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GOLDBERG

A SURVEY OF MESSIANIC LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

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Why We Reach Children

An involvement with children, reaching and discipling them, can be a joy to one's heart as well as a challenge to anyone called to respond to the Lord's command, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14). The big question follows, "Can we minister to these precious ones?" The answer should be a strong affirmative one because one day these children will be the future leaders in the body of the Messiah.

With God, all things are possible. To the thrill of our hearts, children's Messianic Ministry are growing because parents are concerned that Jewish children who are maturing in believing homes must not lose their identity; they need to be aware of our rich culture and heritage in Yeshua.

At the same time however, we need to reach and disciple these children for the Lord and give them a good spiritual foundation based upon the knowledge of God's word. If we don't do it, they will grow into the teen years and be assaulted by diabolical forces and their only weapon will be their knowledge of

the Word of God. The way teens will live, and the choices they must make, will have to rely on a biblical base which has already been instilled in them as children.

We as Messianic believers cannot consider this ministry as a sideline. Children in reality are little people who can learn what is right as well as make the choice to turn away from what is evil.

This writer is not a collector of antiques but has been for more than 30 years a collector of children's and youth materials. Not only have I rummaged in Christian book stores looking for various ideas but wherever I go, I watch and listen for new concepts in discipling children. The visuals, the music, the lesson materials, are constantly assessed as to their spiritual and practical use with children.

As we get down to basics, what kind of program do we find most compelling and challenging? A lot depends upon the age of the child: the very young child of 2 and 1/2 to four and even five have shorter attention spans; the older children of six to seven and even eight are more mature and more time can be devoted for lesson materials; whatever the age, however, the program must consist of materials that are well integrated to keep the child's attention at a high level.

Fashioning A Program

What kind of program will be the most compelling and challenging. A few suggestions are offered:

1. It is imperative for the teacher to know each child, his or her background, and that each one know one another in class. New children can have special kinds of name tags in the form of different animals, trees, plants, or whatever else might be interesting, enabling children already in class to talk with newcomers.

2. Each teacher should keep a 3x5 or 4x6 card in a file box on every child. Information should include the name and age of a brother and/or sister, the child's likes and dislikes, foods (whether they like pizza or not, or flavor of ice cream); which school they attend; what they like or do not like about school; which holidays do they like the best, and so on.

3. Prayer time.

This is the writer's favorite time with the children. Unlike so many classes and schools where the teacher opens and closes with prayer, leaving the child completely out of it, one can have a special blessing in asking the children what they wish to pray for. If the class is new, it may take a while to "break the ice," but once they get over their shyness, they will tell you just about everything that comes into their minds.

When I once asked for prayer requests, a six year old said, "I wish my father would make better oatmeal!" When I reminded the children that God knows everything on their minds and hearts, even before they ask, a little boy said, "He also knows our zip code numbers!" We are prone to think that children cannot reason, but this writer can assure you that they are little people. A three

year old girl once asked prayer for her mommy, saying, "Pray that my mommy will know how to pray."

After the children have listed their prayer requests, this writer asks each one who wishes to come forward and pray, even if it is just a sentence. Prayer becomes real to the children and enables them to turn to the Lord before they will face their crises in later years.

Children will also be encouraged to share freely their prayer requests when the teacher is willing to share his or her needs. As a leader also asks for prayer, it becomes all the more real to everyone in the class. Another means for encouraging prayer is for the teacher to share how God answered prayer for him or her. When children hear and see how their teacher is victorious in prayer life, they will likewise be encouraged to enter into a new and precious relationship with the Lord.

4. The Main Bible Story

All of us recognize the major importance of this part of the program. Here is where we try to make the Bible characters of which we speak alive for the children. The stories need to be told dramatically so as to keep the interest of the children.

When telling the story, a teacher should not use words that children cannot understand. Teachers need to check themselves continually that they are really communicating. We have to remember we are teaching children

and not adults.

One note of caution is necessary. No teacher should begin to prepare during the evening before the lesseon will be taught. Several hours are necessary for adequate preparation so that the teacher will have the lesson well in mind and heart. The teacher should be much in prayer over the lesson and have a sense of how to apply it in the children's lives.

In talking about the different Bible characters, we can weave them around a theme of Hineni, or "Here Am I!" We need to point out how each Bible character reached his/her crisis point before the Lord, deciding to serve Him with his or her entire heart and mind. Each child can likewise be encouraged when he or she will come home to their moment of decision to want to serve the Lord with all of their heart.

5. Memory Verse Time.

The teacher should first choose verses regarding salvation. It is imperative that children relate to these verses and understand them so as to know what personal salvation means. Some verses that have been used are Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16; and John 14:16.

Other verses for their daily lives are: Isaiah 12:2; Psalm 23; Philippians 4:13; and I Peter 5:7 and so on.

6. Contests.

Contests are a good means to encourage attendance, memorizing verses, and can be used in many other ways to challenge

children.

7. Game Time.

There are a lot of interesting games with children. Books are plentiful regarding the kinds of games children like to play. Someone who is gifted in leading children in games can be used for this purpose.

8. Holidays and Treats.

Each of the Jewish holidays has a special emphasis on various kinds of foods with the obvious exception of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). For Rosh HaShanah, we use apples dipped in honey. During Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) we can serve different fruits. At Hannukah time, we have potato pancakes with which Askkenazi Jewish people are familiar, and suf_ganiot or special cakes Sephardim Jews use. At Purim, we tell the story of Esther, spin the dreycl and eat haman taschen, various fruit flavored pastries shaped according to Haman's three cornered hat. For Passover, we have opportunity to go through a simplified version of the seder, and then share with the children unleavened bread, or Masah. At Shavuot (Feast of Weeks, or, Pentecost) we can remember the giving of the commandments and also eat what is associated with Spring, all kinds of cheeses and fruits. For Shabbat, we have a number of stories to explain its meaning and practice. This day is considered a time of joy and we do not deprive ourselves of food.

Obviously, treats can be used on many other occasions than holidays. As with adults, treats provide social occasions when children and teachers can have good fellowship.

9. Handcrafts.

We use special individuals who have a gift for doing and teaching handcrafts which should be simple for children. Almost anything can be used for handcraft to correlate with the lesson and make it meaningful. Good books on handcrafts are available today in abundance and materials can be obtained which will greatly enhance the meaning of the lessons.

10. Practical Object Lessons.

This writer cannot begin to indicate the importance of having some practical lesson to which children can relate. We can use just about any object which can convey a spiritual truth, as for example:

1) The Watermelon Lesson.

This is a story of how a watermelon was left in the refrigerator with instructions by the mother that the children must not touch it. A friend of one of the children came over and, seeing the watermelon in the refrigerator, suggested that they eat it. The daughter at first refused because she wanted to obey her mother but finally yielded to her friend's persistent persuasion. They both finally finished the entire watermelon. So as to hide what happened, they dug a shallow hole in the backyard and then covered up the left over rinds and seeds. When the family returned, the daughter simply explained that someone had come and taken the watermelon.

Nothing was said by the parents. The following Spring, the entire family was out in the backyard and the father

noted some shoots coming up out of the ground. He called for the daughter, and pointing to the shoots, he asked her what they might be. The girl replied she did not know, but the father said, "These are the shoots from the watermelon seeds which were planted last Fall!" The girl then confessed her misdeeds. The point of the lesson brings out the Scripture passage, "Be sure that your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

Any number of practical lessons exist such as the use of the umbrella, a salt and pepper shaker, the wordless book which explains the meaning of salvation. A favorite one is the "Cake Story." All of the ingredients are laid out on the table and the children are asked to taste each one of them. While the sugar is sweet, the rest of them have no taste or are bitter, such as the salt, the baking powder, the butter, etc. The children are asked to then relate some of their good and difficult experiences. After sharing, a cake is then brought out and each child is given a slice, and of course, what child can refuse cake? The lesson becomes obvious: many of the ingredients are themselves sweet, bitter or have no taste, but when they are put together, they now are all sweet to the taste. So it is with life with many of its bitter problems. But if we trust the Lord, He has a way of making all things work together for good, a beautiful lesson of Romans 8:28.

Junior Leaders

This writer strongly encourages the use of junior leaders one or two age groups older than the children being taught. For example, if the class consists of primaries (six to eight years of

age), then these younger leaders would be either Juniors (nine to eleven) or middlers (twelve to fourteen years). These leaders will find such service invaluable for leadership training. They can help the teachers in many ways and the younger children can relate to those nearer to them in age. Especially will it be true of a Junior leader who has a gift of teaching the simpler lessons. The teacher can be a guide to such a leader and when he or she can be trained how to teach the lesson, the younger children will listen well.

Programs can be varied depending on the Shabbat school and the various needs. In general, however, each child should be considered as the teacher's very own; each teacher should have the best interests of each child at heart. The point is that we are dealing with little people and we want to see them know the Lord, and in days to come, be fruitful for Him. As you work at this task for a number of years as this writer has done, ours is the joy that is indescribable to see children who have grown up to be mature adults and who are now in His service. The Lord bless each leader as you follow His command already mentioned, "Let the little children come to me."

Available Messianic Teaching Materials

As with the start of any new movement, the materials available from a Messianic perspective are few and far between. However, a lot of enthusiasm by teachers is very evident and some

have begun to write materials to meet the growing need in various Messianic congregations. On the other hand, many are also using children and youth materials published by the existing publishing houses and then adapting them for the particular need.

This writer has surveyed a number of materials and a brief overview is provided within this paper. Most of these sample materials are laid out on the table for you to examine.

1. Delores Kohl Educational Foundation (Wilmette, IL: The Kohl Jewish Teacher Center, 1981).

Three books published by this Jewish center cover the holidays from a Jewish point of view. They are excellent for a description of the holidays. Unfortunately, there is no table of contents which makes it difficult trying to find the various stories, activities, games, and questions. However, at the end of each of the books there are specific questions under each of the holidays for the teacher and student to answer which gives each one an overview of the holiday.

The material contains many pictures of different facets of the holiday. For example, under Passover (Pesah), there are pictures of: unleavened bread, the Haggadah, how Israelis were once slaves, Elijah's cup, etc. Under Purim, the pictures present Queen Esther, Mordechai, the Dreydl, the Gregger or noise maker, and Hamantaschen.

There are a number of good handcraft ideas for each of the holidays. For Pesach, the child makes a "My Passover Book," and in it he can express his or her feelings and impressions on what occurs during the course of the Seder.

These materials also include games and activities for each

of the holidays. For Passover, the child still takes a number of paper plates and on each plate he or she draws or pastes a symbol of Pesach; on one plate he draws or pastes a picture of the Zeroa, or bone; on another plate, the parsley, then the egg, and so on.

Included also is a list of vocabulary which enables the child to learn the specific words associated with each of the holidays.

2. Martha Zimmerman, Celebrate the Feasts (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1981).

Martha Zimmerman is a Presbyterian minister's wife who has provided an excellent book to encourage believers to celebrate the Old Testament Feasts in the home or church.

There is a good table of contents which includes: the Sabbath; Passover; Counting the Omer (Offering of the First Fruits and Counting for Shavuot, or First Fruits of the Wheat Harvest); Shavuot (First Fruits, or Pentecost); Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur; and Sukkoth.

Each chapter has an excellent discussion regarding each of the holidays. The well written story is provided as a guide for the parents to teach the children their Jewish roots of the New Testament faith. Enough material is provided to help parents and children how to observe each of the holidays.

Recipes are provided for different foods for each of the holidays. For example, recipes are provided for different elements of the Passover meal, the egg soup, the gelfite balls, matsah kneidlach and a special Passover cake. The main dish recom

mended is roast lamb.

An entire seder is provided for the Passover, and the author also relates it to the table at which Jesus sat concerning his last Passover or last supper.

The book is excellent from a biblical and theological point of view. An appendix at the end compares the holidays of Leviticus 23 and their corresponding observance in the New Testament.

The book is highly recommended for parents as resource material to learn well the holidays and to teach their children how to observe them. However, we have to keep in mind that this book does not handle the holidays from a Messianic Jewish perspective, although the writer as a non-Jewish person has done well to understand the Old Testament backgrounds. This writer would recommend this book as a good supplement.

3. Martha Aller of the LIGHT OF ISRAEL CONGREGATION, Yonkers, New York, in a children's series, I AM UNIQUE for grades 1-5.

This is a children's series running for one-quarter, 13 weeks or 3 months. Ideas for the materials are taken from "Hallelujah! I'm Special;" The Helping Hands Series; "Toby's Missing Memory" tape about friendship, Maranatha Music, Costa Mesa, California; "Fruit of the Spirit Tree" from Beth Yeshua Congregation in Philadelphia.

I AM UNIQUE is a series teaching children they are important to God, providing them with a sense of self-esteem and confidence. Some of the lessons are entitled: More Than Sparrows; Somebody Special; Special Friends; etc.

The material is presented on 8 and 1/2 by 11 paper and double spaced. The lessons are easy to follow and provide an excellent guide for the teacher, including the review from last week, the preview, the lesson itself, and then an encouragement to have the children relate to the lesson as it is shared. After each lesson, there are special projects that involve the child. These are kept in a special folder and at the end of the quarter when the child takes it home, he or she will have a constant reminder of why he is unique.

The only difficulty in reproducing this material is that the author is highly dependent on other sources, incorporating them into her own arrangement. As a result there could be copyright difficulties.

4. A series of lessons on the Jewish holidays written for the most part by Martha Eller of the LIGHT OF ISRAEL CONGREGATION, Yonkers, New York, but two lessons on the Feast of Trumpets and the True Yom Kippur were co-authored with Sondra Guy.

Besides the two holidays already mentioned, there are also: The Two Goats; Celebrate Joy, or the celebration of Sukkot; the Chanukkah Detective Story; and Esther--A Servant in God's Hands, which is a children's Purim representation.

This material is also on 8 and 1/2 by 11 paper. As each holiday is presented, the teacher can teach his or her children its meaning, although for the most part, the material is a simple guideline on one page. Perhaps, the writers need to expand the material so as to give the teacher a more full background for adequate lesson preparation for children.

The Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur lessons have a number of suggestions, enabling the children to make objects relating to these holidays: For Rosh Hashanah, the child makes a shofar; Yom Kippur, a book is made with a cover saying BOOK OF LIFE; the Two Goats for Yom Kippur, a picture or a flannel graph of a priest with two goats standing by him; and so on. Each lesson also has handcrafts so that for Rosh Hashanah, children make silver trumpets and New Year cards, and for Yom Kippur, scrolls which on the inside is pasted a Bible verse relating to atonement or a caption, "Yeshua, the Keppurah."

For Chanukkah, readings are provided for various narrators, and it would appear that the children present different facets of this holiday. However, a lot is left to the teacher for the presentation because the material is too much in outline form. The words for a song also appears although the music itself is not provided. The notation appears to indicate that the writer of the music gave permission for its use.

The Esther material is more detailed with provision for a Purim spiel, written out in one's handwriting.

5. Karen Marks--Purim Sunday (Olive Tree Congregation, Niles, ILL.).

This is one lesson on Purim, and is evidently an attempt to begin a series on the Jewish holidays. The material appears on 8 and 1/2 by 11 sheets and is written out.

The material consists of two sets: one for the preschool and beginners and the second is for middlers and primaries.

A time schedule appears on the first page. On the second and third pages, insight is provided for lesson planning, guiding

the teacher on how to present the story of Purim. An additional page is given over to activity in connection with the arrival time whereby the teacher can ascertain how much the children know about Purim. In this time of about 15-20 minutes, the children are taught the specifics regarding Purim, its definition, the Megillah, and the characters associated with Purim--Esther, Mordechai, etc. On the last page, a suggestion is made that story time should perhaps take about 15-20 minutes. Suggestions are provided for the handcraft time: the middlers and primaries make a handmade gregger while the younger children, using a paper plate, make Haman's hat.

6. Jeff and Pat Feinberg, Celebrate! Shabbat School Fun for Messianic Kids.

In the introduction, Jeff and Pat explain the "Celebrate!" program which structures Bible learning experiences for preschool aged children in a Messianic Jewish congregation. They further explain that "the purpose of the program is to orient the learner towards an evolving Messianic relationship with God and community in a context of celebration."

The material is still in its formative state and typed 8 1/2 x 11 paper. However, it is well organized, with lesson plans, time divided out for activity, Bible craft, snack time, and together time. Altogether, each lesson runs one hour.

The schedule of Celebrate units are presented, and holidays during the month of Tishri, Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah is completed. Also completed is the Shabbat lesson

as well as the Passover, Shavuot and a holiday of Elul which centers on God's promise to Father Abraham. Still to be finished at this writing are: Hannukah, Purim and some of the minor holidays.

This writer has the lesson material for Passover which includes a calendar page for the holiday with its different days of significance. Small pictures indicate what shall be done on each of the days. For example, two days are set aside, picturing children cleaning up the house. Another picture shows a table for Passover.

Five lessons are given over to the celebration of Nisan: Lesson 1--Slaves Under Pharoah, 2--Free From Egypt, 3--The Last Seder With Yeshuah, 4--Free From Sin and Death, 5--Pesah--God Sets Us Free.

The material is well covered, with the story, activity, songs, and is possibly one of the best presentations of this holiday from a Messianic perspective.

The lesson material also includes periods for play as well as handcrafts. Scripture memory verses are also presented as well as various songs in connection with Passover. Hebrew words are incorporated into the stories. Each child also receives an activity sheet emphasizing various facets of Passover, the plate with the arrangement of the various articles for the Seder, pictures indicating how our forefathers were slaves, a picture showing how Moses a slave boy is cradled in his basket, etc. Special music is also provided by Jeff and Pat.

By far, this is one of the best materials available and

this writer hopes that it will be in print soon. One point needs to be made, however: this work is ideal for the more Messianic type of congregation, especially with the Shabbat emphasis. The congregations which meet on the first day of the week might not be able to make the best use of this material, but even then, such congregations can use part of the work to good advantage.

7. Willie George, FAITH ROOTS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CHURCH CURRICULUM, AND FAITH ROOTS FOR PRESCHOOLERS (Broken Arrow, OK).

These materials are included in this writer's assessment because the preschoolers in Congregation Beth Messiah in Rockville, MD use them. When discussing the reason with the teacher, she replied that they are biblically and theologically correct, but also have an emphasis on the spiritual gifts. However the teacher does adapt them for a Messianic Jewish context to bring out this dimension.

In the preschool sample, a master lesson is presented for the teacher and each lesson mentions the scripture to be studied, the central truth, memory verse, supplementary object lesson on God's animal "the dog" and a supplementary lesson of a puppet skit, "Saved By Believing."

The materials are well written, and illustrated, and serve well for teaching preschoolers as well as older children.

The material however is not from a Messianic Jewish perspective.

8. Messianic Jewish Books for Children: Merry Kaye and David Weiner, From Abraham to Me, Bet Shalom Books, 1986.

The specific book Abraham to Me as well as a series of other books are designed to be informative and entertaining and bring the truths of Old and New Covenants down to the level of the child in order that he or she may understand it.

The story is presented in picture book style, and the biblical materials enable the child to learn them well. In the particular book on hand, the lesson on Abraham indicates how he ~~people however through obedience to God's word made it~~ ~~Not Messiah was~~ sent to "teach people to love God again and to obey Him."

The lesson teaches the child that while the Messiah died, He came back to life again and that if we ask Him, Yeshua, into our hearts, our decision will make God happy.

The only difficulty with the story is that no mention whatever is given as to why Yeshua died.

The books are well written and illustrated and the story is told in a very pleasing way for the child to grasp the basic biblical truth.

9. Jamie Lash, Righteous Rhymes, Vol. I (Ft. Lauderdale, Love Song to the Messiah, 1983) and Righteous Rhymes Vol. II (Ft. Lauderdale, Love Song to the Messiah, 1987).

Jamie Lash's years of experience as a teacher has enabled her to produce two good sets of materials, one for pre-schoolers up to five years of age and the second which is more sophisticated, for children up to ten years old.

Both sets of material follow the same order; each of them have 11 songs, 11 lessons and 11 illustrations to color. Each lesson is laid out on the left and right sides of the pages so that everything can be seen at one glance. At the top of every right page is a song that goes with the lesson. Each lesson in the teacher's manual has a Bible based lesson.

A cassette tape goes with each of the two volumes of material. Jamie presents each lesson on tape and sings the adapted nursery rhyme that goes with the lesson. Then she invites the children to sing the rhyme with her one or two more times. The tapes therefore enable the teacher to teach the lesson although this does not preclude any teacher from taking the specific lesson in the manual and presenting it in his or her own way.

The pre-schoolers have lessons geared to their needs, with such emphases as: Freedom from Fear; Joy; Stars and the Promises of God; and so on. In Volume Two, the lessons are: Believing in Jesus (Yeshua); Praise and Worship; The Greatness, Power, and Majesty of God; and so on. In all the lessons, there is a conscious attempt to present a Messianic Jewish perspective.

These materials can be used at home where parents can take time to instill some basic Bible teaching to their children in an interesting manner. There are also designed to be used in a school for a class dealing with specific biblical themes or can be used in a Shabbat school, presenting these themes likewise. It would be good however if these materials are to be used in a

Shabbat school, that two additional lessons be provided to complete out a quarter of teaching thirteen lessons for three months.

All in all, these materials do treat a number of biblical subjects in a delightful way.

10. Carole H. Nelson, Feed My Lambs (Rockville, MD: Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, n.d.). Evidently involved also in the production of this material is the UMJC Education Committee, and Andrew Shishkoff: Faith and Direction. The Union is the distributor.

Feed My Lambs material is contained in a looseleaf notebook and is designed to give the child and young person an exposure to the Hebrew Scriptures and New Covenant. There is no notation for which age child the lessons are designed but judging from the content, the teacher can vary the presentation for children up to twelve years.

The material is divided into five parts: The Torah, The Neviim (Prophets), The Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. On the first page of each division, an introduction provides the teacher with a Table of Contents as well as a list of songs to be used with the lessons. With the notebook, three booklets of songs are also provided, containing the songs for use by the teacher.

On the second page of each division, there are instructions or a weekly pool of activities for the teacher, providing direction for teaching the lessons. For example, in the Torah

division, the teacher has guidelines for teaching the Hebrew alphabet. In addition, instructions are provided on what is to be memorized, the books of the Tenach, and the Ten Commandments; guidelines on what music and crafts are to be used; having a conference with each child after the ninth lesson so as to have an idea of their difficulties, likes and desires. A lot is left up to the teacher on how the lesson can be developed and how much time should be given for each activity.

For example, for the Torah division, eighteen lessons pertain to the first five books and an additional four lessons treat the holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot. The weekly pool on page two mentioned Channukah but it was not included in the division this writer reviewed. The final lesson is an emphasis on the weekly pool of activities as a guideline for the teacher to review the materials.

Each lesson is contained on one page only. There are some directions on how to proceed with the lesson but many times it would appear the teacher must draw out from the Scriptures the lesson pertinent for the child. For each lesson, small pictures illustrate the main points; handcraft ideas are artfully presented to keep up the interest level and enable the child to learn the lesson well. A memory verse appears at the bottom of the page. Reference is also made to songs used from the books provided.

In the Torah division, the Hebrew alphabet is introduced. The children learn some of the specifics of the lettering and

vowels and thereafter, they learn two letters a week. Eventually they will also learn the vowels as well. A song also goes with the first lesson to help the child learn the letters more quickly.

Some of the biblical topics covered in the Torah division are: Genesis...Beginnings (Torah game); Creation; Sin; Covenant People; and so on. The Neviim division I covers the prophets in nine lessons; evidently, there is a second part to Neviim, but it was not included in the material this writer reviewed. The Gospels division are a presentation of character studies including the biblical means of recognizing who is the Messiah. Included is also a special lesson on Hannukah/Purim; the Acts division presents different lessons on the Ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the message of blessings in Yeshua, Peter's message of Repent and be Saved, and so on; and the final division on Revelation with its eleven lessons emphasize Suffering for His Name, Letters to the Congregations, Throne Room of God, A Look at Yeshua in Heaven, and the rest with prophetic themes.

All the divisions are designed to give the child a good overview on an introduction to the Bible.

11. Sylvia Yellin, Shabbat School Curriculum (Denver, CO: Congregation Roeh Israel, n.d.) for age level: 6-7. A second book is directed for age level 8-10. A third book on the Feasts of Israel is designated for children of School Age.

On the first page of each of the books is a set of

Teacher's Instructions. The first statement is a reminder to the teacher to read the lesson plan included with each lesson and do it before teaching. For this writer, this guideline is important so that the teacher can have the material to be taught well in mind and heart.

The teacher's instructions provide the teacher with ideas on how to proceed with presenting the material. A glossary gives definitions of names and terms to be used. There is also a Table of Contents. For both age groups, 6-7 and 8-10, there are 39 lessons. Generally, the lesson is the same for both age groups, except that for the older child, the lessons fit his or her age better.

On the first page of each lesson, the teacher has a lesson plan. Succeeding page(s) which do not have the lesson plan should be copied and given to each student. The student's page(s) contain their memory verse, Bible reading, worksheets and homework. Parents are encouraged to affirm what is taught.

Each set is designed for a year's presentation in the Shabbat school and covers in an overview the entire Bible which indeed is a tall order. Vacation Bible School is suggested for additional learning during the summer.

Each lesson has a plan for the teacher, providing the information for the Scripture reading, objectives, memory verses, course teaching, summary or handcraft and games. While no time is set for how long each section should consist, yet the teacher will have a fairly good idea on how to cover the material.

The material is well written in large print, making it easy to read, especially for the children. Discussion questions are also used to consolidate in the child's mind what has been taught. Plays are introduced in certain lessons which bring out the main points. Pictures are also present in some lessons for the children to color. Hebrew words appear on various pages, designed to introduce students to their meanings and use.

The third set of materials for the Feasts of Israel follows the same format as the Shabbat School material. A separate lesson is provided for: Rosh HaShanah; Yom Kippur; Sukkot; Simchat Torah; Chanukkah; Purim; Tu b'Shevat; Passover; and Shavuot.

For each lesson, the teacher has the lesson plan. On the page for the students, the holiday is explained. Depending on the holiday, games, food, songs, and homework are provided for best presenting the main points. The students' pages are illustrated. All in all, the set on the Feasts is a good contribution for teaching children the meaning of the holidays.

The three sets of curriculum have been approved by the Union and should find ready acceptance among the congregations.

12. Other sets of materials. By no means has this writer exhausted the materials available. Marsha Melisko of Olive Tree Congregation in Los Angeles has begun to develop some. The Bnai Yeshua Congregation in Philadelphia also has materials. However, this writer, while trying to obtain them, has not been able to have them on hand for an analysis. No doubt there are others, but what has been covered in this paper does represent the

main contributions so far among the Messianic congregations.

13. Child Evangelism (Warrenton, MO).

This writer wishes to make one more analysis of existing materials which, while developed for the Church in general, can be adapted for use in the Messianic congregations.

Child Evangelism puts out well developed materials which deal with a number of biblical emphases for both the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the New Covenant. Obviously, the teacher will have to adapt these materials to make them apply to a Messianic perspective.

The Biblegrams which Child Evangelism puts out are: Beginnings, Five lessons on creation, the beginning of sin and punishment, the first children, Enoch's walk, and Noah's family; five lessons on the patriarchs; five lessons on Joseph; six lessons on Moses in Volume one and an additional six lessons in Volume II; five lessons on the Tabernacle; and a number of other lessons on Joshua, Judges, Ruth, two volumes of lessons on David, Elijah, Elisha, and Esther.

There are two volumes of excellent material on GOD'S WORD AND ME from both the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the New Covenant. Children can learn the importance of the Word, its origins and how we can put it to the best use in our own personal lives. This writer has used this material across the years in her club work of children three to seven years of age with great profit. Again this material can be adapted and made most meaningful to Messianic Jewish Children.

Conclusion

I can say that working with children has been my abiding passion for years and to this day, nothing is more blessed than being with them, helping in their decisions for the Lord for salvation and then challenging them to dedicate their young lives for future ministry. We do not start giving them a vision for the Lord's work when they are older teens. The challenge begins long before children reach their early teens so as to set their little minds and hearts on what can be done for the Lord.

I am grateful for those involved in preparing messianic materials today and for all involved in working with the children in the Messianic Jewish congregations. How different it is than when my husband and I first started out years ago. We had prayed and are grateful for the congregations that exist today, allowing for Jewish believers to find their fellowship in a more congenial ethnic and cultural atmosphere.

Now as to materials. Obviously, in spite of what we do have, a lot more needs to be done that will minister to the needs of children and teens at each age level. While we have a number of attempts to deal with the holidays, only two sets of materials treated in this paper actually try to take the children through the Bible: FEED MY LAMBS by Carole Nelson and SHABBAT SCHOOL CURRICULUM by Sylvia Yellin. Even then, the materials cover too wide an age span to effectively minister to the needs of specific ages. For example, a five year old has different needs than a

seven year old and a seven year old must be ministered to differently than a ten year old. For the time being, we can get by, but in time, we will need to become more particular in our ministry to children.

For specific material in ministry, Martha Aller's I AM UNIQUE is excellent and can be put to good use meeting the needs of children. So is Jamie Lash's RIGHTEOUS RHYMES. I look forward to the publishing of Feinberg's materials on the Jewish holidays.

I have three recommendations as a result of examining what is available today: 1) for the time being, we have to go along as we are now, exchanging our materials with one another, for use in our congregations. This will be good cross-fertilization of our ideas and challenging each of us in our respective areas as to further development of materials.

2) Because we do not have graded materials for the specific needs of children at each age level, some of us can make good use of what existing materials do exist today in the standard publishing houses, i.e., Gospel Light, Scripture Press, Child Evangelism, and then adapting the material for specific Messianic Jewish use.

3) We all recognize that it will take time to produce materials for each grade level. A great deal of effort and time is necessary to contact the many different people who can begin to produce graded materials for our children. I would propose that some agency, (perhaps the Lausanne Consultation for Jewish Evangelism is best suited for this purpose), set in motion a representative committee to discuss further what needs exist to

produce the graded materials to cover the Scriptures and the Jewish holidays. The Committee can then assign various children's workers to write these materials for each grade level. The Lausanne Consultation can then publish this material or contract its production by some existing publishing house for children's materials, or the Lederer Foundation in Baltimore.

This writer has considered this paper a labor of love and trust that the Lord will use it for the encouragement in developing materials for use by Messianic Jewish congregations to the extent that our children in the future generations will take their place in leadership as long as the Messiah tarries.