

Chapter 14

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1. Why is Adventurers not under the care of Children's Ministries?

Adventurers is a program of the Pathfinders for younger children. Pathfinders started out as a youth program; hence it came under the care of the Youth Department. Then, Pathfinders began to conduct similar programs for children in the lower primary level, and in recent years programs for the kindergarten level. Since the Youth Department has always handled Pathfinders, it continues to be under their jurisdiction even though the participants are children.

2. Why do we need to create a new Sabbath School curriculum?

The decision to undertake the creation of a new curriculum was made by the General Conference. The General Conference Sabbath School department, in consultation with all world divisions, has been the moving force behind the writing, editing, and publishing of all the GraceLink materials.

Studies conducted across North America showed that parents, pastors, and children's leaders were asking for change. They wanted lessons that are:

- more appropriate to the age levels
- more interesting to hold the child's attention
- not too abstract too soon
- told and taught the way children learn best--according to their learning styles
- based on a Bible story, even for junior teens
- focused on Jesus and His grace

3. Why don't the GraceLink lessons teach Bible stories in chronological order?

Imagine for a moment that they did--that the lessons in each series began with Genesis and progressed straight through to Revelation. This would mean that primary and junior children, who have a four-year series, would experience stories of Jesus only *once every four years*. Even in beginner and kindergarten, which are two-year series, the section on the life of Christ would be proportionally tiny if those two years were supposed to cover the entire Bible in order. The primary reason for departing from chronological order is to make sure that children have frequent opportunities to make friends with Jesus Christ.

A second reason for departing from chronological order in teaching Bible stories is because of the calendar. While many Adventists choose not to make a big deal of celebrating Christmas or Easter, these seasons present a "teachable moment" when much of society is focused on spiritual things. Choosing not to follow chronological order means that Jesus' birth can be taught in December, and His death and resurrection in the spring. It means that each year, parents and Sabbath School teachers can take advantage of these times to focus children's attention on what the Bible says about these all-important events.

The planners of GraceLink have followed an overall [Scope & Sequence](#) which makes sure that all of the major Bible stories are taught (some of them more than once) throughout the

curriculum. In general, each division alternates from quarter to quarter between Old Testament and New Testament. And where possible within the monthly units, stories are taught in sequence.

4. Why do we introduce the lesson first at church? What incentive will kids have to study now?

Teachers used to complain that one child in a whole class would know the Bible story very well and others not at all. It was difficult to teach so that everyone was involved. But when we teach the lesson first at church, everyone is at the same place; nobody has studied it yet. As you teach the lesson, you can encourage kids to study more about it during the week and to share the things they learn with the whole family.

Challenge them to personal prayer and Bible study as a way to stay close to Jesus--which is the true purpose of Bible study. Keep asking how many times they studied and record their responses, not in order to reward them, but to chart their progress. After a while they will begin to study for themselves. Encourage them to increase their study.

Children take their cues from adults. When teachers understand the added benefits of the new curriculum and methods, they can model a positive viewpoint.

5. Why do the GraceLink lessons miss the point of some Bible stories?

One of the best ways to keep the Bible fresh and alive throughout a lifetime of study is to allow the Holy Spirit to bring out aspects of familiar passages that we've never thought of before. The GraceLink curriculum develops four of the most important concepts of Christian life to use as lenses for Bible study--Grace, Worship, Community, and Service. Each lesson is approached through one of these viewpoints:

- ** How can this story show God's saving love for me? ([Grace](#))
- ** What can this story teach me about my response to God? ([Worship](#))
- ** What does this passage have to say about my relationship with others? ([Community](#))
- ** How does this lesson make a point about reaching out to others? ([Service](#))

A GraceLink lesson may have a focus completely different from the "point" that you might expect. This does not mean that the GraceLink message isn't valid. As children come to realize that the same story can make many different points when studied from a different emphasis, they will learn to appreciate the breadth of God's Word and the infinite possibilities for learning that it contains.

Each GraceLink lesson focuses on only one message, or "point," of the MANY that are possible in a given Bible story. Research has shown that the most effective way of teaching children--or adults either, for that matter--is to make **one** point in a lesson, to thoroughly explore its applications to everyday life, and to repeat that point (message) at various times throughout the class time. After all, one message can be experienced in many different ways.

This also gives the teacher the best possible strategy for organization: how does this activity or presentation contribute to the main point of the lesson? In a GraceLink lesson, the entire Sabbath School time is focused around the message.

6. Why don't the new materials use the traditional style of art that we're used to from the old Sabbath School lessons?

Traditional Seventh-day Adventist art is not known for being culturally inclusive. These lessons are used around the world, and it is not appropriate for them to depict only Caucasian children. The non-realistic style of artwork allows race/ethnicity to be ambiguous. When you look at one of the characters, you can't always say, "This person is African," or "This person is

European."

Another issue connected with artwork is time-sensitivity. Many of the pictures we grew up with, while still beautiful, look dated to the current generation. Clothes, hairstyles, etc. have changed since they were painted. A non-realistic style is a lot less subject to fashion detail.

Different artists have been selected to create illustrations for each level of the curriculum that will appeal to children. Child-friendly artwork is relatively simple, emphasizing primary colors and devoting less attention to background and detail. A conscious effort has been made to avoid the appearance of any characters directly identifiable from the media.

7. Is the Children's Ministries coordinator responsible for training teachers to use the GraceLink curriculum?

The Children's Ministries coordinator works together with the Sabbath School leaders to provide training for teachers in using GraceLink. The coordinator may invite the conference Children's Ministries director to conduct the training for the teachers in the local churches.