each unit, a selection from the Prayers of the People in *The Book of Common Prayer* is used for the closing. *Going Forth* is a ritual closing to mark the end of time teachers and students spend together. Students are given an opportunity to add their own prayers, petitions, or intercessions at this time. Occasionally, a prayer of intercession or thanksgiving from one of the activities may also be added. This simple dismissal models the conclusion of our Episcopal worship, signifying the fact that it is time to leave this place of explanation and exploration and re-enter the world as practicing Christians.

Without careful attention, class sessions usually end in a swirl of chaos as students and their parents race to get coats, find take-home items, and leave quickly for services or home. A concluding ritual will help to provide a transition away from the classroom activity. Be deliberate about taking time for *Going Forth*, if necessary scheduling the closing ritual slightly before the actual time for leave-taking. Strive to make the Closing unhurried and reverent in tone.

Following the prayer suggested for the unit, the dismissal is the familiar “Let us go forth in the name of Christ,” to which the learners respond, “Thanks be to God.”

Optional Session Categories: Activities and Resources

Exploring

This category offers three distinct options for students to become actively involved with the content presented in *Introducing the Story*. Suggested activities include art, drama, projects, and games for full group activities, individual projects, and word puzzles for independent or group use. All the activity options are self-contained, with no expectation of carryover into the next session. Access to standard supplies is assumed. Some patterns, diagrams, or instructions are included in the Teacher's Packet. The time estimates given in the curriculum may need to be adjusted to reflect the work habits of particular classes.

These are guided opportunities to “do” something with the session content. The wide range of options is intended to help students experience the ideas and facts of the session in a variety of ways. Some of us learn best by looking, some of us by hearing, and some of us by doing. Play—the serious, yet magical business of making experiences our very own—is a necessary ingredient for learning at every age. We play with ideas, we role play feelings, and we can display responses. Still able to be captivated by the sensory pleasures of play, intermediates are readily engaged by art materials, costumes, and games.

What distinguishes activities for intermediates is the critical role language plays. Speaking, reading, and writing are genuine tools for exploring. They will take great satisfaction from group efforts as well as individual work.

Group Activities. The group is of tangible importance to intermediates. Belonging, being recognized as a group member, and knowing others are highly desirable social achievements. Teachers should recognize that group activity suggestions, for some students, may simply provide a common purpose, a good excuse for a group to form and work together. The activity needs to be relevant, but an equally compelling goal is building community among class members. Seek ways for students to assume responsibility for setting up, choosing alternatives or devising adaptations of an idea, supporting the ongoing work, and cleaning up after activities. Teachers can invite intermediates to be part of the planning and preparation in very real ways. Facilitate conversation during the activity. (Consider incorporating the conversation suggestions in *Connecting/Speaking Out*.) Observe how comfortably students relate to and work with one another. Use smaller groupings to ease shyness or defuse negative behaviors.

Individual Activities. Art projects and impressionistic activities are offered in many sessions. While the description presumes that students will work singly, teachers could adapt the suggestions for group work. Needed supplies are described; teachers are encouraged to substitute whatever available materials they deem suitable.

Every suggested activity has a purpose, and an explicit link to the themes presented earlier in the session. Encourage students to explore these connections through conversation and reflection at the start of the activity. Invite students to offer comments and thoughts as they work. When appropriate, provide a way for students to share their work.

Teachers can expect a very wide range of artistic ability among intermediate-age students. Meticulously detailed work will co-exist with passionate strokes of line and color. Students may be eager to speak about their efforts, or quite willing to write explanations about their work. For intermediates, thinking and talking about what has been expressed is an integral part of the act of creating.

Word Puzzles. The vocabulary of our faith can be encountered in print as well as in speaking. Many intermediate-age students enjoy working with words and ideas. They have the opportunity to think about concepts such as prophecy, justice, teaching, community, thanksgiving; names such as Isaiah, John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene; places such as Bethlehem and Jerusalem; and key events of Jesus' life—baptism, the Last Supper, footwashing, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension. Or, words such as these from *The Book of Common Prayer*: Liturgy, Morning Prayer, and Eucharist.

The student newspaper, *Community Times*, includes a word puzzle in every issue (typically appearing on the back page). The puzzles may be crosswords, word searches, word scrambles, acrostics, fill-in-the-blank, etc. Each puzzle has been created to highlight words representing key concepts or facts of the session.

Puzzles can be done in class independently, in pairs, or as a total group activity. Another option is to allow students to do the puzzles at home with family members. Teachers may establish a routine method for inserting the puzzle activity into class sessions, or vary its use session by session.

Music

The Episcopal Children's Curriculum introduces students to music that is part of our Episcopal heritage. The chosen hymns are consistent with session themes and/or the Church calendar. Hymns selected for emphasis in the curriculum are ones students are likely to hear and sing in their corporate worship with their congregations. All appear in *The Hymnal 1982* and on the tape *Children Sing!* for the Intermediate Shell Year. (Many can also be found in *We Sing of God*, a children's hymnal with Teacher's Guide available from The Church Hymnal Corporation.) In each session outline, brief suggestions are offered for introducing and singing the hymns or exploring aspects of the hymns' texts through projects and discussion.

Music is an elemental part of the language of faith. Consider the full meaning of the oft-quoted phrase, "Those who sing, pray twice."

We are blessed in the Episcopal Church with a wealth of great music as part of our liturgical tradition. *The Hymnal 1982* includes service music and hymns for congregational singing. The texts and settings are drawn from ancient and contemporary sources from around the world.

Appreciation and familiarity with this music is an uncomplicated, worthwhile goal for Christian education.

Intermediates and music. At this age level, it is likely that students will have had prior exposure to music in schools. They are capable of learning the words, the rhythmic structure, and the melody of a hymn or song. As singers, they can imitate and echo what they hear. In addition, many intermediates will be interested in reading music. Many will be highly motivated, enjoy performing, and achieve remarkable success during these years of musical study.

Pre-adolescents are big consumers of cassettes, compact discs, and music videos. These are also the years of judgments about personal musical abilities, exemplified by comments such as "I'm not a good singer." Even those who enjoy music may not fully participate because of peer pressure.

Music at church. Suggest to those who plan the liturgy that they include one or more of the hymns selected for emphasis during a unit in worship services that the students attend. This may be easier with the seasonal hymn selections. (See the session plans for selected hymns.)

How can a "non-singing" teacher incorporate music in a group's classroom activities? The answer is two parts attitude and one part strategy. For attitude: Express your feelings in words and actions about the value of music, along with your pleasure in making music. For strategy: Get help—from your students and musicians in the congregation. A few specific tips:

- Remember that the line can be very blurred between singing, chanting, and saying the words of a hymn. It is not necessary to "sing a solo" to introduce a hymn in class. Saying words with feeling also communicates powerfully.
- If a hymn tune is unfamiliar, ask for help from a musician. Listen to the tape available for the Shell Intermediate Year entitled *Children Sing!* Play it at home or in the car as you go about your daily activities. Let the tune creep into your memory. Share this recording with the class.
- Use some kind of "body language" to help you memorize words and rhythm. Working phrase-by-phrase, clap or tap the beat, or swing and sway with the words. Even with familiar hymns, this technique will entice you more fully into the music.
- Solicit help from your students. Maybe you have a "song leader"—someone who can start on pitch and carry a tune. Do you have anyone who plays an instrument? Affirm these skills and nurture student leadership.

- Pay close attention to the social interaction within your class, and the general atmosphere. With music activities, initially, try to match the emotional dynamic. For example, in a class of socially cohesive, eager talkers invite everyone to chant the words and clap the rhythm. Solicit discussion about the text. Or, if yours is a quiet class, hesitant and wary, let the music surround them first. Play recordings, read the text silently, softly whisper the words or tap the rhythm.

Music Resources. If at all possible, arrange to have a sufficient number of copies of *The Hymnal 1982* available for class use as well as one music cassette of *Children Sing!* for the Intermediate Shell Year. The Church Hymnal Corporation has published a set of companion volumes to the hymnal that are designed for children's worship. The paperback hymnal, *We Sing of God: A Hymnal for Children* contains selected stanzas and refrains of hymns. A separate volume, *We Sing of God: Teacher's Guide* is a compendium of creative activity suggestions keyed to each hymn. Editors Robert and Nancy Roth share insight gained from their many years of singing with children.

Connecting/Speaking Out

Conversation is sparked by good questions. Two approaches to conversation are included in this category. Option 1, Group Discussion proposes questions intended to elicit students' opinions about the session's theme, the people, events, symbols, and concepts. Option 2, Current Events proposes questions aimed at helping students make connections between the themes of the session and their daily lives. Teachers may use either option singly or combined with another selected activity.

One insightful definition of teaching states that it is purposeful conversation. Throughout any classroom encounter, teachers and students should trade turns talking and listening. Within this framework, students may come to understand prayer itself as a conversation with God.

We need not hesitate to use the words of our faith with students. "Teachers in the church are aware that they must provide bridges between the Word of God (known to us in Jesus Christ, the Bible, and the Church) and the everyday life of learners." (The ECC Foundation Paper, 1990.) Throughout this Teacher's Guide, stress is laid on the importance of language—and the need for language to be part of the transaction between teacher and learner.

Embedded in Scripture and liturgy, history, and tradition, the language and vocabulary of faith become part of our common experience.

Teachers use language to label, interpret, and convey meaning. The vocabulary of faith, the words students have available with which to talk about their faith, grows in direct relationship to exposure and practice. To teach the stories of our faith requires language.

Teachers can ask themselves, "Do we have an adequate command of the vocabulary of our faith tradition? Are we comfortable in using the language of Scripture and the Church in our teaching ministry?"

Intermediate-age students can be good conversationalists. Conversation is an elemental part of the nurture of faith for young students. The lively dynamic of conversation includes both speaking and listening. Through speaking and listening, the participants in a conversation use language to create a relationship within which one's thoughts, feelings, and values can be shared.

Some observations on conversation for intermediate-age students:

- The pattern of moves in intermediates' conversation is almost always a mutual duet; I talk and you listen, you talk and I listen; I talk and you listen, etc.
- The "pregnant pause" as someone gets ready to speak, and the silence of an active "inner

conversation,” are respected and occur routinely.

- Conversations are multi-directional. Students will talk directly to each other (listening to and commenting on each other's thoughts), perhaps temporarily bypassing any adults.
- Students expect conversation to be interactive. Good conversationalists talk *with* others, not *at* them.
- Conversation is purposeful.

Schedule class conversation time to minimize interruptions. For example, it is tough to start a discussion if class is over in five minutes and students are starting to get itchy about getting their things, meeting their families, and leaving. Plan sufficient time to allow the group to wait comfortably. Avoid pressing for pauses and silences to flow into words. Plan to “talk” in a location where all members of the group can easily make eye contact with and hear one another. Sitting in a circle or dividing a large group into several smaller groups are good strategies.

Intermediates need more than props or pictures to provide a sense of purpose for their conversations (although these can be helpful at times). Express through your voice a sense of invitation and welcome as you request students to join the conversation. Then invite student contributions almost immediately. Weave the purpose of the conversation into the early questions rather than announcing it like a master of ceremonies.

Another strategy for conversation is to tuck in the talking around activities. Working together on a project creates an encouraging mood for spontaneous conversation. Moments of cooperation are ripe for starting conversations.

Reflecting

Activity suggestions are fashioned to furnish a quiet time for students to make a personal, and perhaps private, response to material presented in the session. Students' responses may take the form of a journal entry, a prayer, an artistic response, or meditative thoughts. Each unit follows a particular approach through its nine sessions. Sturdy envelopes, called, “Reflection Collections,” are suggested to preserve students' work. *Reflecting* could be a regularly planned activity, or an occasional exercise.

Without imagination, learning may be reduced to sets of facts and fixed meanings. Students gain immeasurably from the opportunity

to wonder and to wish . . .
to muse and to mull . . .
to puzzle and to probe . . .
to contemplate and to cogitate . . .
to speculate and to surmise . . .

Through private and personal reflection, students can “move into” a scene or “play with” an idea, engaging in quiet, inner conversation.

Reflecting suggestions provide guidance for teachers to kindle students' thoughts through absorbing descriptions, intriguing questions, conditional statements, or soothing, sensory-based meditations.

Teachers can consider following a three-stage process: a peaceful beginning, an engrossing reflection, and a gently guided closure.

In each unit, various types of responses are suggested—writing, drawing, just thinking. Materials needed for students' responses should be set out *before* the guided portion of the reflection activity.

Pay careful attention to preserving and protecting the privacy of students' responses. This will communicate the intimate, absorbing possibilities of reflecting activities. Use large sturdy envelopes with clasps, accordion file folders, boxes, portfolio folders, and the like. The idea is to have something for each student that can be easily stored between sessions, and that offers some type of secure fastening for privacy. These “Reflection Collections” can be sent home at the end of each unit or the year.

Learning Skills

The Bible, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and *The Hymnal 1982* are important books for Episcopalians. Bible study is integrated into session activities throughout the curriculum. The options in this category are designed to focus on particular skills and understandings which will be most beneficial for students using these great books. **Option 1, Class Memory Challenge** presents suggestions for memorizing material suitable for a lifetime of practical use. **Option 2, Learning Scripture** presents selected verses related to the session themes for individual students to commit to memory over the course of the unit.

In Proper 28, we pray: “Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us . . . to hear them, read them, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them . . .” (BCP, p. 236).

Intermediate-age students need some sense of how the Bible came to be. They are now able to grasp the historical time-frame for the events in the Old and New Testaments. Teachers need to speak aloud of their love of the Bible, articulating clearly that it is a treasure for us. Similarly, students can be expected to explain in their own words what the Bible and other books of our faith mean to them personally. The *Treasurebooks*, which accompany each year of the ECC Intermediate level, are written to convey a sense of the value Episcopalians place on the Bible, the Prayer Book, and the Hymnal.

Bible study is integrated into the essential activities of every session. Reading from the Bible, locating Scriptures, and interpreting passages are part of virtually every session's *Gathering* (a student lector reads a passage) and *Introducing the Story* (students locate passages and respond to questions). Throughout the curriculum, material from *The Book of Common Prayer* and *The Hymnal 1982* is incorporated into the optional activities within each session, or in some cases, may be used at *Gathering* or as part of *Introducing the Story*.

The category *Learning Skills* focuses explicitly on memory skills. Skill expectations include:

- Bible—names and order of the 66 books, how to use appendices, and maps
- Prayer Book—names and location of the various offices, collects, sacramental liturgies, other services, prayers and thanksgivings, psalter, and other material
- Hymnal—location and types of service music, the sequence in which hymns appear, and the several indices for the book

At the Intermediate level of the curriculum, Scripture passages have been taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible. This translation offers the most contemporary language of any, and is likely to be what many students will hear as part of their congregational worship. Teachers should feel free to substitute other approved versions.

Memory Work

Now is a great time for memory work. Intermediate-age students are capable learners, eager to acquire skills that will extend their competence. Many are beginning to participate fully in the worship and community life of their local congregation. Many are enthusiastic attenders of various organized Christian education programs. Students are hearing and saying the texts of our faith from the Bible, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and *The Hymnal 1982* in worship and the classroom. Memorizing some of these texts is a natural next step.

The Episcopal Children's Curriculum, at the Intermediate level, introduces two types of memory tasks for students. In the category *Learning Skills: Option 1. Class Memory Challenge* students are offered four memory tasks—one for each unit. For the Shell Year these are: Unit I—books of the Old Testament; Unit II—outline of the Gospels' content and location of key passages; Unit III—Baptismal Covenant; and, Unit IV—books of the New Testament. These are all items that will be useful now and in the future. Suggestions in each session include tips for helping students learn the material, and ways to recognize those who have done so. This is a Class Memory Challenge, designed to be used as a total group activity.

A second, individual memory option is provided in *Option 2. Learning Scripture*. Inspirational Scripture verses were selected from each session's theme for students to memorize. One of these appears on the session symbol card. Instructions are provided in the session outlines to guide teachers in managing this project. Support material for both the Class Memory Challenge and Learning Scripture appears in each issue of the student newspaper, *Covenant Times*.

Ongoing Project

Explicitly intended to carry over from session to session, a cumulative class project offers students and teachers the opportunity for continuity and review across the unit sessions. Typically, these continuing projects lend themselves to display or sharing with the entire congregation.

Each session in the Episcopal Children's Curriculum is designed to be discrete and self-contained.

Yet, for intermediate-age students in particular, there are excellent reasons for entertaining the possibility of an *Ongoing Project*. Students can become interested in a theme and handle complex projects. Cooperation among class members heightens the possibility that those who may have missed a session will still know what happened. Also, during some units, or some seasons of the Church Year, students' attendance may be predictably steady. Of greatest significance, however, is the potential of substantial ongoing projects to tap the talent of intermediates. They can organize, plan, and carry out these projects. Let the group help to solve any problems of space, storage, or participation.

An ongoing project can also be used at the Gathering in each session. A classroom display of the previous pieces of the project can provide a quick review of previous sessions' themes.

Projects of the scope and scale suggested in this category offer an opportunity to reach out to the congregation. In the Shell Year of the Intermediate level, suggested projects include a biblical time line (Unit I), a series of billboards designed around a spiritual theme (Unit II, Sessions 1-5), pictures of Jesus' deeds of power (Unit II, Sessions 6-9), and exhibit of items connected to Holy Baptism (Unit III), and a series of travel posters for cities connected with the apostle Paul (Unit IV).

Teachers interested in using an ongoing project are advised to read through the descriptions for all

Background--

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nine sessions of the unit. After the first, fully detailed description, each session's outline suggests a small piece of the project that teachers could reasonably be expected to accomplish in one session. If circumstances do not permit work on the ongoing project at every session, teachers could combine one or two of the small steps later. Similarly, the ongoing project can be started or stopped at several points.

Symbol Cards

One of the developmental milestones for intermediate-age students is their ability to understand symbols. Symbols are included in sessions throughout the Intermediate level of the curriculum. Each session of the ECC is accompanied by a small, collectible card that includes an illustration of a Christian symbol, an explanation, and a Scripture passage.

Teachers are encouraged to devise appropriate ways to include the cards as part of their class activities. Cards can be used to conclude the session, handed out as part of the Going Forth activities. Cards can be used to stimulate conversation, as references for art projects, or simply cherished as a gift from the church to each student. Symbol Cards, the *Treasurebook*, and *Community Times* are concrete and desirable links between home and church.

Treasurebook

Intended for guided, independent reading, the *Treasurebook* provides support for the four units. Intermediate students can read on their own to learn more about their faith.

In the *Shell Year Treasurebook*, students can examine the treasures of God's covenant with God's people (Unit I), investigate the miracles of Jesus (Unit II), explore aspects of the service of Holy Baptism (Unit III), and learn about the conversion of the apostle Paul and his missionary journeys (Unit IV).

At the end of the session, along with the symbol card description, a suggestion is given to guide students' independent reading, along with a question for students to think about. Teachers are encouraged to read appropriate *Treasurebook* sections as part of their personal preparation in *Getting Ready*.

Resource and Reference Books

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An illustrated history of the Church. (Ten volume series). Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1980.

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Background--

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