
CHEROKEE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
BIBLE DEPARTMENT
BIBLE CURRICULUM, 2012-2013

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PHILOSOPHY OF BIBLE INSTRUCTION

THE FOUNDATION OF BIBLE INSTRUCTION

The foundational belief of all Bible instruction at Cherokee Christian High School is that the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We confess with the church throughout history that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are the very word of God to man. Therefore, the Bible is inerrant (without error) and infallible (incapable of error).

THE PURPOSE OF BIBLE INSTRUCTION

We will be describing a number of specific goals or outcomes for the Bible curriculum below. But we should consider here what the overall purpose is in Bible instruction. What are we seeking to achieve, in a big-picture way?

First and most fundamental, the goal of our instruction is the *glory of God*. “So, whether you eat or drink, *or whatever you do*, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). We seek to honor and promote the Lord God, to exalt Him, to lift Him up before men. Everything else we do in our Bible program (or in any other aspect of the school) is secondary to that overriding goal.

Second, a more proximate goal is the *fulfillment of the Great Commission*. “Jesus came and said to [his disciples], ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus here gives His church the charge to make disciples. And how are we to make disciples?

- *By going*. In our case, however, we do not have to go far – just into our classrooms! The Lord is bringing the students to us.
- *Baptizing*. Cherokee Christian School is *not* the church, and so we do not have the authority to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. However, we may think about what is implied by the command to baptize. Baptism is administered to those who enter into the Kingdom of God, to those who become members of His covenant body. And how does one enter into that covenant? In the context of the school setting, through professing faith in Christ. So we may say that, in our context, this refers to evangelism – presenting the gospel claims of Christ to our students and calling for saving faith and repentance.
- *Teaching all that Christ has commanded*. Notice that Christ did not limit His Great Commission to simply making converts or pressing for professions of faith. Those are vital, but they are only part of what Jesus commanded. In fact, His command was not to make converts or to press for a profession of faith – the command was to *make disciples*. One vital element of making disciples is evangelism. But the other vital element is *teaching the whole counsel of God*. If we believe that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, inspired the entire Bible, then it follows that the entire Bible is what He has commanded. If we are going to make disciples as Christ has instructed us, then it is necessary that we teach the entire Bible. We see a profession of faith, not as the *conclusion* of our work of making disciples, but as the *starting point*. If we are going to do as Christ has commanded, then we must teach all that Scripture teaches. Note also that “teaching all that Christ has commanded” is not some sort of “second step” in making disciples (as if we first evangelize and only afterward teach all the Bible). No, the way Christ has worded this command is that we make disciples *precisely by teaching all He has commanded*. As we teach the entire Bible, as we faithfully instruct our students in the whole counsel of God, we will be making disciples. In the case of some of our students, that

instruction will be the tool that God uses to bring them to saving faith in Christ. For other students (those who already savingly believe), that same instruction will bring about their further growth in discipleship.

Third, our goal for Bible instruction must present the Bible in the way it was given to us. How did God intend His Word to function? Fortunately, we have that definition in Scripture. Paul says, in 2 Tim. 3:16-17, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” Paul here lists four purposes or uses for Scripture, with one goal.

- 1 *Teaching* – Scripture is given to us by God to provide instruction, teaching, knowledge, etc. It has been compared to a road map – when one begins a trip (at least in the pre-GPS days), he has a map showing the route from the starting point to the end. Scripture provides us with that map, showing us the route we should take in our lives.
- 2 *Reproof* – There are times in a trip when we get lost, make a wrong turn, or take a detour. If that happens, the driver (or his wife) looks at the map and says, “We just passed Elm Street, and that is two miles from where we should have turned.” So the map points out the error. Scripture does the same thing – when we sin, the Word of God reproves us and shows us our sin. This is one of the historic uses of the Law – to show us our sin and our need of a Savior.
- 3 *Correction* – After finding out that we are lost, the map is then useful to point out how to get back on the correct road. “If we turn left at the next street, we will get back to the interstate.” The Word of God does likewise. After revealing our sin to us, Scripture tells us what we need to do differently – how we need to repent and turn from our sins and turn to Christ.
- 4 *Training in righteousness* – Now that we have gotten back on the correct route in our trip, the map can help us stay on the right road. “If we watch for signs for I-75 South, we will be right.” So it is with the Scriptures. After we see our sins, and after we confess and repent of them, then the Word of God instructs us in how to continue in the path of righteousness and avoid falling into the same sin again.
- 5 The goal which Paul gives for all these uses of Scripture is that the man of God would be complete and equipped for every good work. To be “complete” means to be mature, to be well-equipped, to be thoroughly prepared. And for what is he prepared? For “every good work.” Whatever good works are to be done – whatever actions would be pleasing to God – those are informed by the Word of God. As the Westminster Confession of Faith says, “Good works are only such as God has commanded in His holy Word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention” (XVI:1).

So to sum up, if our Bible instruction is going to use the Bible the way God intended it to be used, it will teach students the truth of the Word of God (“teaching”), point out their sins (“reproof”), call them to confess and repent of those sins (“correction”), and teach them how to live a righteous and godly life (“training in righteousness”). The outcome will be students who are brought to maturity and are ready to obey God in every area of their lives (“complete and equipped for every good work”).

PERSPECTIVES ON BIBLE INSTRUCTION

About thirty years ago, Dr. Richard Pratt (formerly professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, FL) wrote an article entitled “Pictures, Windows, and Mirrors in Old Testament Exegesis.”¹ Consider these three objects.

- When we go to an art gallery, we look *at* a picture. We study the colors, the shapes, the texture, the arrangement of objects, etc.
- When we have a window, it is primarily something *through* which we look. Unless we are window washers, we don’t look *at* a window; we use it to look at other things.
- Mirrors are also not things at which we look, unless we are trying to clean them. And, except for special two-way mirrors, we don’t look through them. We use mirrors to look at *ourselves*.

In Pratt’s article, he dealt particularly with the Old Testament historical narratives and said that we can profitably use three perspectives in their interpretation:

- *Pictures* – We look *at* the text as we would study a picture. In Old Testament narratives, we engage in literary analysis, studying the background and form of the text.
- *Windows* – We view the text as giving us a window into the historical record. What can we learn about Old Testament history from the text?
- *Mirrors* – We study the themes of the texts. What does the Old Testament history teach us about God, about sin, about our need for a Savior, etc.?

These same three perspectives may be applied to our study of the Bible in general, and so Bible instruction at Cherokee Christian School may be seen from these three angles. First, the Bible is an *object of study*. That is, the Bible is a body of content which the students must learn, just as they learn the content of history, of mathematics, of science, and of the other subjects in the school. Students learn the basic facts and stories of the Bible, study the types of literature contained in it, and learn what it teaches in its various parts. Bible classes thus will involve study, lectures, quizzes, tests, etc., the same as for other classes. Students need to master the content of the Bible just as they do for other subjects.

Second, the Bible provides a *perspective for understanding the world*. We commonly call this a “world view.” As we learn more of Scripture, we begin to see the world around us the way God Himself sees it. It is comparable to wearing eyeglasses – as our students put on the “spectacles” of Scripture, they see everything around them clearly and properly. This would include the area of *application*. How does the Bible apply to current issues? To our culture? To various topics with which men have to deal? We want Bible instruction at CCS to train our students to think about all areas of life from a Biblical perspective.

Third, Bible instruction at CCS will seek to *change the lives of the students*. We want our students to know more of Christ through their Bible classes, to be drawn to Him, to come to repentance and faith, and to be made more and more like Christ. Bible classes should become places where students come face to face with the living Word of God, and are either brought closer to Christ or have their sins exposed more fully. Students should not leave Bible class unchanged by the Word of God.

All three of these viewpoints are important and essential to our Bible instruction. We do not place any of them as a higher priority than the others, for all are needed. If students do not know the content of the Bible, they will not be

¹ Richard L. Pratt, Jr.; “Pictures, Windows, and Mirrors in Old Testament Exegesis.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 45.1 (Spring 1983): 156-167.

able to understand the world Biblically, nor will their own lives be changed. If they do not develop a Biblical world view, it indicates that they really don't understand the content of the Bible, and their lives are not being changed in the right way. If our students do not experience changed lives, it means they have not really learned the content of the Bible, and they will not be able to develop a proper understanding of their world.

At various times through the course of study at CCS, one or the other of these viewpoints may be more prominent than the others. That is, there may be class sessions, units of study, or even entire courses which will focus more on knowledge of content than on world views or on personal holiness. At other times, the development of a world view will come to the fore; and at still other times, the emphasis will be on the development of a personal walk with Christ. But over the course of our Bible curriculum, all three emphases will be maintained and developed, as essential to a proper study of the Bible.

THE IMPACT OF REGENERATION ON BIBLE INSTRUCTION

One important concept that applies to Bible study is the importance of *regeneration*. Paul tells us, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). First, consider what Paul is saying here.

- 1 *The natural person* – in the context, that is someone who is not regenerate, someone who does not have the Spirit of God working in their lives, someone who is not a true Christian.
- 2 *He does not accept the things of the Spirit of God* – The key word here is "accept." It also means to "receive" or to "hold on to." The force of the word is to *embrace* them. As Barnes says in his commentary, "he rejects them as folly; he does not perceive their beauty, or their wisdom; he despises them. He loves other things better."²
- 3 *They (the things of the Spirit) are folly to him* – In the Bible, "folly" does not mean "incomprehensible," as if it were in a foreign language. Instead, it refers to things that are vain, useless, or worthless. Paul's point here is that, for the unregenerate man, the things of the Spirit are counted as empty or as worthless.
- 4 *He is not able to understand the things of the Spirit* – Literally, the text says he is not able to "know" them. Again, we need to consider what the Bible says about "knowing." Rarely does the word refer to what we consider "intellectual knowledge" as in "I know that 2+2=4." Instead, "knowledge" in Scripture refers to *love, commitment, or a covenant relationship*, as in "for whom He [God] *foreknew*, them He also predestined" (Rom. 8:29). So this phrase in 1 Cor. 2:14 needs to be seen as parallel to the previous phrase, that the natural man "does not accept the things of the Spirit of God."
- 5 *The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned* – The key word here is "discerned," which means "judged, scrutinized, or questioned" especially in a courtroom setting to determine the truthfulness of something. What Paul is saying here is that the only way things of the Spirit can be properly judged or accepted as true is by the working of the Holy Spirit. He is not saying the natural man cannot figure them out, or cannot intellectually comprehend them. Instead, the man without the Spirit cannot properly judge the truthfulness of the things of the Spirit.

Sometimes we might look at this passage as if it said this: "The unregenerate man cannot have intellectual understanding of the Scriptures, since only the Holy Spirit gives understanding. Those without the Spirit are going to see the Bible almost as if it were gobbledygook or were written in ancient hieroglyphics." That is *not* what Paul is saying here. He is not denying that unregenerate men may understand the Bible (the things of the Spirit) on a purely intellectual level – the natural man may very well be able to state what the Bible says. What Paul is saying is

² http://bible.cc/1_corinthians/2-14.htm

that the natural man will not *take the Bible to heart*, that he will not accept it as true, that he will not love it, because only the Holy Spirit can work that in him.

Consider two other passages in Scripture which bear this out.

- 1 *Acts 26* – Paul here is presenting his defense before King Agrippa. At one point, Paul says, “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe” (vs. 27). However, it is obvious from the context that Agrippa was not a regenerate believer. So what did Paul mean here? He was saying that Agrippa had intellectual knowledge of what the Old Testament prophets said. Even though Agrippa was unregenerate, he was able to follow an intellectual defense based on the prophets.
- 2 *Matthew 23:1-3* – “Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do.’” Jesus is telling His followers that the scribes and Pharisees – who were definitely not faithful believers – had the position of teaching the Scriptures, and His disciples needed to hear that teaching, but not to follow the lifestyle of the scribes and Pharisees. What the scribes taught was true, insofar as they were presenting the Scriptures (from the “seat of Moses”). But their lifestyle showed that they did not truly accept or grasp that teaching. Jesus does not deny that the scribes and Pharisees had a true intellectual knowledge of the Scriptures – He is saying that they did not *believe* those Scriptures from their heart.

What is the point here? We see students who show by their lives that they are most likely not regenerate, but who are able to do well on academic/intellectual tests in our Bible classes. They know the right answers, they can repeat the Bible memory passages, they ace the tests. But their lives (and sometimes their lips) declare that they do not live by the Spirit of God. The conclusion might be drawn that there is something wrong with our academic Bible teaching, if an unbeliever can get As on our tests. It might be thought, “If we have students who graduate from CCHS with high grades in their Bible classes, but who blatantly deny Christ after they leave here, then our Bible instruction must be at fault. Non-regenerate students *should not* get high grades in Bible classes, because the things of the Spirit are not accepted by the natural man; if our teaching *is* being understood by the natural man, then our teaching must not be what the Spirit would have us teach.”

However, what Scripture shows is that it is entirely possible for unregenerate men to have an intellectual grasp of the Bible. It is not a fault in the teaching of the Bible if unbelievers can intellectually comprehend that teaching. It is certainly possible for students to get As on all our Bible tests, to memorize Scripture, to give all the right answers in class, and yet be unbelievers. That is not a fault in our teaching, but is actually to be expected, based on the experience of Jesus and Paul.

So does that mean we should be satisfied if our students can ace all our tests, if they can recite many Scriptures from memory, if they know all the right answers in Bible class? Is that all we look for? Of course not! We long most of all that our students be true children of God – that they all come to saving faith in Christ, that they live their lives for Him, that they worship Him in Spirit and in truth. No teacher of the Word of God is content with students who can simply give the right answers on Bible tests, but who have no love for Christ. In fact, Bible teachers grieve over such students, for those students are heaping greater judgment upon themselves. Having known the truth and rejected it, they come under greater condemnation than if they had never known it to begin with. “For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them” (2 Pet. 2:21). Those students who ace our Bible tests but who reject Christ will be judged more severely at the final day than if they had never heard the Bible.

But should we then conclude that we should not teach the content of the Bible, since it will only increase judgment on our students who are not believers? By no means! “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom. 10:14) If our students do not hear the Word of God – the *whole* Word of God – they are

never going to come to saving faith. The Holy Spirit uses His Word – the Bible which is taught in Bible classes – to bring our students to saving faith in Christ.

Are *all* our students going to come to saving faith? If we have students – either current or former – who appear to be unbelievers, does that indicate a fault with our Bible teaching? Not necessarily. Consider these cases:

- 1 In Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 1:24, Paul refers to Demas as one of his fellow workers. However, near the end of his life, Paul says that Demas was “in love with this present world [and] has deserted me” (2 Tim. 4:10). Demas showed himself (at least at that point in time) to be an unbeliever, as one who loved the world more than he loved Christ. Is that because Paul had not taught him properly? Did Paul not disciple and mentor Demas appropriately? Was Paul merely satisfied that Demas was following along with him for years, but was not concerned about his soul – is that why Demas deserted Paul? Of course not. The fact that Demas turned away was an indictment against Demas, not against Paul.
- 2 Judas Iscariot had the inestimable privilege of following the Lord Jesus Christ for three years. He heard the very words of life from the Savior’s lips; he did miracles in the name of Jesus; he went through a three-year mentorship along with the other disciples. And what happened? He betrayed the Son of God! Surely we would not point to Judas and say that Jesus’ teaching was at fault, that Jesus should have done more to call Judas to saving faith, that Jesus should have spent more one-on-one time with Judas rather than spending all that time teaching, preaching, healing, etc. No, Judas sat under the most perfect course of instruction the world has ever seen, and still he rejected Christ.

We need to remember several things about our students and regeneration.

- 1 We are always going to have both regenerate and unregenerate students in our classes. In this world, the wheat and tares grow together (Matt. 13:24-30). They are not finally separated until the harvest (the final judgment). We can count on having unregenerate students in our classes (or school, or church). Our teaching must take that into account.
- 2 We cannot know which students fall into which category. “The Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart” (Jer. 17:9-10). We can be fairly confident that some of our students may be unregenerate (although it is possible that a particular class could be made up entirely of true believers). But we *cannot* know which students are regenerate and which ones are unregenerate.
- 3 “What about Christ’s teaching that ‘you will recognize them by their fruits’ (Matt. 7:16)? Doesn’t that mean we should be able to tell which of our students are regenerate and which are not – not infallibly, but to some degree?” Notice about whom Christ says this – false prophets (vs. 15). So, in context, Christ is not here saying that we should be able to know a person’s status of regeneration by looking at their lives (their fruits). Rather, He tells us to examine the outcomes (fruit) of the work of a prophet (teacher). Is that teacher producing disciples who are opposed to the things of God, who live ungodly lives? Then that is a false prophet – you can discern the prophet by the results he produces. Of course, Christ later applies a similar concept to individuals in Matthew 12:35 – “The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.” A person’s heart condition – regenerate or unregenerate – will manifest itself in outward behaviors. However, that might not happen instantly or even in a limited time frame. An unregenerate person may for a time (even a long time) appear outwardly to be regenerate. Consider again the example of Judas Iscariot. For three years, he gave outward indications of being one of Jesus’ true disciples. Or consider John’s teaching: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us” (1 Jn. 2:19). Here were individuals who, for a season, appeared to be true believers; however, they abandoned the faith, showing that they never had been truly regenerate. On the

other hand, a regenerate person may live in a way that looks the same as an unregenerate person. Consider Peter – here was someone who denied the Lord with curses. To all outward appearances, at that time he seemed to be an unbeliever in the same category as Judas Iscariot. However, Peter was truly one of the regenerate, and the Lord restored him. The same thing was true of King David, the man after God’s own heart, who committed adultery and murder. At that point in his life, David would have appeared to be unregenerate. However, the Lord graciously forgave him and restored him. Even true believers may fall into grievous sin and may, for a time, appear to be unregenerate. Over time, however, the Lord so works in their lives that they manifest the fruit of the Spirit. All this is to say that, while we may look at the fruits of our students’ lives and have an idea about their heart status, we have to recognize that the outward appearances are all we can look at – the Lord alone looks on the heart.

- 4 “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29). If we cannot know the status of our students regarding regeneration, what do we do? “All the words of this law.” That is, since we cannot know the secret things of the Lord, we are called to do what He has revealed to us in His Word. And, for our purposes, we have outlined that above as we considered Matt. 28 and 2 Tim. 3. We are to make disciples by teaching the whole Word of God – a Word that provides instruction, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.
- 5 Since the entire Bible is profitable, according to 2 Tim. 3, God is able to use any portion of His Word in the lives of our students for those purposes. The Lord may use any part of Scripture to bring a student to saving faith. We tend to think about the “obvious” salvation passages (John 3:16, the “Romans Road,” etc.), and believe that if we are going to see our students come to saving faith then we must narrow our teaching to those “salvation” passages. However, we all have heard testimonies about individuals who were brought to saving faith in Christ by hearing what might be thought to be an “obscure” passage. And remember that Christ said that the entire Old Testament spoke of Him (John 5:39; Lk. 24:27). That means that, for example, in our Old Testament Survey class (even in the books of Judges, Esther, or Lamentations), we may present Christ to our students and see some of them come to saving faith in Christ.

Does all this mean it is not important to press students to believe in Christ? Does it mean we teach as if regeneration is not an issue to be addressed? By no means! Our teachers should regularly call students to confess their sins, to repent of their sins, to turn to Christ in faith. This must be done in our Bible classes (and other classes, for that matter, when appropriate), through both formal instruction and informal spur-of-the-moment discussions of student issues, and on a personal, one-to-one level. Students must regularly and consistently hear the gospel presented from Scripture, and our teachers must not be content with simply working for intellectual knowledge of the Bible. We should pray for our students to have a heart change. We are concerned about the eternal welfare of our students and not just that they can pass our tests. It grieves our teachers that students can hear the Word taught faithfully day after day and yet be eternally lost. Our prayer and desire is that all our students would be saved.

We must remember that there is a limit to what we can do in this regard. Only the Holy Spirit can change the hearts of our students, so it would be illegitimate to place “regeneration” as a goal of our curriculum. That is something which we cannot expect to achieve on our own. Our emphasis must be to present the whole truth of God in the context of prayer, while we profess our need of the grace of God as much as our students do.

The point here, is that we can (and should) faithfully teach the whole Word of God, press the claims of Christ on our students, pray earnestly for their salvation, and grieve over those who are lost – we can do all those things and still have students who are unregenerate and who reject the faith, either while they are here or after they leave. That is not necessarily a fault of our Bible instruction, but instead is the result of sin in the hearts of our students, and a recognition that the Spirit of the Lord regenerates whom He will.

THE FUNCTION OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE FUNCTION OF THE TEACHER

It is helpful to make a distinction between the Bible *curriculum* and the Bible *teacher*. The *curriculum* addresses *what is taught*, while an understanding of the *teacher* will address *how it is taught*. The focus of this statement of philosophy is on the *curriculum* itself. What is the content of our formal Bible instruction? When do we teach various aspects of Scriptural truth? Those are the questions which are addressed by this statement of philosophy.

However, that does not downplay the role of the teacher in our Bible instruction. The best course of study imaginable would be worthless if the teacher is not teaching it in the right way. This is actually the case in all subjects, not just Bible. We recognize that it is not sufficient simply to have a superior math curriculum – we must have qualified, effective teachers or students are not going to learn math. Many studies have shown that the single most important factor in student learning is the quality of the classroom teacher. If an outstanding teacher is compared to a mediocre teacher, that has a much greater effect on student learning than does the same teacher using a superior versus a mediocre curriculum.

This is even more true in the Bible class. The Bible teacher must not only consider which teaching methods are most effective (the same as teachers of other subjects), but must also consider how to press the truths of Scripture on the hearts of the students, calling them to faith and repentance. If that is not done, the most effective Bible curriculum imaginable will not be successful. We cannot here present a complete manual for effective teaching methods in the Bible class. But there are some characteristics of Bible teachers which should be mentioned.

The teacher needs to display passion – for the Lord, for His Word, for faithfulness to Him, for His people. This passion, joy, and zeal for Christ must be communicated to the students regularly. We realize that the personality differences between teachers will mean that passion may come to expression in different ways. Not all teachers are going to be wildly exuberant – some will be more quietly joyful. But teachers must still pray that their own love and passion for Christ will be evident to the students.

Teachers also must remain constant in prayer for their students, both inside and outside of class. In particular, the teacher needs to be burdened to pray for the hearts of his/her students. This life of prayer will also result in evident care and concern for the students. Our students are not just brains to be filled with Bible knowledge, but are living souls in need of a Savior. That love and care for the students must be displayed regularly to the students.

In addition, the teacher needs to be aware of the decline in our culture – in particular, the increasing indifference to Scripture. The school's focus upon Scripture, both in Bible class and in other classes, runs contrary to the prevalent culture around us in which the Bible is seen as, at best, irrelevant to life or, at worst, a definite hindrance to life. Unfortunately, this indifference to the Bible has even crept into the professing Christian culture, as we see that Christian families very seldom look to the Word of God as their only infallible guide, but often treat it as a book of suggestions for the successful life. The idea of an authoritative Word of God as found in the Bible is all too often a foreign concept in our society, and our teachers need to be aware of that fact as they teach.

Finally, the Bible teacher (as with all teachers) needs to establish and maintain an environment in the classroom which will allow and encourage students to ask questions openly and without fear. Many of our students may be woefully ignorant of Biblical teaching, and they should experience the classroom as a safe place to get questions answered. The teacher needs to do this by being honest, winsome, and loving as he/she deals with student questions and concerns, and by assuring students that their grade will not be affected adversely by sincere and honest questions and even disagreements.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

OVERALL GOALS FOR BIBLE

Before we develop a detailed scope and sequence for our Bible curriculum, we should consider what our broad goals or outcomes would be for our Bible instruction. In this document we consider broader goals for Bible instruction which will be applicable at all grade levels. For example, a broad goal might be that students would be confronted with the claims of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The specific form this goal would take might vary from grade to grade, since the teacher might present Christ in a different way to kindergarteners than to high school seniors (somewhat similar to how Paul presented the gospel differently to Gentiles than he did to Jews). But the thrust is the same for all students – that the saving work of Christ be pressed home to them. These are the type of broad goals we want to outline here.

In order to organize our goals, it will be helpful to consider them under the three aspects we outlined above (content, worldviews, and personal application). These last two will generally overlap with each other. As we learn to apply the Bible to our own lives, it will affect our views of the world, since it is *we* who live in the world; personal growth in holiness will of necessity involve applying the Word to the situations in life we face. Likewise, we cannot truly understand the world around us unless we are actually becoming more sanctified (the natural man cannot understand the things of God...).

It should be emphasized that these three areas of study (content, world views, and personal application) are not mutually exclusive. For example, when we list goals for the content, we are not saying that the content does not apply to the students' lives; likewise, when we have goals for worldviews, we are not implying that the worldviews are not based on the content of Scripture. These goals are simply helping us to understand the richness of what we are teaching in our Bible classes across the grade levels.

We want to make it plain that these are not goals in the sense of “guarantees,” as if we could confidently say that every student will invariably achieve each of these goals. This is not true in any subject of the curriculum – we could not guarantee that every child leaving grade 1 will be reading at a certain level of proficiency, for example, since each child is unique and might not learn at the same rate as other students. But it is even more true in the Bible class as we consider the more “spiritual” goals (such as manifesting the fruit of saving faith). That is brought about only by the working of the Holy Spirit, who works when and how He wishes. So these goals should be seen as ends toward which we work and pray. They are the desired outcomes for our students, and they direct the instruction in our Bible classes.

(References following each of the major points below are to the “Bible Standards” below.)

BIBLICAL CONTENT

STUDENTS WILL KNOW...

- Key biblical passages, characters, and events (BIB.1)
- The historical and cultural context of the Bible (BIB.2)
- How geography and culture impacted the biblical story (BIB.4)
- How the Bible is organized, the types of literature the Bible includes, and how to read the Bible (BIB.5)
- What the Bible teaches about God (BIB.7)
 - God the Father
 - Jesus Christ, the Son of God
 - The Holy Spirit
 - The Trinity

- What the Bible teaches about truth (BIB.8)
 - The Bible is the Word of God to His people
- What the Bible teaches about God's creation (BIB.9)
- What the Bible teaches about people (BIB.10)
 - The Biblical teaching of God's covenantal work and plan for mankind through the Old and New Testaments
 - Sin
 - Nature of man
 - Salvation
 - The church
 - Worship

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Use a variety of reference materials (BIB.6)

WORLD VIEWS

STUDENTS WILL KNOW...

- Various Christian and non-Christian religious views (BIB.3)
 - Principles and practices of diverse religious groups, heresies, and cults, and how those principles and practices compare with Scripture and are evidenced in church history

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Apply biblical teaching to all of life and learning (BIB.11)
 - Biblical principles of relationships with others (including friendships, courtship, marriage, and family living)
 - Biblical principles of culture and society
 - Effectively communicate their faith with others
 - Defend their faith with boldness and appropriate cultural sensitivity
 - Evaluate current cultural ideas and issues in the light of Biblical principles

PERSONAL APPLICATION TO LIFE

STUDENTS WILL KNOW...

- What the Bible teaches about God and about people (BIB.10)
 - Biblical teaching about their own relationship to Christ
 - How the Bible applies to their particular circumstances in life

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Apply biblical teaching to all of life and learning (BIB.11)
 - How the Bible applies to their particular circumstances in life
 - Manifest the fruits of saving faith in Christ
 - Manifest biblical repentance
 - Develop spiritual disciplines to be a maturing Christian, including
 - Personal and meaningful Bible study
 - Practical approach to devotional life and worship
 - Ministry to others
 - Preparation for life away from home (e.g., college adjustment)
 - Develop a heart of thankfulness and gratitude
 - Develop a love for the study of Scripture

STANDARDS

Based on work done by Christian Schools International (CSI), the following are standards for Bible instruction. We first list the overall standards, and then provide more detail by breaking them down into benchmarks in four main grade levels:

- Early elementary (grades K-2)
- Upper elementary (grades 3-5)
- Middle school (grades 6-8)
- High school (grades 9-12)

Within each of these grade levels, individual classes might concentrate on a subset of the benchmarks. However, it is desired that, by the time students leave each of these main grade levels, they will have addressed all the benchmarks listed for that level.

OVERALL STANDARDS

- BIB.1: Students know key biblical passages, characters, and events.
- BIB.2: Students know the historical and cultural context of the Bible.
- BIB.3: Students understand various Christian and non-Christian religious views.
- BIB.4: Students understand how geography and culture impacted the biblical story.
- BIB.5: Students know how the Bible is organized, the types of literature the Bible includes and how to read the Bible.
- BIB.6: Students use a variety of reference materials.
- BIB.7: Students understand what the Bible teaches about God.
- BIB.8: Students understand what the Bible teaches about truth.
- BIB.9: Students understand what the Bible teaches about God's creation.
- BIB.10: Students understand what the Bible teaches about people.
- BIB.11: Students apply biblical teaching to all of life and learning.

BENCHMARKS FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SECOND GRADE

- A BIB.K-2.1: Students know key biblical passages, characters, and events.
 - i BIB.K-2.1.1 Retell and respond to Bible stories
 - ii BIB.K-2.1.2 Sequence Bible stories, characters, and events
 - iii BIB.K-2.1.3 Recite identified Bible passages
- B BIB.K-2.2: Students know the historical and cultural context of the Bible.
 - i BIB.K-2.2.2 Tell how God was visibly with his people in Bible times as he is today
 - ii BIB.K-2.2.3 Identify Israel as God's chosen people
- C BIB.K-2.3: Students understand various Christian and non-Christian religious views.
 - i BIB.K-2.3.1 Differentiate between God's chosen people and pagan nations

- D BIB.K-2.4: Students understand how geography and culture impacted the biblical story.
 - i BIB.K-2.4.1 Describe Jewish worship and how worship changed because of Jesus
 - ii BIB.K-2.4.2 Identify key locations, including Israel
- E BIB.K-2.5: Students know how the Bible is organized, the types of literature the Bible includes and how to read the Bible.
 - i BIB.K-2.5.1 Identify that the Bible is divided into Old and New Testaments and into books
 - ii BIB.K-2.5.2 Recite the books of the Bible
 - iii BIB.K-2.5.3 Identify poetry and narrative
 - iv BIB.K-2.5.5 Read Bible stories with appropriate oral expression
- F BIB.K-2.6: Students use a variety of reference materials.
 - i BIB.K-2.6.1 Use maps
- G BIB.K-2.7: Students understand what the Bible teaches about God.
 - i BIB.K-2.7.1 Describe God in terms of his attributes
 - ii BIB.K-2.7.2 Identify the persons and work of the Trinity
- H BIB.K-2.8: Students understand what the Bible teaches about truth.
 - i BIB.K-2.8.1 Identify the Bible as the infallible Word of God
 - ii BIB.K-2.8.2 Identify what the Bible teaches about faith and behavior
 - iii BIB.K-2.8.3 Understand biblical values including shalom, justice, mercy
 - iv BIB.K-2.8.5 Identify how Bible characters responded to culture
 - v BIB.K-2.8.6 Identify what we learn from God's creation
- I BIB.K-2.9: Students understand what the Bible teaches about God's creation.
 - i BIB.K-2.9.1 Identify God as the Creator
 - ii BIB.K-2.9.2 Identify God's promises about creation
 - iii BIB.K-2.9.3 Retell the stories of creation, fall, and redemption
 - iv BIB.K-2.9.4 Explain how people were created to take care of creation
- J BIB.K-2.10: Students understand what the Bible teaches about people.
 - i BIB.K-2.10.1 Retell how people are created in God's image
 - ii BIB.K-2.10.2 Tell how people have sinful hearts
 - iii BIB.K-2.10.3 Tell how people, by God's grace, can have a relationship with him
 - iv BIB.K-2.10.4 Explain the idea of covenant related to Bible characters
 - v BIB.K-2.10.5 God's plan for man has a start and a finish
- K BIB.K-2.11: Students apply biblical teaching to all of life and learning.
 - i BIB.K-2.11.1 Identify personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus
 - ii BIB.K-2.11.2 Identify the fruit of the Spirit
 - iii BIB.K-2.11.3 Identify God and the Bible as the key sources for making decisions
 - iv BIB.K-2.11.4 Identify what the Bible teaches about behavior
 - v BIB.K-2.11.5 See themselves and others in the light of creation in the image of God, the sinfulness of man, and the grace of redemption/restoration
 - vi BIB.K-2.11.7 Retell what the Bible teaches about an issue

- vii BIB.K-2.11.8 Retell how service opportunities are designed to help others
- viii BIB.K-2.11.9 Retell Bible teaching about leaders
- ix BIB.K-2.11.10 Explain how conflicts can be resolved in Christian ways

BENCHMARKS FOR THIRD THROUGH FIFTH GRADE

- A BIB.3-5.1: Students know key biblical passages, characters, and events.
 - i BIB.3-5.1.1 Retell and respond to Bible stories
 - ii BIB.3-5.1.2 Sequence Bible stories, characters, events, and eras
 - iii BIB.3-5.1.3 Recite identified Bible passages
 - iv BIB.3-5.1.4 Identify relationships between characters and/or events
- B BIB.3-5.2: Students will know the historical and cultural context of the Bible.
 - i BIB.3-5.2.1 Explain Old Testament events
 - ii BIB.3-5.2.3 Identify characters and events in history that impacted the history of God's people
- C BIB.3-5.3: Students understand various Christian and non-Christian religious views.
 - i BIB.3-5.3.1 Describe the influence of false religions on God's people
 - ii BIB.3-5.3.2 Describe and compare ancient and contemporary religious practices
- D BIB.3-5.4: Students understand how geography and culture impacted the biblical story.
 - i BIB.3-5.4.1 Describe the Jewish and Middle Eastern cultural practices
 - ii BIB.3-5.4.2 Identify key geographic features of the land of Israel and the Mediterranean world
- E BIB.3-5.5: Students know how the Bible is organized, the types of literature the Bible includes and how to read the Bible.
 - i BIB.3-5.5.1 Identify the sections of the Bible including the Pentateuch, books of prophecy, Gospels, Epistles, etc.
 - ii BIB.3-5.5.3 Identify the characteristics of various genre and apply them to a passage
 - iii BIB.3-5.5.5 Use understanding of the passage's purpose to read expressively
- F BIB.3-5.6: Students use a variety of reference materials.
 - i BIB.3-5.6.1 Use various reference materials appropriately, for example, maps, Bible dictionaries, concordances, online, etc.
- G BIB.3-5.7: Students understand what the Bible teaches about God.
 - i BIB.3-5.7.1 Identify which of God's attributes a Bible story reveals
 - ii BIB.3-5.7.2 Recognize the persons and work of the Trinity in Bible stories
- H BIB.3-5.8: Students understand what the Bible teaches about truth.
 - i BIB.3-5.8.1 Explain that the Bible is the infallible Word of God
 - ii BIB.3-5.8.2 Explain how the Bible guides us in matters of faith and behavior
 - iii BIB.3-5.8.3 Explain biblical values including shalom, justice, mercy
 - iv BIB.3-5.8.4 Recognize a variety of valid biblical beliefs with the Christian community
 - v BIB.3-5.8.5 Identify Christian responses to culture (separation, identification, transformation, incarnation)
 - vi BIB.3-5.8.6 Explain what we learn from God's creation

- I BIB.3-5.9: Students understand what the Bible teaches about God's creation.
 - i BIB.3-5.9.1 Give examples of God's attributes revealed in creation
 - ii BIB.3-5.9.2 Describe God's covenant with creation
 - iii BIB.3-5.9.3 Explain creation, fall, redemption, and restoration
 - iv BIB.3-5.9.4 Explain the biblical concept of stewardship in terms of taking care of God's creation
- J BIB.3-5.10: Students understand what the Bible teaches about people.
 - i BIB.3-5.10.1 Describe how people are God's image bearers
 - ii BIB.3-5.10.2 Identify the nature and consequences of sin resulting in separation from God and death
 - iii BIB.3-5.10.3 Identify God's grace and the plan of salvation
 - iv BIB.3-5.10.4 Recognize covenants in Bible stories
 - v BIB.3-5.10.5 Understand timeline of biblical events
- K BIB.3-5.11: Students apply biblical teaching to all of life and learning.
 - i BIB.3-5.11.1 Explain personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus
 - ii BIB.3-5.11.2 Explain the fruit of the Spirit
 - iii BIB.3-5.11.3 Recount a process of Christian decision-making
 - iv BIB.3-5.11.4 Explain what the Bible teaches about behavior
 - v BIB.3-5.11.5 See themselves and others in the light of creation in the image of God, the sinfulness of man, and the grace of redemption/restoration
 - vi BIB.3-5.11.6 Use biblical teaching to constructively examine community/cultural values and practices
 - vii BIB.3-5.11.7 Explain what the Bible teaches about an issue
 - viii BIB.3-5.11.8 Identify how service opportunities are designed to help others
 - ix BIB.3-5.11.9 Identify ways Christians can demonstrate servant leadership
 - x BIB.3-5.11.10 Explain how conflicts can be resolved in Christian ways

BENCHMARKS FOR SIXTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE (MIDDLE SCHOOL)

- A BIB.6-8.1: Students know key biblical passages, characters, and events.
 - i BIB.6-8.1.1 Retell and respond to Bible stories
 - ii BIB.6-8.1.2 Sequence Bible stories, characters, events, and eras
 - iii BIB.6-8.1.3 Recite identified Bible passages
 - iv BIB.6-8.1.4 Explain relationships between characters and/or events
- B BIB.6-8.2: Students will know the historical and cultural context of the Bible.
 - i BIB.6-8.2.1 Explain the history of God's people from creation through the Book of Acts
 - ii BIB.6-8.2.3 Explain characters and events in history that impacted the history of God's people
- C BIB.6-8.3: Students understand various Christian and non-Christian religious views.
 - i BIB.6-8.3.1 Identify fundamental biblical beliefs
 - ii BIB.6-8.3.2 Describe and compare the beliefs of various Christian churches
 - iii BIB.6-8.3.3 Identify and describe the basic events of church history

- D BIB.6-8.4: Students understand how geography and culture impacted the biblical story.
 - i BIB.6-8.4.1 Describe ways in which the Jewish religious culture impacted the people of Israel's relationship to God
 - ii BIB.6-8.4.2 Describe the impact of geography on Bible stories
- E BIB.6-8.5: Students know how the Bible is organized, the types of literature the Bible includes and how to read the Bible.
 - i BIB.6-8.5.1 Identify where key events and passages in the Bible are located in terms of books and section
 - ii BIB.6-8.5.3 Use the characteristics of various genre to determine the meaning of a passage
 - iii BIB.6-8.5.5 Use understanding of the passage's purpose to read expressively
- F BIB.6-8.6: Students use a variety of reference materials.
 - i BIB.6-8.6.1 Use various reference materials appropriately, for example, maps, Bible dictionaries, concordances, online, etc.
- G BIB.6-8.7: Students understand what the Bible teaches about God.
 - i BIB.6-8.7.1 Use Bible stories and life experiences to describe attributes of God
 - ii BIB.6-8.7.2 Give Bible evidence for the Trinity and the work of each person in the Trinity
- H BIB.6-8.8: Students understand what the Bible teaches about truth.
 - i BIB.6-8.8.1 Defend the Bible as the infallible Word of God.
 - ii BIB.6-8.8.2 Defend the Bible as the guide for faith and behavior
 - iii BIB.6-8.8.3 Understand biblical values including shalom (God's peace), justice, mercy
 - iv BIB.6-8.8.4 Describe a variety of valid biblical beliefs with the Christian community
 - v BIB.6-8.8.5 Explain Christian responses to culture (Christ against culture, the Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, and Christ transforming culture)
 - vi BIB.6-8.8.6 Defend general revelation as a way of knowing truth
- I BIB.6-8.9: Students understand what the Bible teaches about God's creation.
 - i BIB.6-8.9.1 Describe what creation teaches us about God
 - ii BIB.6-8.9.2 Explain God's covenant with creation
 - iii BIB.6-8.9.3 Explain how Christian should respond to creation, based on creation, fall, redemption, restoration
 - iv BIB.6-8.9.4 Defend the biblical concept of stewardship in terms of taking care of God's creation in contrast to humanistic environmentalism
- J BIB.6-8.10: Students understand what the Bible teaches about people.
 - i BIB.6-8.10.1 Explain that as God's image bearers, people are inherently religious
 - ii BIB.6-8.10.2 Explain how sin has alienated people from God, creation, others, and themselves
 - iii BIB.6-8.10.3 Explain God's plan of salvation
 - iv BIB.6-8.10.4 Explain the implications of the covenant relationship
 - v BIB.6-8.10.5 Defend the idea that creation has a starting point and an ending point
- K BIB.6-8.11: Students apply biblical teaching to all of life and learning.
 - i BIB.6-8.11.1 Defend personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus
 - ii BIB.6-8.11.2 Analyze a case study as an opportunity for application of the fruit of the Spirit to the scenario

- iii BIB.6-8.11.3 Analyze a process for Christian decision-making
- iv BIB.6-8.11.4 Use Bible teaching to defend personal behavior choices
- v BIB.6-8.11.5 See themselves and others in the light of creation in the image of God, the sinfulness of man, and the grace of redemption/restoration
- vi BIB.6-8.11.6 Use biblical teaching to constructively examine community/cultural values and practices
- vii BIB.6-8.11.7 Explain a biblical response to a perspective and/or social issue
- viii BIB.6-8.11.8 Explain how service opportunities are designed to help others
- ix BIB.6-8.11.9 Explain how Christians demonstrate servant leadership
- x BIB.6-8.11.10 Apply biblical principles of conflict resolution to case studies

BENCHMARKS FOR NINTH THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE (HIGH SCHOOL)

- A BIB.9-12.1 Students know key biblical passages, characters, and events.
 - i BIB.9-12.1.1 Know the content of biblical passages
 - ii BIB.9-12.1.3 Recite identified Bible passages
 - iii BIB.9-12.1.4 Explain relationships between characters and/or events
- B BIB.9-12.2 Students will know the historical and cultural context of the Bible.
 - i BIB.9-12.2.1 Explain the history of God's people from creation through the Book of Revelation
 - ii BIB.9-12.2.2 Explain how various cultures influenced and are reflected in the Bible
 - iii BIB.9-12.2.3 Explain characters and events in history that impacted the history of God's people
- C BIB.9-12.3 Students understand various Christian and non-Christian religious views
 - i BIB.9-12.3.1 Describe the beliefs of non-Christian world religions, sects and/or cults
 - ii BIB.9-12.3.2 Describe and compare the beliefs and practices of various Christian churches
 - iii BIB.9-12.3.3 Identify and describe the basic events of church history
- D BIB.9-12.4 Students understand how geography and culture impacted the biblical story.
 - i BIB.9-12.4.2 Identify key geographical features in the Bible and explain how they impacted characters and events
- E BIB.9-12.5 Students know how the Bible is organized, the types of literature the Bible includes and how to read the Bible.
 - i BIB.9-12.5.1 Explain the sequence and nature of the Bible's sections
 - ii BIB.9-12.5.3 Use the characteristics of various genre to determine the meaning of a passage
 - iii BIB.9-12.5.5 Use understanding of the passage's purpose to read expressively
- F BIB.9-12.6 Students use a variety of reference materials.
 - i BIB.9-12.6.1 Use various reference materials appropriately, for example, maps, Bible dictionaries, concordances, online, etc.
- G BIB.9-12.7 Students understand what the Bible teaches about God.
 - i BIB.9-12.7.1 Explain the relationship between God's nature and actions

- ii BIB.9-12.7.2 Compare the triune God of the Bible with a variety of nonbiblical concepts of God
- H BIB.9-12.8 Students understand what the Bible teaches about truth.
 - i BIB.9-12.8.1 Explain the concept of an infallible Bible in reference to the nature of God
 - ii BIB.9-12.8.2 Compare the Bible to a variety of non-Christian bases for faith and behavior
 - iii BIB.9-12.8.3 Understand biblical values including shalom, justice, mercy
 - iv BIB.9-12.8.4 As appropriate, relate faith beliefs to varying interpretations of Scripture
 - xi BIB.9-12.8.5 Explain Christian responses to culture (Christ against culture, the Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, and Christ transforming culture)
 - v BIB.9-12.8.6 Explain the role and limits of general revelation
- I BIB.9-12.9 Students understand what the Bible teaches about God's creation.
 - i BIB.9-12.9.1 Explain the implications of the Creator-creation relationship
 - ii BIB.9-12.9.2 Compare the Creator-creation concept to a variety of non-Christian concepts of nature
 - iii BIB.9-12.9.3 Compare creation, fall, redemption, and restoration with non-Christian concepts of the problem and solution for creation
 - iv BIB.9-12.9.4 Compare a Reformed biblical emphasis of stewardship with other Christian and non-Christian concepts of treatment of creation
- J BIB.9-12.10 Students understand what the Bible teaches about people.
 - i BIB.9-12.10.1 Explain what it means to be created in God's image in terms of attributes and tasks
 - ii BIB.9-12.10.2 Compare the biblical concept of sin and death to a variety of non-Christian concepts of sin and death (e.g. reincarnation)
 - iii BIB.9-12.10.3 Compare God's plan of salvation to a variety of non-Christian concepts of salvation
 - iv BIB.9-12.10.4 Compare covenant relationships to non-Christian views of the Creator-people relationship
 - v BIB.9-12.10.5 Compare the biblical view of history to nonbiblical views of history (e.g. Greek cyclical view)
- K BIB.9-12.11 Students apply biblical teaching to all of life and learning.
 - i BIB.9-12.11.1 Use biblical teaching to develop a plan to become a mature Christian
 - ii BIB.9-12.11.2 Compare the person who walks with the Spirit to one who is a slave to the law.
 - iii BIB.9-12.11.3 Use biblical moral/ethical systems to critique nonbiblical moral and ethical systems
 - iv BIB.9-12.11.4 Use Bible teaching to evaluate personal behavior choices
 - v BIB.9-12.11.5 See themselves and others in the light of creation in the image of God, the sinfulness of man, and the grace of redemption/restoration
 - vi BIB.9-12.11.6 Use biblical teaching to constructively examine community/cultural values and practices and the factors that influence them
 - vii BIB.9-12.11.7 Use biblical teaching to critique nonbiblical responses to a perspective and/or social issue
 - viii BIB.9-12.11.8 Use Bible teaching to evaluate service opportunities

- ix BIB.9-12.11.9 Use biblical teaching to evaluate views of leadership
- x BIB.9-12.11.10 Use biblical teaching to develop approaches of conflict resolution

These sets of benchmarks and standards may also be seen as “exit goals.” One of the issues to be considered in any curriculum design is how well students are prepared in one grade level for success in the next grade. In particular, we need to consider the “transition grades” – students going from second to third grade (early elementary to upper elementary), fifth to sixth grade (elementary school to middle school), from eighth to ninth grade (middle school to high school), and from twelfth grade to college.

First, we can think about what we want our graduating seniors to know and be able to do in the area of Bible when they leave us. What tools do they need in order to faithfully grow in Christ and apply their faith in college and beyond? In a sense, this directs all that is done throughout the entire school. We should always keep that end product in mind, even from kindergarten. Teachers should at least have in the back of their mind, “How is this Bible instruction going to help prepare these students to live faithful and fruitful lives for Jesus when they graduate from our high school?”

Breaking it down from that level, Bible teachers in each grade division (lower elementary, upper elementary, middle, high) should think how they are preparing their students for the next grade division. More specifically, the teachers in the transition grades (second, fifth, eighth, and twelfth) need to plan how their students are being prepared for Bible courses in the next grade level.

That discussion must be a two-way street. For example, the sixth grade Bible teacher will have certain expectations for what he wants his students to know and be able to do. Those need to be communicated to the fifth grade teacher. However, at times those expectations might need to be tempered by realism, if the sixth grade teacher has expectations which cannot reasonably be met by elementary Bible instruction through the fifth grade. To take an extreme example, the sixth grade teacher might wish that all incoming sixth graders knew outlines of each of the books of the Bible – that would certainly enhance his instruction if he could build on that. However, the fifth grade teachers will immediately disabuse him of that possibility. So the sixth grade teacher will have to adjust his expectations to fit with what the students actually can achieve. However, the fifth grade teacher might need to be challenged to increase the level of instruction to better prepare her students for middle school instruction. It could be, for example, that all she expects fifth graders to learn is the names of the four gospels and the story of Jonah. That is certainly not going to prepare students for middle school Bible, and she will need to adjust her teaching based on input from the sixth grade teacher.

Another consideration/qualification must be the reality of transfer students. We have students transferring into CCS at various grade levels. Because there is no widely-accepted set of expectations for Bible instruction in the schools (as there is, for example, in math instruction), and because some of those transfer students will come from schools in which they have had no Bible instruction at all (such as public schools), our instruction must account for such students in our Bible classes. For example, if the ninth grade Bible curriculum were based on students knowing the overall covenantal structure of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and how Christ is the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies, and if students could not realistically pass the ninth grade Bible class without that prior understanding, then transfer students would immediately be assured of failure. On the high school level, with the exception of ninth grade, this can sometimes be addressed by placing transfer students in lower grade level courses (an incoming junior might need to take the freshman Old Testament survey course, for example, rather than the junior worldviews course). However, in all grade levels we will need to keep three things in mind:

- 1 Our exit goals (or expectations of prerequisite knowledge) must not be so stringent that they preclude transfer students from succeeding. The expectations must allow for students who come with greatly divergent levels of prior knowledge.
- 2 On the other hand, we must not lower our expectations to the point that we assume none of our students know anything about the Bible. We should not teach as if the students have no prior understanding simply because there may be some students who have little prior understanding. This would result in lack of growth on the part of the students who have progressed very well in their understanding of the Bible – they would simply be hearing the same thing over and over again.
- 3 Much of this will be up to the teacher to make adjustments in his/her instruction, based on the needs of the particular students. It may involve the teacher taking a student aside to give some individual instruction. This could be as basic as the ability to find verses in the Bible – the high school Bible teacher can expect students to be able to find a given verse. But if there is a new student who has had little to no Bible instruction, the teacher should work with that student to teach him/her how to locate verses in the Bible. It will be likewise with other Bible teachings. The teacher needs to be sensitive both to new students and to students who are already quite knowledgeable of the Bible, and must take care that the needs of both groups are being met.

TEXTBOOKS

KINDERGARTEN

Walking With God and His People, CSI - overview of Old and New Testaments

FIRST GRADE

Walking With God and His People, CSI - Gospel of John, Old Testament history

SECOND GRADE

Walking With God and His People, CSI - Book of James, Old Testament review, intertestamental period, Jesus' ministry

THIRD GRADE

Walking With God and His People, CSI - Book of Ephesians, how to study the Bible, Genesis through Joshua

FOURTH GRADE

Walking With God and His People, CSI - Book of Philippians, Judges through the exile

FIFTH GRADE

Walking With God and His People, CSI - Book of 1 Peter, Exile through the return, Jesus' birth and ministry

SIXTH GRADE

Old Testament survey - Old Testament overview, Old Testament covenants, Old Testament preparation for the Messiah. Teacher-developed curriculum, incorporating the CSI *Walking With God and His People* grade 7 materials as a resource along with other materials

SEVENTH GRADE

New Testament survey, part 1: Gospels and Acts. Teacher-developed curriculum using various curricular materials as resources

EIGHTH GRADE

New Testament survey, part 2: Epistles and Revelation, along with application to specific life issues (related to 8th grade course in Christian Living). Teacher-developed curriculum, incorporating the CSI *Walking With God and His People* grade 6 and 8 materials as resources

HIGH SCHOOL

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Teacher-developed curriculum using various curricular materials as resources

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

Teacher-developed curriculum using various curricular materials as resources

DOCTRINE AND APOLOGETICS

- *Fundamentals of the Faith* (MacArthur)
- *Every Thought Captive* (Pratt)

WORLDVIEWS

- *Our Sufficiency in Christ* (MacArthur)
- *Think Biblically* (MacArthur)