

A NARRATIVE MINISTRY
TO A TEENAGE BIBLE CLASS

STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT

A NARRATIVE MINISTRY TO A TEENAGE BIBLE CLASS

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

School of Graduate Studies

Avondale Campus

Title: A NARRATIVE MINISTRY TO A TEENAGE BIBLE CLASS

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Date completed: November 1984

Problem

The Church is failing to communicate its doctrines to teenagers in a familiar, relevant, interesting, and understandable medium. Ministers and teachers are often using abstract language which is inadequate to gain the understanding and interest of all teenagers. Adolescents are forming negative attitudes to these attempts which lead them to discontinue their affiliation with the Church.

Method

Common factors that became evident in a theological survey are established. Further input is

sought from religious educators and teachers of literature on the way in which narrative functions. Adolescent needs and problems are surveyed and the fitting role of narrative to meet these concerns is outlined.

A ministry is designed to use the strengths of narrative in a way which is compatible with this theological foundation. The effectiveness of narrative is tested in relation to the regular Bible classes.

Procedure

Between August 6-20 1984, nine Bible periods at the Avondale Seventh-day Adventist High School were used to teach basic salvation truths by the narrative method. Two other periods were used for a Pre-test and Post-test to measure Bible knowledge, student interest, and the level of willingness to make a commitment to God. The results were arranged statistically into four groups. Student responses to the two methods were contrasted and discussed.

Results

A marked impact upon those who were backward in religious development (Group One) was evident. The method succeeded in maintaining interest, teaching salvific truth, and in varying degrees raising their willingness to spiritual commitment. An inability to isolate other influencing factors means that the

successful reception of the project cannot be attributed to the narrative method alone.

Conclusions

The success of narrative demands a reappraisal of story by religious educators. Its suitability to those in transition from concrete to formal operational thinking has been shown by the way in which it was more easily comprehended by Group One. The results necessitate a reappraisal by pastors of their indoctrination methods. A larger incorporation of the narrative style of Jesus into High School Bible teaching is recommended to reach students backward in religion.

Andrews University
School of Graduate Studies
Avondale Campus

A NARRATIVE MINISTRY TO A TEENAGE BIBLE CLASS

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by
Murray S. House
November 1984

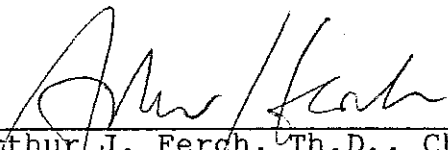
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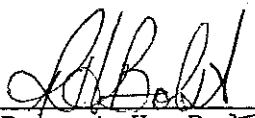
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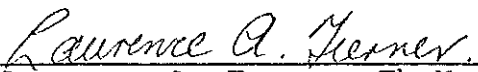
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the endeavour to communicate religious truth to the teenagers of the Church, pastors struggle to be relevant. Abstract methods of expression suited to older people are commonly used in the interchange between pastor and teenager.

The refinement of religious truth into a precise propositional framework has broken away from the narrative medium used by Jesus in His endeavour to communicate to mankind. As a result, the teaching process between pastors and teenagers at Church schools has been concerned primarily with the impartation of information, rather than attitudes and concepts.

Communication with the story medium by both television and parents has proved its success with sustained popularity. The failure to use a medium that facilitates identification, imagination, relevance, and interest could be making the Church appear less relevant in the eyes of teenagers. The Church is challenged by the decline in reading ability, concentration levels, and the effects of changing technology. These factors

underline the demand for a medium proven in today's society.

Storytelling as used by Jesus must be tested to identify its beneficial use in these times. Will the ancient art of narrative so prevalent in today's media be adequate to maintain teenagers' interest and raise commitment to Christ? Will narrative be too simple to convey complex theological ideas? What further use can narrative have in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

It is the intent of this project to examine the success of narrative¹ as the main teaching method in a teenage Bible class. Grade 8b at the Avondale High School was selected to be presented with eleven Bible lessons.

The project observes the effectiveness of this narrative method in maintaining interest, teaching salvation truth, and raising the willingness of commitment. An analysis is given of the success of narrative in reaching these goals for those who are backward in their religious development. Further assessments of this ministry are reported and subsequent recommendations and conclusions are given.

¹In the context of this project, narrative is defined as extended metaphor which enables one to view divine truth through the lives of its characters.

CHAPTER II

A THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR NARRATIVE MINISTRY

Introduction

Since the ascension of Christ the Church has laboured to fulfil the Gospel Commission. Simply stated, this involves teaching the message of Jesus to others. To be an effective witness for Christ the content and method of Jesus' ministry must be mastered.

The simplicity of Jesus' parables contrasts with the Church's attempt to convey the teaching of Jesus.¹ The Church has neglected to copy Christ's method faithfully. How the Divine Teacher mediated His message is therefore a timely and important study.

This chapter shall examine the use of narrative in the Pentateuch as well as in the ministry of Jesus. Principles will be sought from these that will support a contemporary narrative witness. Attention will be given to the narrative content of "witness" by the apostolic eyewitnesses and the believing Church. Guidelines in the

¹Historically, the church has spent its time and energies debating, systematizing, and refining the message of Jesus. Burgeoning and complex theological structures are indicative of its sincere attempt to clarify the content of Jesus' message.

writings of Ellen White concerning the use and abuse of a story ministry will also be surveyed.

The Use of Narrative in the Pentateuch

Narratives Concerning Individuals

Genesis is replete with narratives concerning individuals. The characters of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph dominate Gen 12-50. Incidents in their lives convey spiritual truth (e.g. the birth of Isaac and the patriarch's experience on Mount Moriah). A record of the events and choices they made informs us of their victories and failings. They are not idealised as "super-saints" but rather we read of a deceitful Abraham (Gen 20:2), and a lying Jacob (Gen 27:24). These main characters experience an internal struggle of choice between good and evil.¹ This inner conflict is a common human experience. The story of their struggles resonate within the readers, touching at their deepest level of consciousness. In this manner these narratives function as a competent educative method.

A large portion of these narratives about individuals is written in direct speech, comparable with the modern novel.² In so doing, the writer of Genesis

¹Joseph's decision against the soliciting of Potiphar's wife shows the moral choice with which these individuals were confronted.

²Leland Ryken, "The Bible: God's Storybook," Christianity Today, 5 October 1979, p. 35.

gains the reader's participation. This can be seen in the dialogue between God and Abraham concerning the fate of Sodom. Abraham negotiates with God over the number of righteous in Sodom necessary for the city to be saved. This makes the narrative live before the readers and causes an immediate identification of the readers with Abraham. The universal experience of bargaining in this narrative makes its meaning and relevance timeless for all cultures. God is introduced as a personal God capable of participating in human experiences.

These narratives encourage a personal trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of these heroes can be everyone's God. God's redemptive actions and purposes, though often frustrated by human folly, do succeed.¹

National Narrative

Throughout the account of God's activity for Israel the readers are made aware that they are not only learning Israel's history but also the nature and personality of Israel's God. Exodus records stories of providence, power, forgiveness, and Divine frustration (Exod 14-16). The Exodus was central to Israel's covenant faith. Their existence was due to God's initiating grace as revealed in historical acts. These

¹Robert Alter, The Art of the Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 113.

events recorded and remembered in narrative become the standard for Israel's view of God and of their own privileges and responsibilities. Israel was solemnly commanded in Deut 6:7-9 to tell repeatedly the story, to their children, of Israel's history and God's activity for them.

Moses in Deuteronomy urges again and again that Israel should remember that they were bondsmen in the land of Egypt, and the Lord God redeemed them. In this way the national narratives were held in memory and were also brought to mind by the cultic narratives.

Cultic Narratives

The sanctuary system was "a living liturgy that impressed a theology on the minds of the simple as well as the great."¹ Nowhere was the re-enacting of history more vivid than in the cult. Yearly festivals acted out Israel's story as sacred drama (Lev 23). Through concrete actions the worshippers portrayed the character of God and Israel's covenantal relationship.

Succeeding generations were given purpose and identity as they saw in the cultic narratives the nation's origin and destiny. As the Israelite family celebrated the religious festivals they contemporised the

¹Werner C. Graendorf, ed., Introduction to Biblical Christian Education (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), p. 27.

events of the past, such as the Exodus and their time in Egypt.

Through worship and customs children were taught the stories of God's deliverance. Throughout the year symbols and events provided opportunity for the story to be repeated.¹ Questions such as "Why do we eat bitter herbs at Passover time?" led fathers to become storytellers. They were to explain the uniqueness of the common Israelite heritage (Deut 6:7-9). In this way Israel's narratives became the personal experience of succeeding generations.

Repetitive cultic symbols kept the word of God personal and alive. By participating in the symbols they were educated in theology. The Word was not a dead, abstract entity but a living force. The cultic narratives were well suited to their function. As symbols they were flexible enough to point back to God's activity, and forward to the future work of Messiah.²

As a story which exposes sin and death, the sanctuary was a great drama "acted out" for all to see and remember. It dealt with God, man, life, and death. Worshippers were confronted with the need to make a personal decision for or against the work of Yahweh. All

¹Richard Lischer, Speaking of Jesus: Finding the Words for Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. 37.

²When John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God he was pointing to the fulfilment of a cultic symbol.

Israelite life revolved around the sanctuary. The Sabbath, the festivals, and the feasts were symbols of narratives recalling regularly the individual and national past. In this way "the religious rites of the Hebrew people were occasions for pedagogy."¹ The pentateuchal narratives therefore function to teach readers wisdom through the lives of others. Life is seen to be both complex and surprising. We are shown how to live "before God" and "with others."²

The Parable Teaching of Jesus

Though Jesus did not teach by historical narratives³ His teaching was still in the narrative mode. It is estimated that about thirty-five percent of Jesus' teaching in the synoptic gospels is in parables. Forty parables and twenty parabolic statements comprise this teaching.⁴ Parabolē occurs forty-eight times in the New Testament and is divided into seven categories; metaphor, simile, similitudes, parabolic stories,⁵

¹Graendorf, p. 27.

²Alter, p. 22.

³James Barr, "Some Thought on Narrative, Myth and Incarnation," in God Incarnate: Story and Belief, ed. A. E. Harvey (London: SPCK, 1981), p. 21.

⁴C. H. Peisker, "Parable, Allegory, Proverb," New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (1975), 2:743 (hereafter cited as NIDNTT).

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 747, "The NT illustrative stories only occur in Lk."

illustrative stories, allegories, and parables.¹

Forty of Jesus' parables were stories. Their average length is only seven verses. Scholars see this brevity as characteristic of the parables of Jesus. However, the parable of the Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) is the longest with twenty-two verses. One quarter of Mark and one half of Luke are parable.

Jeremias has said that against the rabbinic background Jesus' parables were of "a definite personal character."¹ Matthew records forty-one teaching episodes of Jesus. Thirty of these are personal and thirty-six are short.

Graendorf sees four purposes for Jesus' stories. First, they were for interest and inquiry; secondly, they illustrated abstract principles or truth; thirdly, stories were the entire lesson; and finally, stories summarized an application of truth.² This analysis indicates the adaptability of parables.

Whether it was in response to situations or questions, to Pharisee or fisherman, Jesus had a story suited to the immediate need. His use of plot, anticipation, and punchlines inherent in the stories resulted in a discernable reaction from His hearers.

¹Ibid., p. 743.

²J. Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 12.

³Graendorf, p. 60.

This medium served to maximize His ministry to individuals ready to hear His message.

As free and easy communication, Jesus' parables reached the emotions, intellect, and will, stirring and enriching lives. They worked like leaven upon stubborn minds. Calvary and Pentecost released many of the stories Jesus had placed inside people (e.g. Nicodemus publically demonstrated his belief in Jesus at Calvary).

The parabolic teaching of Jesus was memorable for young and old. Jesus tapped the soul of the Jewish people. He aimed at their expectations and memories, matching and fulfilling their whole culture. His truth was relevant and interesting. By being pictorial and poetic Jesus ensured the retention of His message.¹

The parables offered a means of capturing the imagination even when the hearer's understanding is unenlightened. Once rooted in the memory, the parable might later lead to a fuller grasp of the basic truth.²

Jesus used the familiar as the substance in His parables. This guaranteed the understanding and assent of His hearers to these common human experiences. He portrayed practical godliness in everyday situations. Truth was not only alive in Him but also in the characters of His stories. They could readily identify

¹Lilas D. Rixon, How Jesus Taught: Methods and Roles of Jesus Christ the Teacher (Granville, N.S.W. Ambassador Press, 1977), p. 54.

²Donald Guthrie, "Jesus," in A History of Religious Educators, ed. Elmer L. Towns (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 23.

themselves in His parables. (e.g. Simon in Luke 7:41-44).

Guthrie has noted that the use of abstract form is "relatively sparse" in the teaching of Jesus.¹ Philosophical and theoretical religious language is really a translation of the original narrative medium.² "The true parable is . . . rather a mode of religious experience. . . . A parable is a picture in words of some piece of human experience, actual or imagined. As such it is a work of art."³ Wink has described the parable as "tiny lumps of coal squeezed into diamonds, condensed metaphors that catch the rays of something ultimate and glint it at our lives."⁴ In these poetic descriptions of a parable the personal relevance of a parable to human experience is emphasized. The contrast between the practical nature of parables and the theoretical nature of propositional teaching is made more apparent.

In summary, the narrative style of Jesus is evident in the Gospel record. Narrative has been seen as the Divine medium for gospel communication. Is the failure to copy the style of Jesus due to cultural differences or to the difficulty of perfecting this teaching mode? The

¹Ibid., p. 19. ²Peisker, p. 743.

³T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus: Studies of Its Form and Content (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 73.

⁴Walter Wink, "Letting Parables Live," Christian Century, November 1980, p. 1062.

advantages of a narrative ministry demand further assessment.

Witness as Narrative

Apostolic Church

The disciples were called to witness to the things they had seen (Acts 1:8). Often the larger story of God's activity was given as a backdrop to the story of Christ which they could tell (Acts 22). At Pentecost Peter told what he knew from experience (Acts 2:32). Paul's witness to Christ's activity included the telling and re-telling of the story of God's encounter with him on the Damascus Road (Gal 1:13-17). For Paul this was where the two stories intersected; namely "His story" and "My story." Being personally involved in an on-going story gave Paul the witness of a dynamic and involved storyteller.

For the early Church the Christ-event had been experienced by mind and senses. As observers of God's self-revelation they could testify to the reality of events that had occurred.¹ The witness of the apostles was easily authenticated by those whose lives were interconnected with Christ's life and death. In telling what happened they told a story (Acts 10:38,39). It was a gripping, climactic story without an equal. All the

¹L. Coenen, "Witness, Testimony," NIDTT, 3:1045-46.

ingredients of a good story were present: an innocent underdog, the wicked apparently victorious, celestial visitation, rejection by a friend, a surprise ending, and final victory for the hero.

Post-Apostolic Church

For the post-apostolic Church the witness revolves around the experience of belief. By faith it experiences His presence as the living Lord. The testimony of this experience and its effect upon lives consists in the telling of a first person narrative.¹ It is a story no one else can tell. It is unique in its appeal to the inner being of man as a powerful life changing force.

The church's presence also tells a story. Its existence, like the lilies of the field, calls to mind a story, an event, an historical time, when men met God. The calling by Christ of His Church as witnesses is relived and remembered by the Church.² These witnesses are obligated to be the continuing storytellers. In retelling the story their belief is refreshed. As the story's impact upon other lives brings conversion the community story is authenticated. The ability to change people reassures the Church that their story is a viable witness.

¹Ibid., p. 1044.

²Suzanne de Dietrich, "You are My Witnesses," Interpretation 8 (1954):279.

The church's witness to John 3:16 is not an abstract dissertation on agapē. On the contrary, it is an illustration of self-sacrificing lives.¹ Stories present an opportunity to convey abstract concepts in concrete form. To adopt the narrative method of witness is not optional, rather witness cannot be done without it. The real question is, how much shall we rely upon other methods? Christian witness is dependent upon personal involvement and experience. This testimony is personally confronting and has often been neglected.

Christian mission may never be complete until the whole Church begins to tell the story rather than describe and categorize its content.

Ellen White's Counsel on the Use of Narrative

In this section principles in Ellen White's writings that could guide new methods of teaching Bible will be investigated. Her view of illustrations and stories as a Biblical method will be surveyed. The dangers she saw in the use of improper stories will be examined.

Principles for New Methods

White's philosophy of education and her view of the Bible's importance are very evident in even a limited survey of her writings. "The teaching of the Bible should have our freshest thought, our best methods, and

¹Coenen, p. 1045.

our most earnest efforts."¹ Again,

This all-important knowledge should be kept before our children and youth, not in an arbitrary, dictatorial manner, but as a divine disclosure, as instruction of the highest value, essential for their present peace in this world of turmoil and strife.²

White saw the Christian walk as being more "caught" than "taught". Children must be drawn to heaven by short repeated lessons. To do this they must be "reached where they are." She saw a great need to reach down to the student's level in simplicity.³ For White it was important to find out "the things in which they are interested,"⁴ and arouse their interest.

Adaptation to the wants of the people included the avoidance of "long speeches", "tedious remarks", and "too much speechifying." The need to study "various ways of expressing the truth" was vital to her.⁵ She saw this being achieved through the use of simple language that would "be comprehended and find lodgement in the heart."⁶ Also indispensable, in this adaptation, was the use of illustrating spiritual truths by nature and by the

¹Ellen G. White, Counsels to Teachers (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1913), p. 181.

²Ibid., pp. 429-30. ³Ibid., p. 435.

⁴Ibid., p. 181.

⁵White, Gospel Workers (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1936), p. 406.

⁶White, Counsels to Teachers, p. 261.

familiar events of everyday experience.¹ "Teach by illustrations," she urged.²

Overriding all her views on educational methods and Christian indoctrination was her appreciation of the Master Teacher's approach. The fact that He made truth personal was important to her. "Abstract theories", were not the manner of Jesus.³

Biblical Use of Stories and Illustrations

As the educator of Israel, Jesus used figures and symbols in His parables because truth was thereby more fixed in the memory.⁴ Recall, prompted by their everyday experiences, kept alive the truth and its transforming influence. The use of nature's illustrations and Biblical imagery by teachers enabled a more effective ministry by the Holy Spirit.⁵

Christ's "parable teaching is an indication of what constitutes the true 'higher education'." And again, "No more effective method of instruction could He have employed."⁶ Though the world's greatest teacher, He

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 254.

³White, Christ's Object Lessons (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1900), p. 23.

⁴White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1958), p. 592.

⁵White, Counsels to Teachers, pp. 172, 261; Christ's Object Lessons, p. 24.

⁶Ibid., pp. 22, 21.

used the simplest language and the plainest symbols which contained great depth of meaning.¹

In His own teaching, Christ showed how Deut 6:7-9 was to be fulfilled. Parents were to illustrate the laws and principles of the kingdom through simple stories.²

In all that men have written, where can be found . . . anything so well adapted to awaken the interest of the little ones, as the stories of the Bible?³

"In Christ's teaching there is no long, far-fetched, complicated reasoning."⁴ Jesus brought men into touch with the Divine Mind in His teaching.⁵ His teaching was suited to childrens' comprehension. It was taken from universal human experiences. By arousing the imagination and interest of the youth these stories were unequalled.

Danger of Destructive Stories

White's understanding of the laws of the mind form her basis for cautioning people on their exposure to cheap, worthless stories. The mind adapts itself to its subjects⁶ and shallow thoughts shrink its capacity to comprehend spiritual truth. In filling up the mind with exciting, fictional stories no room is left for

¹White, Counsels to Teachers, pp. 261, 430.

²Ibid., p. 181. ³Ibid.

⁴White, Evangelism (Washington, D. C.: Review & Herald, 1946), p. 171.

⁵White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 23.

⁶White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 596.

information and scientific knowledge.¹ The individual living in this imaginary world loses both physical and mental strength. Fashioned into a restless dreamer it becomes harder for him to focus the mind upon spiritual things. The passions are excited and the imaginations perverted.²

With evil distorting the individual's abilities there is no room left to impress good upon the mind. Satan is therefore, able to charm young and old through these destructive stories, cheating mankind of probationary time.³ Her warning on the destructive nature of shallow stories underlines the powerful force narrative can be.

Conclusion

In the Pentateuch the Word of God was transmitted mostly by narrative. It functioned as a vehicle for theology. The use of narrative facilitated the teaching of history to the children. Constant reminders in the cult of Israel's past recalled these narratives to mind. In the symbols God's activity was enacted and remembered.

Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, communicated truth to others indirectly through a narrative ministry.

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1948), 5: 545.

²Ibid., 2:411.

³Ibid., 7:165.

Ellen White urges the church, to adopt the teaching methods of Jesus.

A narrative ministry that conveys theology in a relevant and personal manner has excellent Biblical credentials. From this theological survey principles have been demonstrated that will guide such a ministry. In the following chapter additional reasons will be examined showing why narrative is effective.

CHAPTER III

NARRATIVE ANALYSED AS EXTENDED METAPHOR

Introduction

This chapter will seek to investigate the contribution and characteristics of narrative as seen by religious educators and teachers of literature. The manner in which metaphor functions will be shown in contrast with abstract language. A comparison of the two forms will reveal the advantages that metaphor has as a method of communication. The more complete learning experience possible through story will be discussed.

The study of narrative theologians on the depth, meaning, and function of story will be viewed as a positive step towards a more personal Christian education. This chapter aims to dispel the belief that story is an inferior medium and endeavours to show its efficiency in reaching teenagers for Christ.

Contrast of Abstract and Metaphorical Language

In structuring human existence, language is the way mankind determines reality.¹ It is the agent for

¹Amos Wilder, New Testament Faith for Today (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 13.

knowing and experiencing. For the purpose of this discussion it will be helpful to divide language into the two categories of abstract and metaphoric forms.

Abstract language is a one dimensional medium that communicates only at the cognitive level.¹ It is objective and has a scientific precision. It is this objectivity that limits its use in time and culture. On the other hand, metaphoric language surpasses these barriers.² Abstract language is largely clinical and prone to precise definition thus making it devoid of depth and personal meaning. While abstract language is at its best in the physical sciences, metaphor is the language suited to humanities. Where the meaning to life is addressed the language of metaphor is indispensable. The separation of "thought and life, belief and practice," characterizes this language form, whereas metaphor unites them.³

Religious language is second level language about God and is largely abstract. Though this form is not dominant in all expressions of faith it does carry an air of academic superiority in today's religious world. Objectivity through abstract language is seen as a great goal of scholarship. A return to the use of first level

¹Sallie McFague TeSelle, Speaking in Parables (London: SCM Press, 1975), pp. 22, 23.

²Ibid., p. 17. ³Ibid., p. 1.

contemporary metaphor is seen by some as a needed return to the Biblical method.¹

To experience its message metaphoric language involves the imagination, senses, and emotions. It has colour and dimension like other art forms. Metaphor mirrors human existence, as it speaks through the human family's "common places," engaging interest and holding attention.² In commenting on the effectiveness of story William James said, "What holds attention tends to determine action."³

Symbolic Characteristics of Metaphor

As symbol, religious metaphor can communicate truth.⁴ These symbols may vary in their complexity but they require the hearer's involvement in order to interpret the symbolic concept with reference to their existing concrete knowledge.⁵ "Repeated encounters with symbolic form," increase our capacity to interpret metaphor and to "experience story."⁶ These symbols are

¹Ibid., p. 23. ²Ibid., p. 45.

³Quoted in David M. Brown, Dramatic Narrative in Preaching (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1981), p. 10.

⁴Wilder, p. 59.

⁵Kay E. Vandergrift, Child and Story: The Literary Connection (New York: Neal Schuman Publications, 1980), p. 126.

⁶Ibid., p. 18.

effective in proportion to the appropriateness they have within the story's setting.

Metaphor, as symbol, provides the possibility of a very private reaction for the hearers. In a personal manner they are able to experience deeper meanings in the metaphor. In this way a diverse audience can select different meanings adapted to suit their present experience. Religious education by this medium is able to move the student at his own pace in a continuous process of commitment and education.¹

By turning events into ideas² story provides a malleable medium for contemporary education. The inherent symbolic nature of story brings to students "achieving and being,"³ and calls for a human response. Through stories, students are able to symbolize into meaning the events that happen to them.⁴

Symbols cannot be cast aside once their hidden meaning is revealed. The images of metaphor do not embellish the story but rather are the story. They are not to be discarded as are the words of an allegory. In

¹See appendix 10, number 2 for an illustration of this.

²Vandergrift, p. 5.

³Leland B. Jacobs, quoted in Ibid., p. xiii.

⁴Edmund A. Steimle, Morris J. Niedenthal, and Charles L. Rice, Preaching the Story (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 12.

this way metaphors are looked at, not through.¹

Vandergrift has summarised the way metaphor functions as a symbol.

All language is symbol in that it points to or signifies something other than itself. Symbol in story does more than just present and articulate meaning; it evokes a human response in relation to the imaginative idea it presents. The totality of story is itself an extended metaphor or presentational symbol of a virtual reality; that is, it does not point to something else as an image of that thing but brings all that is of import in the object into the work itself.²

The Advantage of Metaphor as Communication

Aiding Memory Recall

"The phenomenon of story has returned . . . as a culturally viable mode of communication."³ It has even been hypothesized that "metaphor follows the way the human mind works."⁴ Aristotle commented that "Metaphor implies an intuitive perception of similarities in dissimiliars." sic By associating the known with the unknown, metaphor provides a learning through language that is fast, personal, and memorable. Whether this is the only way that humans investigate and learn about

¹TeSelle, p. 15.

²Vandergrift, p. 126.

³Richard Jensen, Telling the Story (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Press, 1980), p. 120.

⁴Cited in TeSelle, p. 56.

⁵Quoted in Ibid., p. 48.

their universe cannot be argued in this paper.¹ However it is evident that story binds events and agents together in an intelligible pattern."²

Story can therefore communicate truth and knowledge in its own structure. By the uniting of form and message in metaphor, a communication medium is created that is superior to abstract language.

The repetition of abstract language can result in memory recall (e.g. arithmetic tables). It is noteworthy however, that story needs far less repetition in order to facilitate recall. The repetition of story also creates "new constructs, or organs of perception'."³ Patterns of consciousness are more readily formed from story-assimilation than from abstract language's use of the rational mode. Interconnection and associated patterns of thought in the mind are also possible with the use of story. "Some stories can serve as templates for consciousness, patterns frozen."⁴ It is these archetypes that form the basis for our understanding of all existence.

¹TeSelle takes this position, Ibid., p. 59.

²Stanley Hauerwas, "Story and Theology," Religion in Life 45 (1976), p. 344.

³Robert E. Ornstein, The Psychology of Consciousness (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), p.171.

⁴Ibid., p. 172.

Stories, by the wholeness and coherence inherent in their very form, enable us to perceive and relate patterns of meaning and value in our lives. It is through the telling of stories that our relationships develop and our identity as individuals within community is possible.¹

Maintaining Interest

Extended metaphor maintains interest by its sequential nature. The desire of people to know "what happened next" is exploited by story. Its progression to an expected and awaited end also adds to the maintaining of interest. An end to a story provides some form of conflict resolution. It is not until this is achieved that listeners allow their interest to cease. Metaphor as symbol calls for interpretation. This causes the hearers to be interested in what the story is "getting at."² It is while the listener is interested in interpreting that the narrative can do its work unawares.

Story invites its listeners into another world of exploration and adventure.³ (It is the structure and form to which Wilder refers--not merely the content). Through the imagination the hearers enter this world. Like children in a new place they seek to explore the

¹Lynn Ross Bryant, "Dialogue and Silence: The Possibility of Story," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 47 (1979):136.

²Amos Wilder, "Story and Story World," Interpretation 37(1983):355.

³Ibid., p. 361.

interesting things around them. Through the characters, scenario, and plot the narrative has an alluring appeal.

Confronting

The interest and involvement necessary for the interpretation of story also provides the basis for the final confrontation of the hearer with the storyteller's view of existence.¹ The readers retreat into the story, only to experience the deeper plunge into the storyteller's view of reality.² Stories can reveal to the listeners the dimensions of life from which they have hidden.³

Story delivers a choice to its hearers. They can choose either to agree with the storyteller and his narrative, or to disagree. It is the purpose of the teller to communicate some feeling, perception, or idea. "What will you [now] do?" "What will you [now] say?"--these become the questions for the hearers.⁴ Narrative's function in the personal mode makes positive choices--to do with life's meaning and existence, personally confronting unlike abstract language. This is

¹TeSelle, pp. 76-80.

²Robert McAfee Brown, "My Story and 'The Story'," Theology Today 32 (1975):172.

³James Londis, "Preaching as Storytelling," Tape of the Month: General Conference Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, February 1983.

⁴TeSelle, p. 75.

illustrated by the poet who can challenge an audience more than a scientist using abstract language. The metaphors engage us and in gaining our assent become metaphors we live.¹

Their imagination, having been enticed and engaged, is now confronted by the narrative. This shock facilitates greater memory and commitment. Morlan's studies into effective communication enabled him to say, "We are justified, however, in concluding that the daring method Jesus used of shocking audiences out of their complacency is still an effective technique for getting at the minds of modern people."² In this confrontation the hearers can be changed, turned around, and "converted."³

Stories which place the common in an uncommon setting create the unexpected. The turning of the usual into the unusual is often the source of confrontation in a narrative. Humanly improbable events can cause interest, surprise, and make the hearers face a decision they did not anticipate.

For the religious educator this means greater commitment sooner and at a deeper level. It narrows the

¹R. A. Brown, p. 171.

²G. K. Morlan, "An Experiment on the Recall of Religious Material," in Psychology and Religion, ed. L. B. Brown (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1973), p. 254 (hereafter cited as Psychology).

³R. A. Brown, p. 172.

distinction between doctrine and life. Contemporary metaphor will thus be effective in confronting students with the decision for or against Christ.

Available for Immediate Translation

Casey has said that "stories are like windows" and "Good art allows us to see through it to a 'moment of truth' that tells us something about life and what it means to be a human being."¹

Stories are the projection of our humanity. Whether fictional or real they involve all in the dilemmas of life. The success of biography or television soap operas indicates that the lives of others demand our greatest attention. Modern narratives in this way reflect our society. Both are "fearfully personal" and "fearfully social."² They are therefore closer to the life and minds of contemporary man than are propositional doctrines.

Religious narrative that "finds its materials in the story of life in the world,"³ or in human dialogue, already exists in an easily translatable form. This is seen in autobiography that unites life and thought.

¹Barry Casey, "A Man Without a Tie and Five Foolish Girls," Insight, 23 November 1982, p. 5.

²TeSelle, p. 2.

³Sallie McFague TeSelle, "Parable, Metaphor, and Theology," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 42 (1974):643.

Communicating By Personal Experience

Crites has spoken of the narrative quality of human experience.¹ This is accepted by others. Vandergrift writes that story is "a rich, imaginative, intensely personal experience."² As such it is a unique and immediate experience.³ This experience is not something that people need to be taught. Each child has the capabilities to make his own connections between the world of stories, and his own reality. Individual preferences became apparent at an early age and continue as they mature.⁴

The recall of story enables the hearers to remember the complete narrative experience and to "go back to [it] and dwell in [it] again and again."⁵ The story is both about human experience and to be experienced by humans. This quality is a foundational reason for narrative's appeal.

Storytelling with direct human contact provides a closeness and warmth with an audience that cannot be matched.⁶ The resulting relationship maximizes the

¹ Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 39 (1971):291.

² Vandergrift, p. xiv. ³ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴ Ibid., p. 10. ⁵ Ibid., p. xv.

⁶ R. D. Walshe, Dot Jensen, and Tony Moore, eds., Teaching Literature (Sydney, N.S.W.: Primary Education Teacher's Association and English Teachers Association of N.S.W. 1983), p. 47.

teaching potential. Building upon this relationship the teacher earns the right to direct his hearers through story to choices and relationships about meaning and existence. This learning experience is achieved through insight rather than analysis.¹

Metaphor As A Learning Experience

It has been seen that metaphor is a more effective way of learning because of its personal dimension and colour. In this section the manner in which metaphor is a way of knowing will be examined.

Learning Through Indirection

As the story engages the hearer's interest in the storyteller's world, the self is forgotten. A distance between the story's events and the hearer's life is initially established. In this way, content of an important or controversial nature can be occurring in the story without an immediate threat to the hearers. "It is peculiarly appropriate for giving new insight into difficult subjects . . . which cannot be captured in our familiar cliché-ridden words."²

Coming at the end of the story, the call for a decision hits the mind more comfortably and therefore

¹Vandergrift, p. 18.

²TeSelle, "Learning for the Whole Person: A Model from the Parables of Jesus," Religion in Life 45 (1976): 167.

more effectively.¹ The hearers teach themselves and have to accept the conclusion of the story they have entered. Their participation in the story brings them face to face with the inescapable logic of the story.

The indirect approach through our feelings is stated well by Lander:

. . . Nondiscourse is relationally or metaphorically ordered to the end of believability. Discourse is literal; nondiscourse is literary. Discourse is thought about thought; nondiscourse is thought about feeling. Discourse deals with the actual, apparently logical, world and is concerned with precision in the pieces, while nondiscourse deals with an imagined or "felt" world and is concerned with sensitivity to the whole.²

Krass has described the storytelling model as "a relational, non-manipulative methodology."³ It deals with the secular but reforms it and by implication talks about God as it talks about human life.⁴ The hidden meanings of the story can be asserted indirectly and unconsciously. These hidden meanings are often private meanings given public form.⁵ The recognition that results gives the hearers the knowledge "that what was thought to be unique in the deep and dark and private

¹Ibid.

²Quoted in Vandergrift, p. 21.

³Alfred C. Krass, "What the Mainline Denominations Are Doing in Evangelism," Christian Century, 2 May 1979, p. 490.

⁴TeSelle, Speaking in Parables, p. 13.

⁵Vandergrift, p. 2.

places of one's own life is shared by others."¹ The open-endedness of story allows for the individual to find the point relevant to his time and place.²

Learning by the Whole Person

Metaphor's multi-dimensional language appeals to the cognitive, emotional, imaginative, and behavioural nature of mankind, indicating that learning through the means of metaphor is learning by the whole person. The affections and the will are also engaged by story to aid the learning experience.

The emotional content of story is embodied in the symbolic form of metaphor. These images live in the life of feeling. They recall the feelings and direct the imagination to synthesize, categorize, and compare these feelings with the previous experiences of the hearers. Learning through the symbols and emotions thereby builds upon the previously known and enters that reality through the new perspective given in the metaphor. "Story organises our experiences into meaningful coherence."³

A teacher who can create an emotional, intellectual and imaginative environment by using story, has the potential to maximize student participation and learning. As an art form story enables the hearers to

¹Ibid. ²Wilder, New Testament Faith, p. 167.

³Charles Rice, "The Preacher as Storyteller," Union Seminary Quarterly Review 31 (1976):189.

the hearers to "enter into questings, copings, circumstances, longings, happenings that are possible for the individual in no other way."¹

Stories appeal through the senses and emotions. They show rather than tell. Narrative "nourishes both our imaginative taste for story and our rational need for truth."² In this way they educate the whole person through a fully experienced medium.

Conclusion

The manner in which metaphor functions qualifies it for a more effective usage above that of abstract language. As a communicating medium it is suited to convey religious themes in many unique ways. An analysis of the process of the learning experience through story has clearly shown how it functions and why it is preferable to abstract language. An examination of metaphor's suitability for the specific problems of adolescents now needs to be addressed.

¹Leland Jacobs, quoted in Vandergrift, p. xii.

²Ryken, p. 37.

CHAPTER IV

METAPHOR AND ADOLESCENTS

Introduction

In this chapter the transitional stage of adolescents, with its problems and characteristics, will be examined. Some of the suggested solutions by religious educators will be evaluated.

In previous chapters narrative was seen as Christ's general teaching method. The advantages of narrative for the general learning experience were discovered. Narrative's suitability in ministering to adolescents as an attractive, interesting, and convicting medium will now be explored.

An Adolescent Profile -- The Transitional Stage

Adolescents aged thirteen and fourteen have reached a watershed in their religious experience. Until that age they have been limited to concrete operational thinking where they have seen story with only a literal meaning. As they come to adolescence they begin to move into more formal and abstract modes of intellectual operation. They are therefore in a transitional stage. The development towards propositional form is very uneven

within the adolescent and varies in its timing from one adolescent to another. Goldman admits that "there are frequent regressions,"¹ to concrete thinking. It is a difficult time

. . . because his concrete mode of thinking makes him a thorough-going realist, and difficult for his parents or religious teachers because they have the task of preparing him for a deeper and richer understanding of already familiar but inadequate concepts.²

²Edith F. Hunter (1956) illustrates some of these difficulties very vividly. That religious educators are also concerned with this difficulty is illustrated by the nature of some of the research projects formulated at the Religious Education Association's Workshops in Religious and Character Education (Cook, 1962).²

Peel found that the capacity, "to go outside the story," "to set up possibilities, to account for events in a story," did not emerge "until about 13.5 to 13.8 chronologically and mentally not until about 14.8 to 15.0."³

¹Ronald Goldman, Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 21.

²P. J. Lawrence, "Children's Thinking About Religion: A Study of Concrete Operational Thinking," in Psychology, p. 154.

³Quoted in Goldman, p. 22.

Hoge and Petrillo have recently shown that rejection of religion arises with the development of highly abstract thinking (except in Catholic private schools) not from the increasing gap between a students formal operational thinking in most areas and retarded development in religious ideas as Goldman thought.³²

³²Dean R. Hoge and Gregory H Petrillo, "Development of Religious Thinking in Adolescence: A Test of Goldman's Theories," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, vol 17, No. 2, June 1978, pp. 139-154.¹

In the light of this study Rowe asks a question that should be guiding more religious educators. "How abstract or concrete is religious thinking at its truest?"² Previous study by "Loukes (1961) reports secondary school senior pupils as being very critical of religious teaching, many finding the subjects boring and childish, not primarily because of the content, but mainly because of the didactic manner of presentation."³

These studies speak of the failure of abstract religious language to cater for the adolescent in the transitional stage and for the senior secondary school student.

Educationists have in the past taken advantage (perhaps too quickly) of the adolescent's "ability to conceive of God in symbolic, abstract and spiritualized

¹Arthur J. Rowe, "Children's Thinking and the Bible," Journal of Christian Education 70 (1981):24.

²Ibid.

³Ronald Goldman, "Researches in Religious Thinking," in Psychology, p. 179.

ideas."¹ The continual existence of some concrete forms and uneven development individually and internally calls into question the dominant use of propositional teaching for this age level. The use of concrete thinking through the adolescent ages of thirteen and fourteen demands an equally concrete approach.

A further study by Hyde who "found that only in the Church-going group of his adolescents was there a marked increase in the conceptual development in religious thinking,"² also causes concern. At a time when adolescents are opting against Church attendance, an improvement in their conceptual thinking abilities is unlikely.

The Suggestions of Religious Educators

Goldman, while in basic agreement with Piaget, has shown in his research that 14.2 is the age level for the complete transition to formal operational thinking (though allowing for regressions). This he notes "is very much later than suggested by Piaget."³ For Goldman,

A great deal of religious thinking is propositional and can only be dealt with at a formal operational level of thought if it is to be

¹ Goldman, Childhood to Adolescence, p. 239.

² Quoted in Rowe, p. 23.

³ Goldman, Childhood to Adolescence, p. 63.

intellectually satisfying.¹ If thirteen to fourteen is the mental age at which this level in religious thinking is generally achieved, a great deal of time and effort is wasted by instruction in religious ideas which are beyond the comprehension of the child.²

He further admits that a delay in the teaching by propositions is needed during this age period.³

Goldman recommends that for the lower levels of schooling the experiences of Biblical characters should be related to the pupils personal experiences.⁴ He also says that the analysis of narrative should not be used as a teaching method for those younger than fourteen years of age. The reason he gives is the inability of this age to gain the maximum amount of propositional truth from story.⁵

Lawrence in his brief survey admits that he can see no way of ensuring an easy transition and that better teaching materials and techniques are needed. However, he too sees "that the major problem concerns the doctrinal content of religious teaching."⁶ A metaphoric theology

¹Rowe has criticised Goldman for viewing this medium as the only suitable "mature religious thinking," p. 19.

²Goldman, "Researches," p. 173.

³Goldman, Childhood to Adolescence, p. 63.

⁴Ronald Goldman, Readiness for Religion: A Basis for Developmental Religious Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 49.

⁵Goldman, Childhood to Adolescence, p. 64.

⁶Lawrence, "Children's Thinking," pp. 162, 163.

is unknown to Lawrence as it is to Goldman.¹

These religious educators have found that "many adolescents, especially those backward or disinterested in religion tend to retain cruder anthropomorphic thinking much longer than the twelfth and thirteenth years."² Yet this is surely the group they are especially hoping to reach. It would be shirking responsibility merely to bemoan those who show no interest in spiritual things and are characterized by "lower" concrete thinking. Instead it could be the clue to use a narrative method that will build commitment.³

The Use of Narrative for Adolescents

It has been shown that "At the point in human development when Christian truth can be readily absorbed, the Church has lost contact." Buckland continues

We could take a passage from the Bible, any well-known narrative section, and help him see that now he can get beneath the surface of the story. He can now ask "Why?" about actions, words, relationships.⁴
[emphasis mine]

¹He does admit that adolescence needs to be the time for a delay where "the knowledge of life" can be used to interpret the metaphors "so basic to religious story Inference by analogy and metaphor, as in parables, requires some level of propositional thinking before the child can deal with it." Religious Thinking, pp. 63, 64.

²Goldman, "Researches," p. 182.

³See appendix 8 for an example of narrative's ministry to this type of adolescent.

⁴Ron Buckland, Children and the King (Sydney, N.S.W. Anzea Publishers, 1979), pp. 33, 34.

Hilliard wrote as early as 1963 "the teacher now has to begin deliberately and consistently to help his pupils explore the inner meanings of stories, incidents, history in the Old Testament, and of parables, miracles and overt teaching in the New Testament."¹

Both these writers have noted that the adolescent's accumulation of varied experiences makes them suited to look at truth through metaphor. Stories can provide an excellent context in which the adolescent can experience life's struggles and decisions. As a communicating medium, metaphoric language is more commonly used by teenagers and is closer to their life experiences than abstract definitions. They are emotionally ready for religion and awakened to the need for truth.² Narrative's reach to the emotions has already been discussed in this chapter.

The analysis of narrative and adolescence has shown that the strengths of the former are the needs of the latter. In the religious education of today's teenagers it is no longer possible to assume an existing faith. Metaphor has been proven as effective communication to those approaching belief by the parable

¹Quoted in Goldman, Childhood to Adolescence p. 241.

²Goldman, Readiness, p. 49.

teaching of Jesus.¹ For those rebelling against authority it is an indirect approach to God without the manipulative "must."

A narrative ministry to teenagers could well fulfil the call of Goldman that "a more radical change of teaching content and method is needed, if adolescents, who are searching hungrily for truth are to turn to Christianity."² A ministry that unites content and method with relevance could excel. It is possible that a deeper analysis of story at high school level, particularly for thirteen and fourteen year olds, could cater for those in transition from concrete to formal operational thinking. Students who have matured early could still be challenged by the story's medium while those developing later would not be entirely left behind in understanding.

Conclusion

Adolescent's transitional development necessitates a medium that will communicate to those who are still thinking in concrete forms. Narrative's ability to maintain interest, raise commitment, and convey Christian teaching in an indirect yet personal way make its use highly desirable for adolescents.

¹TeSelle, "Learning for the Whole Person," p. 168.

²Goldman, Readiness, p. 55.

Religious educators are very aware of the problems inherent in the religious education of adolescents. However, many of them are not aware of the potential of story to meet these difficulties. The operating and testing of the narrative medium by a religious teacher is therefore timely. The following chapter will attempt to outline the form of a suggested narrative ministry for teenagers in a Bible class setting.

CHAPTER V

MINISTRY DESIGN

Goals

The major goal of this narrative ministry is to achieve a measurable increase in the interest level of adolescents to the teaching of Bible. It shall also attempt to facilitate and measure the retention of religious teaching by students. Through the use of narrative this project attempts to show the relevance of doctrine to students' lives. In reaching out to those who are "backward in religion" and entrenched in more concrete thinking the project aims to raise the willingness of their commitment to Christ.

A Structural Overview

Eleven class periods in the normal timetable for Bible will be selected as an adequate unit for testing this ministry. Through a contemporary story medium the dynamics of the truths of salvation will be conveyed. The unit will cover the following subjects:

1. Sin is "sick"
2. Sin hurts God's love
3. Unconditional acceptance

4. The gift of substitution
5. Undeserved substitution
6. The cost of substitution
7. Intercession of a substitute
8. Adoption now possible
9. Fellowship brings change
10. Necessity of decision; Post-test, Part 1
11. Post-test, Part 2

Permission will be sought to teach eleven periods consecutively in order to avoid a scattered impact and to provide the opportunity for better measurement and assessment. Each period will have its own regular teacher's lesson outline. These will consist of storytelling, individual student reaction (written and verbal), class discussion, and note-taking. All response sheets are to be anonymous, being identified only by a student-selected random number. Different coloured paper according to sex will enable a continuing comparison. The instrument for testing the achievement of the stated goals will be a Pre-test administered before the unit and a Post-test administered in the last two periods.

Selection of the Age Group

The selection of Grade 8 for this project is guided by the proximity of this age level to concrete thinking. It is thought that they are young enough to still appreciate narrative and old enough to analyze

narrative. The interest-maintaining qualities of narrative will be thoroughly tested by these teenagers.

Being at the age when spiritual commitment often occurs and when peer pressure is beginning to have greater influence, they seem suited to test narrative's ability to raise the willingness of spiritual commitment. This age group should rigorously test all goals of the project's design.¹

Methods for Teaching by Narrative

Selection of Narratives

The search for suitable narratives will be guided by the content chosen for individual periods and by the present writer's assessment of their overall suitability.² Vandergrift says that those selecting literature for children need to have a "feel for literature."³ Chambers speaks of finding stories that fit the storytellers' "particular personality" and "style."

Something happens between the storyteller and the tale when he finds it. It seems that the story

¹Some pragmatic reasons for their selection were the lack of examination pressures, the previous experience of the present writer with this age level, and the suitability of their Bible timetable.

²While the Junior Guide is the Church paper for this group the stories involved moral rather than doctrinal education. Insight seemed more suited to students and storyteller.

³Vandergrift, p. 180.

almost begs to be told by that particular storyteller Storytellers know when it happens.¹

Steimle sees Carl Roger's comment, "what is most personal is most general"² as the reason why that which appeals deeply to the storyteller will be of interest to his hearers.

It is natural and unavoidable that the selection of narratives is a subjective process. The selection of narratives, if analysed, could tell as much about the storyteller's own personality as the truths he sees them carrying. It is hoped that the narratives selected will reach pupils who can only understand simple story developments while also providing "the potential for abstract appreciation for the sake of those few who will grasp it."³

Storytellers' Style

Much has been written on the analysis and cultivation of the storyteller's art through this century. The use of the voice in a dramatic way and non-verbal communication are stressed by exponents of the art. This ministry design envisages a very relaxed yet

¹Dewey W. Chambers, The Oral Teaching: Storytelling and Creative Drama, 2d ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, 1970), p. 16.

²Quoted in Steimle, Niedenthal, and Rice, p. 76.

³Children's Literature -- The Power of Story (Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University, 1980), p. 156.

expressive manner. The use of the eyes, hands, and body movement should seek to involve the students in the story as much as the manner of oral delivery.¹ Storytelling is a personal experience. A description of the complete style and delivery sought is never possible. A conscious effort will be made to reveal the storyteller's personality in an acceptable way for "fun-loving" teenagers.²

In the discussions of narrative the teacher will endeavour to use reflective listening without evaluation or direction. Knowing the reluctance of this age group (or any age group, for that matter) to speak concerning their view of story, this approach seems vital.³

Symbol Selection

Appropriate symbols which arise out of the stories' contexts are to be selected for classroom display. Something commonplace will be selected so that its repetition might, at some future time recall the emotions or thoughts generated by the story.⁴ They are to act as summarizers and reminders. They will be

¹See Chambers, p. 42 for a storyteller's Evaluation Sheet.

²It was felt that the absence of a tie might help convey a more relaxed approach.

³Vandergrift says that this can only happen in an "atmosphere of trust." p. 186.

⁴Jesus' selection of the lilies and the sower etc. probably achieved this.

introduced to the students at the end of the period when class notes are being taken. This will limit the influence the selection of the symbol may have upon the students' individual interpretation of the story. It will be placed between the theme and the major points to act as a link. By this close association the capacity of the symbol to convey meaning and truth will be enhanced.

Reaction Sheets

In the first three periods students will be given a reaction sheet to record their feelings and observations. Coming immediately after the story it will be possible for each student to make a personalized response to his involvement in the story. The removal of peer pressure will enable these responses to be a more accurate guide to their individual development. They will be part of the testing instruments and will provide an opportunity for the students to discover meaning for themselves. By this means students will be guided into the depths of story.

Teaching through the students' emotions and experiences will show the participants the validity and truth of the lesson's spiritual conclusions. If the experiences "ring true" the message of the story will be more readily accepted; (for example, a narrative on rejection may help its hearer see the pain that sin causes). The story's message will therefore be put into a closer relationship to their lives.

Discussion of Narrative

Squire (1964) in his work with adolescents found that eighty-two percent of their responses to story were on the interpretative level. These responses involved an attempt by the readers "to discover the meaning of the stories, the motivational forces and the nature of the characters." Plots, ideas, and themes were the main focus of interpretation.¹ Squire's work was not related directly to their level of formal operational thinking but it did show that adolescents (like children and adults) enjoy a discussion of story.

Further research, into narrative's combination with discussion, has revealed the positive impact upon values that this combination can achieve. Narrative without discussion has a mixed influence.²

The questions will help the students explore some ideas and relationships in the story which they have not yet entered. It may help the adolescent develop skills of perception and analysis.³ Discussion will provide another opportunity for students to live the story by the recall of memory, instilling the story's message more

¹Children's Literature, p. 176.

²Isabel Rogers Lewis, "Some Effects of the Reading and Discussion of Stories on Certain Values of Sixth Grade Pupils," cited by Dianne Monson and Bette Peltola, "Research in Children's Literature: An Annotated Bibliography," in Children's Literature, p. 172.

³Vandergrift, p. 196.

permanently into their minds. Classroom control and order will be risked in this responding segment.

Spiritual Relationship Questions

As the discussion progresses the spiritual lessons will begin to surface in the conscious mind. Questions will be asked that will use the human relationships present in the stories directing the students to parallel these with the dynamics of salvation.

Such questioning pre-supposes that these students have the capacity for inferential thinking to extend the theme beyond the story to other stories. Questioning will use and test their formal operational thinking. A comparison with similar thematic Bible stories will help those with concrete thinking to see the parallels.

Questions with divergent multiple answers¹ are to be favoured and a willingness by the teacher to follow where the students lead is to be attempted.²

Note-Taking

Notes are to be brief and are to aid memory to teach some form of narrative analysis. The major sections will be story, theme, symbol, major points, spiritual lessons, Bible story parallels, and a fitting

¹For an excellent list of discussion questions, see Ibid., pp. 207-8.

²Ibid., p. 18.

text of scripture.¹ A repeated format will hasten the "agony" of note-taking and provide the student with a visual outline of the lesson. The displaying of these on overhead transparencies will enable this to be done quickly. The similar format will encourage them to progressively complete more of the notes themselves. It will give them a "permanent" record of narrative acting as a vehicle for religious truth. Class discussion from the beginning will provide the spiritual lessons and Bible story parallels.

Testing Instruments

Storyteller's Observations

The measuring of student's reactions to narrative is fraught with many difficulties.

In most instances, we know more about the comprehension of a child who catches our eyes during the reading of a particular image, laughs uproariously at an incongruous exaggeration, or shares a moment of silence after a moving incident than we do about one who writes numerous book reports.²

According to Vandergrift, the most effective testing is the subjective assessment of the teller.

As researchers we find this especially irksome, for we tend to prize the clear light of the tightly explained rather than the twilight of the dimly apprehended. Yet, in the area of reader response, above all, we must be prepared to work with untidy,

¹The latter was to provide contact with the Bible.

²Vandergrift, p. 181.

uncertain date: [sic] fleeting images, half-formed inadequately articulated ideas, partially glimpsed meanings are the yield of introspective recall.¹

And again,

The subject of the reader's response is the Loch Ness Monster of literary studies. When we set out to capture it, we cannot even be sure that it is there at all and if we assume that it is, we must admit that the most sensitive probing with the most sophisticated instruments has so far succeeded only in producing pictures of dubious authenticity.²

In the same book eight different possible assessment methods are outlined.³ In concluding, the writers leave the selection of testing procedures to the researcher's preference and to the age of the children. With this lack of exactitude in measurable instruments a great deal of responsibility is placed upon the individual storyteller and researcher.

It is very easy to assess the interest level of adolescents. A simple post-test will indicate the extent to which concepts have been retained. However, the measuring of an increase in spiritual commitment and awareness of relevance is difficult.

The Pre-test and Post-test

These testing instruments are not as unambiguous as would be first thought. It is the intent of this ministry design to measure the willingness for spiritual commitment, attitudes to the different teaching methods,

¹Children's Literature, p. 189.

²Ibid. ³Ibid., pp. 123-98.

and knowledge of the doctrines of salvation. Without a repetition of the same wording it is difficult to measure any marked change for spiritual commitment.

The testing of the students' attitudes to the different methods will have many variables. Results will be influenced by the sex, personality, age, dress, and freedom given to the students by the two teachers. Only major consistent patterns will enable significant conclusions.

The testing of knowledge is by far the most problematic. Adolescents know the word formulas for salvation without really knowing what they mean. An indirect method that does not give precise word order faces the difficult task of measurement. The pre-test will therefore attempt an analysis of understanding without demanding a verbal description. It will endeavour to evaluate the students' spiritual commitment to Christ and also their willingness to think about commitment. Both the Pre-test and the Post-test will be in a format that will require little writing by the students.

The Post-test, which deals with content will be unannounced in order to find out more accurately the extent of absorbed learning rather than the ability of students to cram or discipline themselves for study. It will gauge the students' memory of symbol, story, theme,

scripture, relationships within stories, and their reactions to these.

Reaction Sheets and Informal Instruments

The Reaction sheets will provide an opportunity to measure the extent of involvement, understanding, and interest of the individual student. Individual responses to stories will be sought as students are occasionally asked to describe, write, or draw what the narrative does to them. Informal discussions and acceptance will guide the acceptability of presentation but will not provide a tangible measurement of the ministry's success at goal achievement. We cannot quantify what is fully happening within the students by the reaction sheets. We can "plant our seeds in the depth of their lives, we may harvest an occasional blossom without knowing the strength of the roots."¹

Restrictions and Weakness in Design

A minister, without teaching qualifications attempting to be a Bible teacher in a classroom setting, has obvious problems. A lack of teaching techniques, discipline methods, inexperience with classroom management, and the differences of style that the two roles demand, point to some expected difficulties. The

¹Constance Carr McCutcheon, "Evaluating Children's Experiences," in Using Literature with Young Children, ed. Leland B. Jacobs (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965), p. 63.

minister is usually accustomed to teaching Bible to a small committed group of volunteers who comprise a Baptismal class. In this project the students will view the present writer as another practise teacher. Their interest will have to be attracted whereas in a class for indoctrination their interest is their motivation.¹

The spiritual, intellectual, and social abilities of the students will be unknown. This mutual unfamiliarity with each other will work against the attempt to raise the spiritual commitment of the students.

Further weaknesses in the project are the brevity of ministry and the consecutive nature of the lesson periods. While the length of the teaching unit is sufficient for impact it is too short for any noticeable improvement in students' skills of narrative analysis. Adolescents' enjoyment of variety will not be catered for as it would be in regular Bible periods.

There are thirty-one pupils in the class. A personal ministry to such a large number of students with the view to raise their willingness for spiritual commitment is very difficult within the eleven class periods. The size of the class also militates against the attempt to teach them to see the possibilities of

¹The present writer has chosen, against advice from others, not to incorporate interest-maintaining segments that do not use the narrative method into this design. Boredom with the resulting sameness is therefore risked consciously.

understanding spiritual themes from stories. Vandergrift suggests that, "A group of six to eight children is seen to be an ideal size to share in-depth interpretations of story."¹

These inherent weaknesses in the design challenge the success of teacher and method in achieving the goals. The next chapter outlines how this ministry design was implemented and what results were achieved.

¹Vandergrift, p. 188.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to ascertain the effectiveness of "narrative ministry" as the major teaching method in a teenage Bible class.

Permission was sought from the headmaster of the Avondale Seventh-day Adventist High School, Pastor E. G. Krause, and from the Grade 8b Bible class teacher, Mrs. J. Cracknell. Preliminary discussion in February with the headmaster led to the selection of Grade 8b. He felt that students thirteen and fourteen years of age would be suitable for testing the project. Eleven class periods from August 6-20 were given by the class teacher to facilitate this ministry design.

In this February conversation the author was given a valuable sketch of the attitudes of the class and school towards religious themes. At the teacher's suggestion it was agreed that initially, and as long as mutually required, she would be present in the classroom as a "disciplining presence." It was felt that with the transition to a different method, teacher, disciplining skills and methods her presence would be beneficial.

On July 31 a further discussion with Mrs. Cracknell permission was sought for the prescribed pre-test to be administered. No additions or deletions were recommended.¹ Mention was made of the possibility that many teenagers would consider many Bible lessons boring because it was the accepted teenage attitude. A request to sit as an observer in the preceding Wednesday and Thursday's Bible classes was sought and granted.²

Attendance at these Bible lesson periods on August 1 and 2 provided the writer with a positive appreciation of the behaviour and spiritual commitment of the class. It was observed that most students had their Bibles, listened to the serial narrative, and answered the teacher's spiritual questions intelligently. A social profile of the class was tentatively established. Discussions after class on Wednesday and Thursday (August 1 and 2) with Mrs. Cracknell led to a further affirmation of the student's behaviour and commitment. During these two classes approximately ten minutes were used to read

¹See appendix 3 for the content of the Pre-test.

²My advisor, Mr. R. H. Bolst, suggested that such a course would be beneficial. This he maintained would help the writer assess the class mood and social patterns. It would give an indication of the present lesson structure and technique. It would facilitate a smoother transition and help the writer to become more familiar with names and faces.

a serial narrative entitled "Marjie."¹ Ten minutes were also used to discuss the lessons of Christ-likeness that various groups of students had discovered in searching through a Bible passage. The remainder of the class period was spent in personal discussion between students on matters which in general were unrelated to the content of that Bible class.

On Friday, August 3, immediately after the ten minute serial narrative Mrs. Cracknell gave the leadership of the class to the writer. The purpose of the project was briefly outlined and the students were told a little of the writer's experience in ministry. After telling them of the eleven periods that would be in the narrative style the Pre-test was administered. Pink sheets were given to the girls and blue sheets to the boys. The test was explained and briefly read. Students were told that questions which they could not answer could be left. Baptised students were asked to put a "B" on the paper.

While the Pre-test was being administered a bowl containing the numbers 1-32 was passed around. Each student took a number which, they were told was to be written on all response sheets during the eleven classes. It was stated, that this would make bias less likely by providing anonymity for the students. After collecting

¹John Benton, Marjie (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1980).

the Pre-tests the writer left, leaving Mrs. Cracknell to finish her Bible lesson. Ten to twelve minutes had been taken to administer the test.

Narrative Teaching Begins

On August 6, the main section of the project commenced. The lesson outline ¹ was followed with good, lengthy participation. Restlessness in the second period indicated that the two lengthy narratives which had been read were too long. It was decided that future lessons would contain only one read narrative or two short narratives, only one of which would be read. General dissatisfaction was murmured by the class on the need to take notes. However, they faithfully followed the notes from the overhead transparency after the bell had sounded.

The third period followed the school's Sports Carnival which had disrupted the flow of academic life. The Thursday period was to be the last of the formal reaction sheets. The students' responses were very positive with some individuals showing signs of spiritual progression -- a progression which they saw as being motivated by God's accepting love.²

Friday (August 11), was also a day without

¹See appendix 1.

²See sample reaction sheets in appendix 10.

morning classes. A "Skip for Heart" programme had been planned.

On Monday (August 13), Lessons Four and Five were amalgamated. The resulting lesson plan was faithfully followed. Interest in the various narratives reached its peak during the story of "Lem." Total attention from the students indicated their involvement in the story. Later discussion revealed their understanding of the cost of love. A puzzle for the next day's lesson was promised and this was met with enthusiasm.

On Tuesday (August 14), the school band took nine of the Grade 8 students on an excursion to Newcastle. Two students were also absent. Coming at a time of spiritual climax it had the effect of unsettling the momentum and spiritual development. A good reaction came from those students present as they drew and/or described, what happened in the story, and their emotional response to these events.

On Wednesday (August 15), approximately eight minutes were taken by Mrs. Cracknell to arrange the school excursion for that evening. Spontaneously, several students offered an invitation to the writer to go bowling with them. The writer accepted and the ensuing fellowship provided a camaraderie that was to test classroom control for the remainder of the week.

Thursday (August 16), saw a lack of discussion, activities, and lesson variety in the class which seemed

to contribute to a "flat" lesson that finished early. Class behaviour became unruly when the students were dismissed.

Despite the unruly behaviour a more dated story told in this lesson was thoroughly enjoyed. A show of hands revealed most students liked it better than other stories. It was read very quickly and rhythmically.

Friday (August 17), saw classroom control only possible during periods of peak interest in these two stories. Detention was promised and given to one student. Classroom control was completely lost but friendship was maintained. The "rebels" had had a good time and were talking about it after the period had finished. Their commitment, response, and attitude to the narrative method were tested by the first Post-test.

On Monday, August 20 the Post-test, Part 2 was administered without warning. It tested their memory of the stories and the spiritual dynamics within the narratives. The class responded well to the unannounced exam. Mrs. Cracknell's presence had been sought by the writer and the students were well behaved. As each student finished they were given a written quiz. The period ended with mutual friendliness evident.

Results and Assessment

It became obvious to the writer that narrative maintained the interest level of the students, even with

a lack of discipline skills. Unfortunately it was impossible to measure the effect of narrative upon the class separately from the teaching style and story-telling arts. The multiplicity of influencing factors envisaged in the previous chapter precludes any outright conclusions for the class as a whole. The exception to this may be the degree of interest shown during the actual narrative and the personal way in which each student applied and analyzed the spiritual truths in the narratives.

The task of measuring narrative's sole complete impact was not possible within the time limits of this project. However as a unit of teaching, narrative has survived the adolescents' assessment by holding their attention, encouraging feed-back, and enabling discussion.

The testing instruments revealed trends in student attitudes to the two different teaching methods. Both the Pre-test and the Post-test (Part 1), plotted below in fifteen graphs, indicate these significant dissimilarities. There are a further three graphs which only record attitudes to the project.

Those previously negative to religion and regular Bible teaching methods have been placed in Group One.¹

The other three groups of students have been formed

¹See appendix 8 for the reasons and responses that caused these students to be grouped.

according to their previous Bible grade. Group Four contains the previous "brighter" student.¹

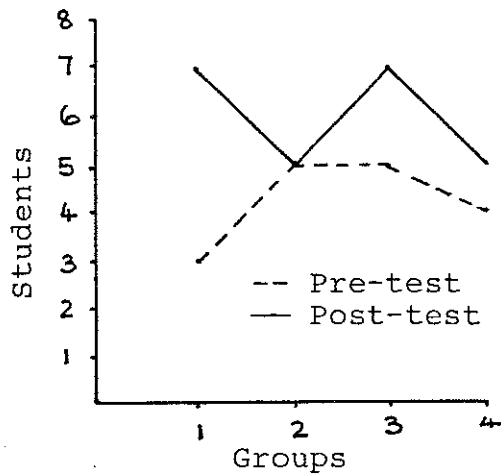


Fig. 1. Good

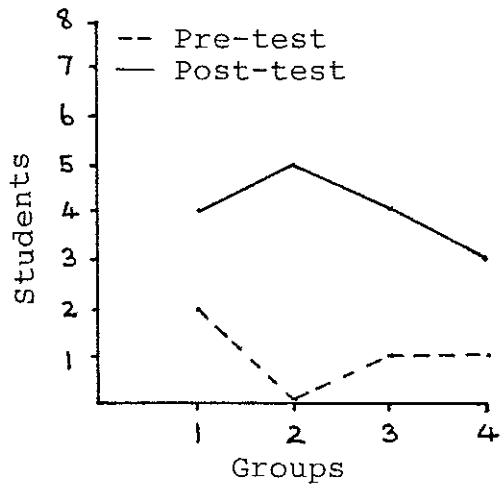


Fig. 2. Very good

Figures 1 and 2 indicate the strong acceptance the class to the project. The most notable differences between the Pre-test and Post-test responses occur in Group One in Figure 1 and Group Two in Figure 2. The greater gap in Figure 2 between Pre-test and Post-test illustrates the acceptance of the project by the students.

¹For an analysis of Groups 1-4 and their individual differing responses see appendix 8. It should be stressed that only seven students comprise Group Three.

²The vertical axis indicates the number of students who responded from each group.

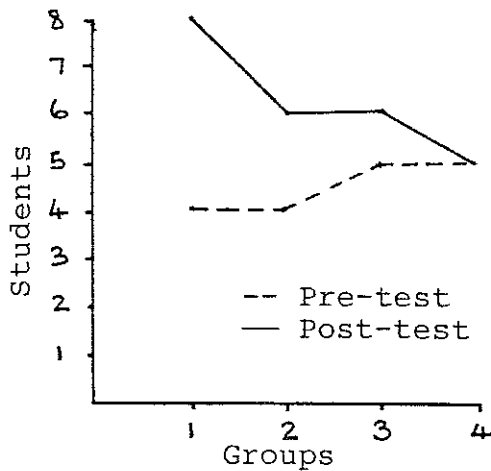


Fig. 3. Interesting

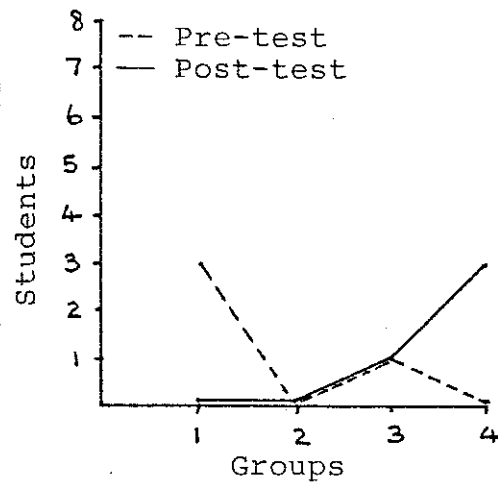


Fig. 4. Not Relevant

Figure 3 records the marked change in interest response in Group One as compared with the movement of the three other groups in Pre-test and Post-test.

Figure 4 records a perfect inversion between Groups One and Four on their perception of the relevance of the two teaching methods. It could indicate the rejection by the "brighter" Bible students of things which are not strongly abstract. For Group One it could further emphasize the nature of their concrete thinking in rejecting previous (abstract favouring) Bible lessons.

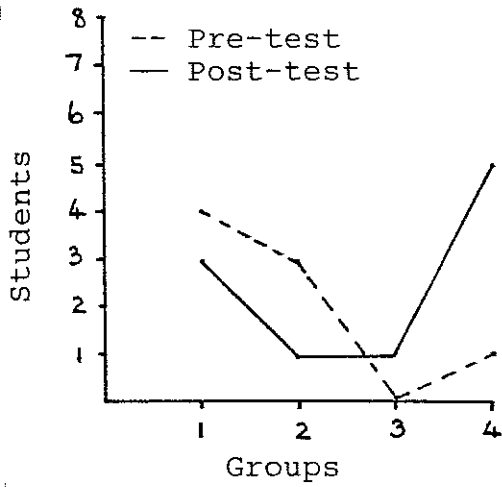


Fig. 5. Doesn't affect my relationship with God

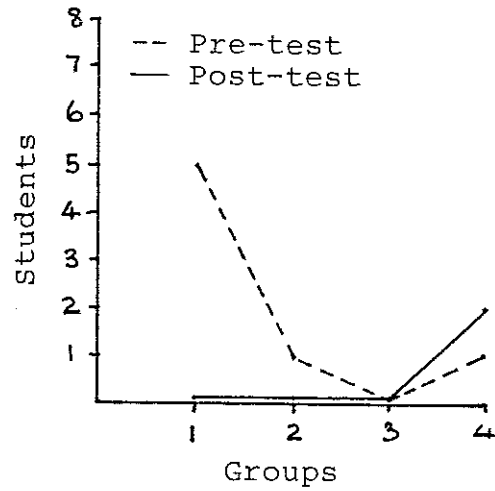


Fig. 6. Dry

Over half the students in Group Four were sure that the project did not affect their relationship with God. This response is remarkably consistent with their commitment responses recorded in appendix 8. Groups One and Two differ with Groups Three and Four over which method affects their relationship with God least.

Figure 6 dramatically highlights the concentration of students in Group One who find the regular Bible lessons "dry."

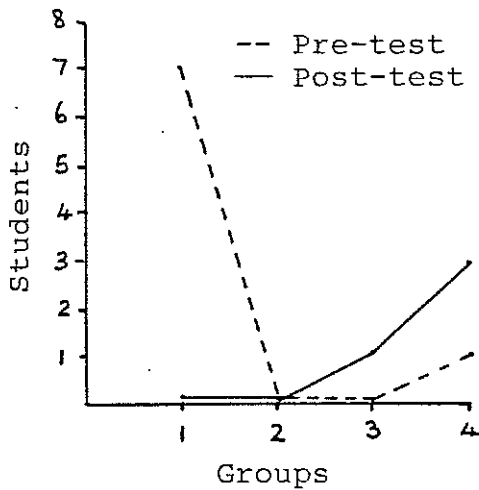


Fig. 7. Boring

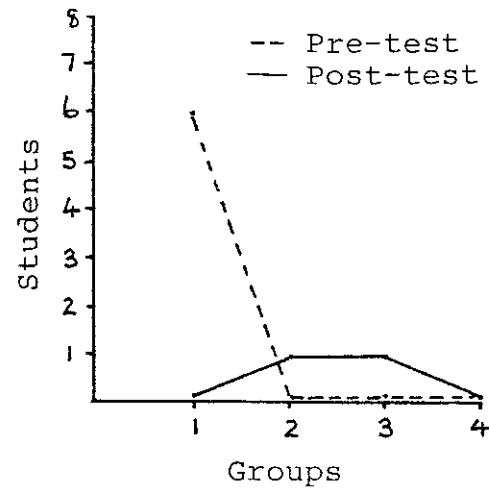


Fig. 8. Hard to Understand

It is worth observing that three students in Group Four found the project boring. Closer examination reveals that the student who felt both teaching methods were boring also found the project "interesting"! There are many factors which could account for all of these responses. However, it is possible that the narrative method did not challenge the "brighter" group or that their was not enough variety.

Figure 8 shows how different the comprehension abilities of Group One are to the other students. Only two adolescents found the stories hard to understand. The newness of this method to the students may have inhibited their willingness to freely explore the spiritual possibilities of story.

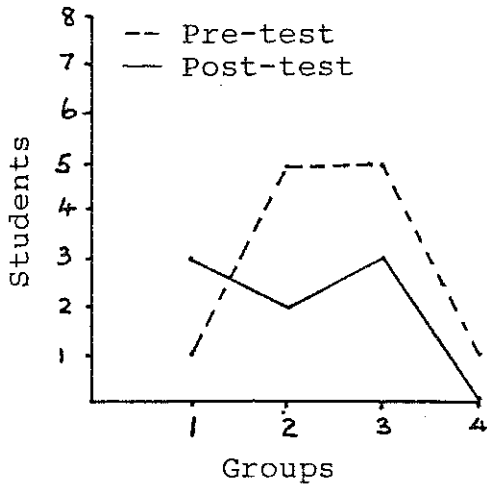


Fig. 9. Lead me more to God

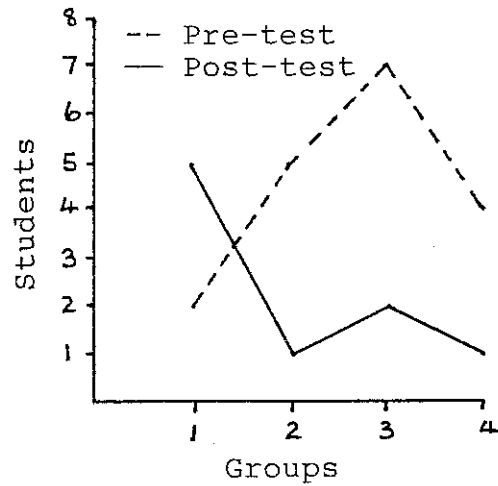


Fig. 10. Help me to understand myself

Only two students (in Group One) felt that the project led them more to God. They did not perceive that it had a spiritual impact on their lives. This figure could be used to show that narrative does not strongly influence people towards commitment to God. It could also show that students are unaware of the spiritual impact story is having upon them. Chapter Three discusses how story teaches through indirection while the hearers are unaware.

Again Group One differs from the rest of the class. The success of existing Bible teaching methods is again obvious.

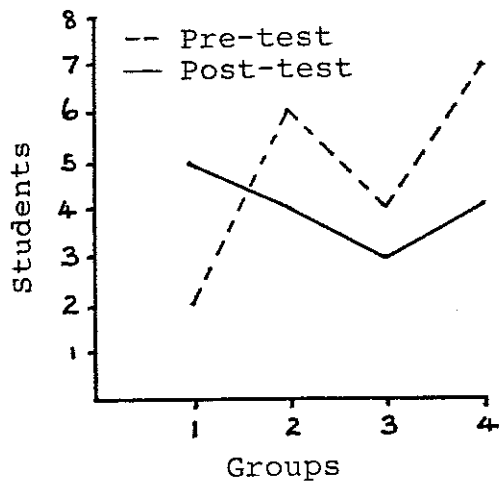


Fig. 11. Alright

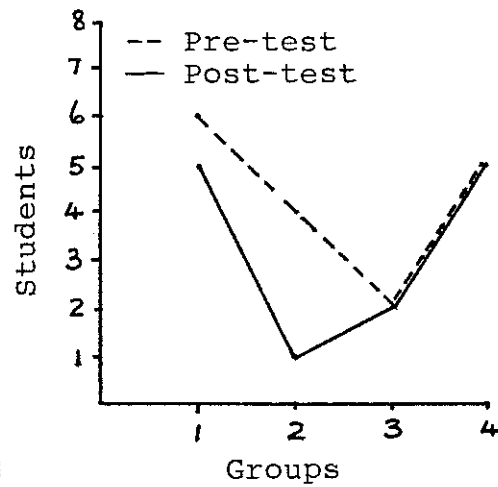
Fig. 12. All I
expect them to be

Fig. 11. seems to repeat the trend of the previous two graphs although this question is ambiguous. The writer feels that the variety of feelings possible to both questions prevents any significant comment on his part. The wording of the question was not sufficiently precise. However, it should be admitted that the regular Bible lessons fared better in both student responses with the exception of Group One in Fig. 1.

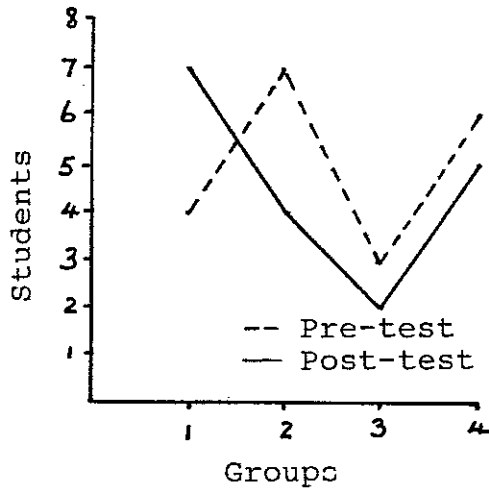


Fig. 13. Simple enough

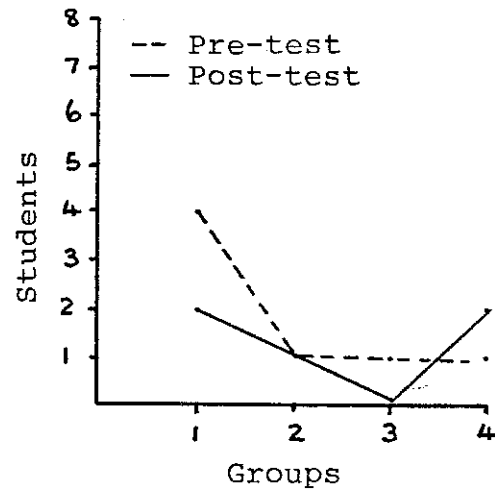


Fig. 14. Not on my wavelength

Figure 13 continues the pattern evident in Figures 9, 10, and 11. Group One is at variance with the rest of the class on the comparative simplicity of the two teaching methods. This may indicate the tendency found by Goldman in those who are backward in religion to be more concrete in their thinking. The lower responses in Group Three compared with the other groups could be caused by the lower number of students in this group.

Fig. 14. pictures another negative response by Group One to previous teaching methods. Apart from Group One both methods seem to be doing reasonably well in reaching teenagers on their wavelength.

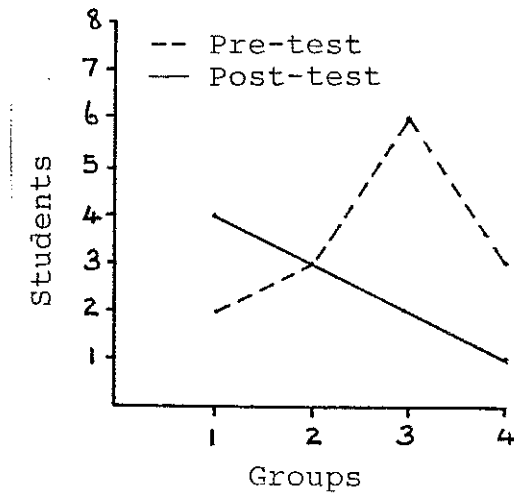


Fig. 15. Explain the Bible clearly

As in Figures 9, 10, 11, and 13 Group One differs from the rest of the class in positively assessing the project. Six out of seven students in Group Three felt that present Bible methods explain the Bible clearly. When this is combined with their responses in Figures 9 and 10 the view of Group Three's spiritual commitment is clear. As stated in this chapter the majority of the class displayed to the writer a large preparedness for spiritual commitment.

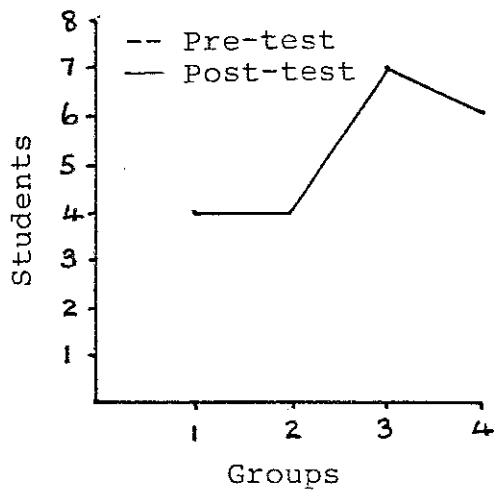


Fig. 16. I can remember some of the stories

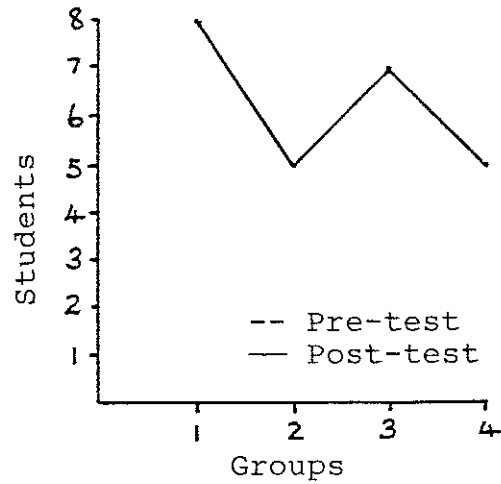


Fig. 17. I found them more interesting than expected

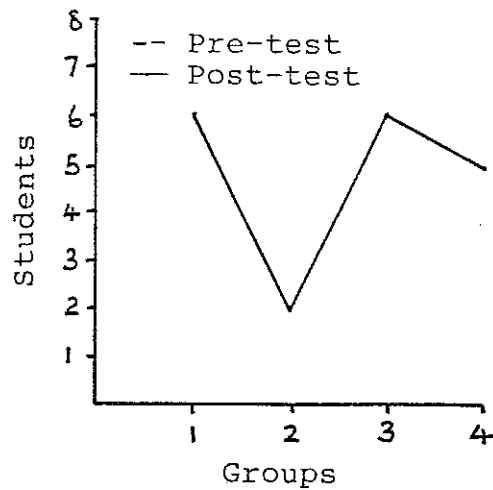


Fig. 18. I understood them more than most minister's Bible lessons

These last three figures record answers to questions only in the Post-test. Most strikingly

illustrative of the unconscious way narrative teaches are the low responses in Group One in Figure 16. However, when the few symbolic keys were given in the unannounced Post-test there were four of this group in the top thirteen students. Only one of these students (a girl) indicated in the Post-test that she could remember some of the stories. All eight students in Group One found the narrative lessons above their expectations.

The following trends are evident in the above figures. First, the negative response of Group One differs dramatically from their positive responses in the Post-test. They showed greater acceptance of the project than did the other groups. Often this is seen in the figures by a criss-cross pattern. Secondly, Group Four repeatedly responds in an inverse manner to Group One. They are more negative to the project. Some influencing factors could be the lack of rewards offered them by the new teacher and a failure to reach their expectations of standard Bible classes. Thirdly, it is evident that the middle groups responded to the previous Bible lessons in a positive manner. They felt that it improved their spiritual and personal development.

These graphs illustrate the writer's thesis that the members of Group One are almost homogeneous in that they are backward in religion. The consistent negative attitudes of interest and religious response combined with a difficulty of comprehension make this thesis

tenable. Within Group One a definite relationship of interest (Fig. 3.), understanding (Fig. 8.), and commitment (Fig. 9.) is apparent. This is expressed in Figure 19.

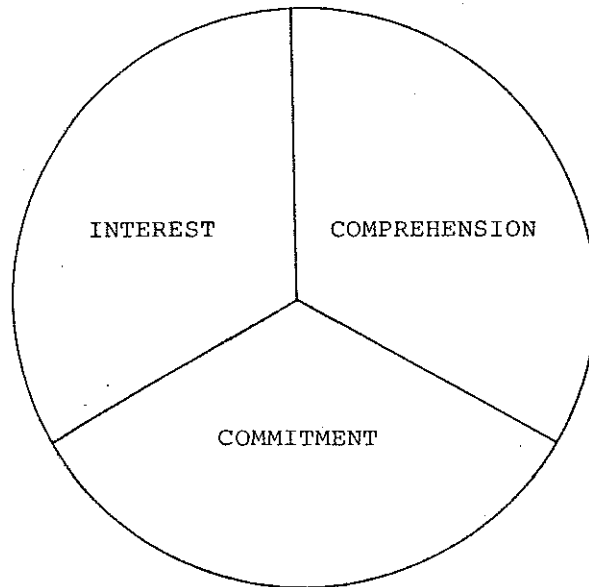


Fig. 19. Related factors in the dynamics of religious education

The results of the Post-test (Part 2) showed the capability of narrative to be exploited by memory. Narrative tapped a common adolescent ability to remember stories. It should be clear that the difficulty of the Post-test further emphasizes that narrative conveys truth symbolically.¹ Students have read into the symbols spiritual truths which are pertinent to their present

¹See appendix 7 for an analysis of the difficulty of this Post-test for students. Also recorded are their scores in relationship to previous Bible marks. The four graphs for each group visually compare the differences between the results of this Bible test and previous student marks.

religious experience. Narrative was able to reach them as individuals. Personal applications have been made at a deep spiritual level.¹

It would be surprising indeed to record any increase in the willingness for commitment to Christ within a fortnight. The writer has therefore been cautious in only selecting variations of two or more points as indicative of such a trend.² Only six changes of this nature occurred in the comparison used. Five of these students were from Group One and only three of these moved in a strongly positive manner.

Conclusion

As the major teaching method narrative has been instrumental in achieving the interest-maintaining goal of this project. Measurement of the students' perception of the relevance of doctrine to life was not possible within the short time frame of this project.³ The achievement of the goals of this project have mainly been in its ministry to students in Group One.

The pupils of Group One who were previously negative to Bible classes received sufficient interest

¹See appendix 10, number 2, for an extensive illustration of this point.

²Appendix 8 records these.

³Fig. 4. in this chapter is worth some attention on this point.

and comprehension from the narrative medium to move towards a commitment to God.

The class as a whole did not reach the writer's expectations of teenagers' abilities to analyse narrative. It may well be that the size of the class prevented this from being observed. However, most of the class did show an ability to interpret the stories according to their present religious experience.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Narrative's singular appeal to those "backward in religion" confirms the need to re-examine the role of narrative in religious education. Adolescents in the transitional stage of development have responded well to the ministry implemented in this project. They found the lessons interesting and easy to understand. At the end of the narrative ministry some of the members of this group showed appreciable differences in their willingness to make a commitment to God.

The value of narrative for the remainder of the class is seen in the way it captivated their interest and attention. An improvement in communicating to all the adolescents was due to these qualities of narrative. Student expectations of Bible classes may have inhibited some students from being noticeably affected by this improved communication.

Narrative carried salvific truth to the students in a memorable form. It facilitated a more lasting memory of spiritual truths through its indirect symbolic approach. The way in which students retained the message of the stories throughout the implementation indicates

narrative's suitability to provide a more lasting religious education.

This project reminds the Church of the broad vista of narrative's potential in fulfilling Christian mission.¹

The writer recommends the use of narrative as the major teaching method in at least one Bible period per week. Other arrangements to cater for those who are backward in religion could involve the regular use of narrative for each Bible teaching unit. Some teachers may wish to incorporate a complete unit of narrative once a term.

Though a debatable issue, streaming for adolescent classes in Bible gains further support from the findings of this project. It is therefore recommended that one of the major Adventist city high schools should pilot a programme of streaming by the criteria of student competence in abstract or concrete thinking.

Adolescent's general inability to fully analyse narrative for its doctrinal truths suggests that more narrative should be recommended throughout the high school years in order to promote greater student skills

¹ Narrative is presently being used in a spectrum from systematic theology to pastoral counselling. See Gabriel Fackre, The Christian Story (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1978); Donald Capps, "Biblical Models of Pastoral Counselling," Pastoral Psychology 28 (1980): 252-64.

in maximizing this medium. Student expectations of the content in Bible classes need to be re-educated in order to balance their view of theology as neat propositional statements. One guaranteed by-product would surely be a renewed interest in Bible study where this skill of narrative analysis is required.

It is further recommended that ministers use narrative for those church youth who are reluctant in their attendance at Baptismal classes. Narrative's appeal especially to boys thirteen and fourteen years of age could provide ministers with an interest-captivating medium that is easily understood. Its possible use for a complete indoctrination schedule should not be overlooked.

Teachers or pastors wishing to repeat or modify this narrative ministry should attempt to improve the testing instruments and provide greater variety within the narrative method. The selection of a smaller number of students could facilitate a more effective and testable ministry. An analysis of the students' interest in narrative as compared with their comprehension abilities could prove to be profitable. Activities that enabled students to use their skills in narrative analysis within the Biblical narratives are needed. This would meet the students expectations of Bible classes. It would show them the importance of narrative.

Further research is recommended to ascertain the

relationship that concrete thinking and low Bible marks have with the attrition rate of teenagers from the church. This would do much to direct the teaching style of pastors and teachers as they minister to adolescents. Parallel to this recommendation is the need to assess the level of abstract thinking required by our present teaching of Bible to Year 8. Such assessment may modify the teaching methods to adolescents.

The present writer has been unable to find any recent research on the usual chronological age of students achieving formal operational thinking. Twenty years ago research revealed that previously proposed adolescent ages were too early.¹ Vandergrift postulates that the lack of imagination required by the visual media could be retarding the development of story analysis by today's children.² A new study on the possible delay of formal operational thinking is therefore strongly recommended. This examination would be crucial to guide religious educators as they form Bible curricula for teenagers.

Within the Church the writer would like to see a greater willingness to investigate the use of narrative in ministry. The greater use of concrete forms seems to be a necessity in ministering to today's uncommitted teenagers.

¹Goldman, Childhood to Adolescence, p. 63.

²Vandergrift, p. 241.

APPENDIX I
LESSON PLANS

APPENDIX 1

LESSON PLANS

LESSON PLAN NO. 1

Teacher: M.House Topic: Sin is "Sick"
Class: 8b Subject: Bible
Date: August 6, 1984 Time: 8.40 am

Learning Focus: The purpose of this lesson is to prepare the students to see the spiritual dimensions of their own personal sin by encountering them with narratives with which they can identify.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Discuss sin and guilt through story characters.
2. Admit mankind's guilt before God.
3. Complete class notes and write out Bible text.
4. Complete the spiritual lessons of the story and the Bible story parallels.

Learning Context: The first of an eleven lesson unit on salvation as seen in narrative.

Learning Resources:

1. No. 1 Reaction Sheet.
2. Stories -
Doward, Jan. "A Scheming Mother," Insight, 25 May 1982, pp. 10, 11.
Johnsson, Terence, B. "A Sad Story," Insight, 30 November 1982, p. 6.
3. Overhead projector and transparencies of class notes.

4. Pinboard picture of story symbol - Ferris wheel.
5. Chalkboard.

Procedure:

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Prayer.
2. Inform - an overview of lesson unit and project.

B. DEVELOPMENT

3. Narration of "A Scheming Mother," brief comment, narration of "A Sad Story."
4. Reaction sheets to narratives completed individually.
5. Discussion - student points written up on the overhead.
6. Spiritual relationship questions -

When we don't accept people as equals what are we doing spiritually?

In what way did Rebekkah receive the penalty of sinful plotting?

How would you feel as the fat boy?

How do you feel when your friends make fun of others?

7. Conclusion.
8. Complete notes by copying discussion points from overhead.

CLASS NOTES

Story - "A Sad Story"

Theme - Sin is sick. Sin hurts.

Symbol - Ferris Wheel

Major Points

1. A man escapes life's problems at an amusement park.
2. People see him, a large fat man, and laugh at him.
3. The fat man walks away more hurt and lonely.

Spiritual Lessons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Bible Story Parallels

- A.
- B.

Text

1 John 4:20 (first part) "If anyone says 'I love God' and hates his brother he is a liar."

REACTION SHEET

1. Did this story create any emotions within you? If so what type?
2. How would you describe the behaviour of those who laughed at the fat man. Tick all that apply -
shameful
disgusting
cruel
sick
unthinking
funny
3. What would you dislike the most? Having people make fun of you because you were -
physically different
mentally different
socially different
economically different (rich or poor)
4. Are these above behaviours sinful? Yes/No

LESSON PLAN NO. 2

Topic: Human Need

Date: August 7, 1984

Time: 10.00 am

Learning Focus: Our guilt must be dealt with by someone other than ourselves. Student realization of this necessity is the purpose of this lesson.

Learning Resources:

Stories -

Field, Kenneth. "Healer," Insight, 21 January 1984, pp. 2, 3.

Hefferlin, Melissa. "I'm so sorry," Insight, 5 May 1984, pp. 2, 3.

CLASS NOTES

Story - "I'm So Sorry"

Theme - We Are Sorry when Sin Hurts God's Love.

Symbol - Fur Coat

Major Points

1. Christina had to talk again, to a weird Polish woman who visits her mother.
2. Suzi, her friend, rings and is told how the woman is a bore.
3. Mrs. Zavunski, the Polish woman, gives her rich sable fur coat to Christina.
4. Christina's heart is broken and she hugs Mrs. Zavunski.
5. Suzi walks in calling Mrs. Zavunski, "the weird lady."

Spiritual Lessons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Bible Story Parallels

- A. Jesus and me.
- B.

Text - Romans 6:23

REACTION SHEET

1. What is your strongest feeling after hearing this story?
2. What do you think the story was trying to say?
3. List some spiritual parallels between this story and mankind's relationship to God.
4. This story makes me feel -
angry
sad
uncomfortable
guilty
happy
sorry
other _____

LESSON PLAN NO. 3

Topic: Unconditional Acceptance

Date: August 8, 1984

Time: 9.20 am

Learning Focus: The purpose of this lesson is to give the students insight into the unconditional acceptance by God of the "ugly" lives.

Learning Resources:

Stories -

Dowling, Tom. "Mr. Ugly," Insight, 21 December 1982,
p. 5.

CLASS NOTES

Story - "Mr. Ugly"

Theme - Unconditional acceptance

Symbol - Santa Claus

Major Points

1. Mr. Ugly works in a circus as a human "monster."
2. He applies for a job in a department store.
3. He is accepted, and is very successful as Santa Claus.

Spiritual Lessons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Bible Story Parallels

- A.
B.

Text Romans 5:6

REACTION SHEET

1. Did the manager take a risk hiring Mr. Ugly? yes/no
2. Would you have done the same? yes/no
3. If you were Mr. Ugly how would you feel -
after the first interview?

after the first hour of the job?

4. What would be your attitude to the Manager if your
were Mr. Ugly?
5. Because God has already accepted you as you are,
describe your attitude to Him:

LESSON PLAN NO. 4

Topic: The Cost of Love

Date: August 13, 1984 Time: 8.40 am

Learning Focus: To prepare students to see the gift of substitution at a human level.

Learning Resources:

Stories -

Treasury of Devotional Aids for Home and School.

Prepared by Department of Education of the
General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist
Church. "Lem," Washington, D.C., Review and
Herald, :1951. pp. 73-75. (from Youth's
Instructor, Adapted.)

CLASS NOTES

Story - "Supreme Gift"

Theme - The Gift of Substitution

Symbol - Red Cross

Major Points

1. Young boy sick in hospital needs blood.
2. An old black man gives blood, thinking that to do so, means death.

Spiritual Lessons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Bible Story Parallels

- A. Moses
- B. Jesus

Text John 15:13 (2nd part)

LESSON PLAN NO. 5

Topic: Innocence died yet still loved

Date: August 14, 1984 Time: 10.00 am

Learning Focus: The student will be able to value the cost of Calvary in terms of their own experience. They will be able to see the horror of sins complete payment.

Learning Resources:

Stories -

Wiesel, Elie. Night, quoted in Jonathan Butler. "Abandoned Children," Insight, 18 May 1982, p. 6.

CLASS NOTES

Story - "Night"

Theme - The Cost of Sin is paid

Symbol - Hanging Child

Major Points

1. The SS hang two adults and one child in front of a whole concentration camp.
2. The child takes hours to die. People in the camp cry out "Where is God?" They are answered, "He's right in front of you dying!"

Spiritual Lessons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Bible Story Parallels

- A. Isaac
- B. Christ

Text John 3:16

LESSON PLAN NO. 6

Topic: Adoption Now Possible

Date: August 15, 1984 Time: 10.00 am

Learning Focus: The students will experience through narrative the accepting adoption of God which Christ's death and intercession make possible.

Learning Resources:

Stories -

Weis, Lucille. "Give Him Up," Insight, 14 April 1981, pp. 8-10.

Bragan, Jeris E. "Death Wish Part 1," Insight, 14 January 1984, pp. 6-8.

CLASS NOTES

Story - "Give Him Up"

Theme - Adoption through love

Symbol - Baby

Major Points

1.)
2.) Class fills in their own notes.
3.)

Spiritual Lessons

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Bible Story Parallels

- A.
- B.

Text Galatians 4:5

LESSON PLAN NO. 7

Topic: Fellowship Brings Change

Date: 16 August, 1984 Time: 9.20 am

Learning Focus: To show how change (obedience, sanctification) is related to our relationship with God.

Learning Resources:

Stories -

Hare, Eric B., Spalding, Arthur W. "The Hermit and the King," Christian Storytelling, Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1966, pp. 19, 20.

Bragan, Jeris E. "When Grace Strikes Part II," Insight, 21 January 1984, pp. 5-7.

CLASS NOTES

Story - "The Hermit and the King"

Theme - Fellowship brings change which brings fellowship

Symbol - Hermit

Major Points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Spiritual Lessons

- 1.
- 2.

Bible Story Parallels

- A.
- B.

Text 2 Corinthians 5:15

LESSON PLAN NO. 8

Topic: Necessity of Decision

Date: August 17, 1984 Time: 10.45 am

Learning Focus: Students to appreciate the place and importance of making a decision.

Learning Resources:

Stories -

Fredericks, Sallie. "Judgment," Insight, 20 October 1981. pp. 4, 5.

Boreham, F. W. A Bunch of Everlastings. London: Epworth Press, 1920, pp. 94-100.

Post-test, Part 1.

CLASS NOTES

Story - "Judgement"

Theme - Life is fragile. Decisions are vital.

Symbol - Train

Major Points

1. A car stalls on the train tracks. The occupant stays in the car because she fears her father. The car is hit by the train.
2. She arrives home and confesses to her father. Her father still loves her.

Spiritual Lessons

1. Life is uncertain.
2. Are we ready to die?

Bible Story Parallels

- A. John the Baptist
- B. James

Text "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ." Matthew 27:22 (middle part)

LESSON PLAN NO. 9

Topic: Post-test on Content

Date: 20 August, 1984 Time: 9.20 am

General Bible Quiz (written questions).

APPENDIX 2

PRE-TEST

APPENDIX 2

PRE-TEST

AVONDALE HIGH SCHOOL

SURVEY OF YEAR 8b

<u>SECTION A</u>	Don't Know					No
	Yes	1	2	3	4	5
I am thinking about being a Christian.		1	2	3	4	5
I must give it a lot of thought soon.		1	2	3	4	5
I am a practising Christian.		1	2	3	4	5
I don't know if I am a Christian or not.		1	2	3	4	5
I don't care about it much.		1	2	3	4	5
I don't like all this talk about the Bible.		1	2	3	4	5
I would like to be saved.		1	2	3	4	5
I can see myself in the future wanting to be baptized.		1	2	3	4	5
<u>SECTION B</u>						
1. I could explain to a stranger why he needs to be saved.		1	2	3	4	5
2. I could explain to a stranger how he could be saved.		1	2	3	4	5
3. I could explain to a stranger what happens when he is saved.		1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe God wants us to change to His way because it is for our own good.		1	2	3	4	5
5. I think God only accepts people who have stopped doing wrong.		1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C

Tick the sections which describe the present Bible lessons.

- ☐ good
- ☐ very good
- ☐ interesting
- ☐ not relevant
- ☐ doesn't affect my relationship with God
- ☐ dry
- ☐ boring
- ☐ hard to understand
- ☐ lead me more to God
- ☐ help me to understand myself
- ☐ alright
- ☐ all I expect them to be
- ☐ simple enough
- ☐ not on my wavelength
- ☐ explain the Bible clearly



APPENDIX 3
RESULTS OF PRE-TEST

APPENDIX 3

RESULTS OF PRE-TEST

KEY

R = response (+ = yes, - = no)

B = boys - maximum no. 18 (one absent)

G = girls - maximum no. 12

SECTION A

<u>SECTION A</u>		R	B	G
1.	I am thinking about being a Christian.	+1 2 3 4 -5	5 8 3 0 2	4 2 3 1 1
2.	I must give it a lot of thought soon.	+1 2 3 4 -5	2 8 6 0 1	1 6 1 1 1
3.	I am a practising Christian.	+1 2 3 4 -5	2 6 7 2 1	3 4 2 1 1
4.	I don't know if I am a Christian or not.	+1 2 3 4 -5	4 4 4 2 4	2 3 5 2 0
5.	I don't care about it much.	+1 2 3 4 -5	3 5 3 1 6	0 0 3 2 3
6.	I don't like all this talk about the Bible.	+1 2 3 4 -5	3 3 3 5 3	2 2 2 4 2

	R	B	G
7. I would like to be saved.	+1	14	12
	2	0	0
	3	1	0
	-4	0	0
	-5	2	0

	R	B	G
8. I can see myself in the future wanting to be baptized.	+1	2	3
	2	4	1
	3	4	5
	-4	0	0
(12 indicated previous baptism)	-5	2	0

SECTION B

	R	B	G
1. I could explain to a stranger why he needs to be saved.	+1	1	2
	2	6	3
	3	6	5
	-4	0	1
	-5	5	1
2. I could explain to a stranger how he could be saved.	+1	5	3
	2	2	5
	3	4	2
	-4	2	1
	-5	5	1
3. I could explain to a stranger what happens when he is saved.	+1	3	4
	2	4	5
	3	6	0
	-4	0	3
	-5	5	0
4. I believe God wants us to change to His way because it is for our own good.	+1	6	4
	2	3	4
	3	6	3
	-4	0	0
	-5	3	1
5. I think God only accepts people who have stopped doing wrong.	+1	2	0
	2	0	1
	3	1	3
	-4	1	1
	-5	14	7

SECTION C

	B	G
1. good	8	11
2. very good	0	3
3. interesting	7	6
4. not relevant	5	0
5. doesn't affect my relationship with God	4	4
6. dry	6	* 1
7. boring	6	2
8. hard to understand	5	1
9. lead me more to God	8	3
10. help me to understand myself	10	6
11. alright	13	11
12. all I expect them to be	9	6
13. simple enough	10	9
14. not on my wavelength	5	* 1
15. explain the Bible clearly	9	7
* same person		

APPENDIX 4
POST-TEST, PART 1

APPENDIX 4
POST-TEST, PART 1
AVONDALE HIGH SCHOOL
SURVEY OF YEAR 8b

SECTION 1

Tick all the sections which describe the last two weeks of Bible lessons:

- ☐ good
- ☐ dry
- ☐ alright
- ☐ very good
- ☐ boring
- ☐ all I expect them to be
- ☐ interesting
- ☐ hard to understand
- ☐ simple enough
- ☐ not relevant
- ☐ lead me more to God
- ☐ not on my wavelength
- ☐ doesn't affect my relationship with God
- ☐ help me to understand myself
- ☐ explain the Bible clearly
- ☐ I can remember some of the stories

- ___ I found them more interesting than I expected
- ___ I understood them more than most ministers' Bible lessons

SECTION 2

Yes 1 2 3 4 5 No

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I found these stories confronting me more with spiritual themes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. They have helped me think more about being a Christian. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. This series of lessons has helped me see the reality of God's love more personally. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Because God will accept me, I would like to give Him my life daily. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. These lessons have helped me to understand my relationship with God in a better way. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX 5

RESULTS OF POST-TEST, PART 1

APPENDIX 5

RESULTS OF POST-TEST, PART 1

<u>SECTION 1</u>	B	G
1. good	16	10
2. very good	12	5
3. interesting	12	10
4. not relevant	2	2
5. doesn't affect my relationship with God	5	6
6. dry	1	0
7. boring	2	1
8. hard to understand	0	0
9. lead me more to God	6	2
10. help me to understand myself	7	3
11. alright	8	8
12. all I expect them to be	3	7
13. simple enough	9	9
14. not on my wavelength	2	3
15. explain the Bible clearly	8	3
16. I can remember some of the stories	13	10
17. I found them more interesting than I expected	17	10
18. I understood them more than most minister's Bible lessons	11	8

SECTION 2

	R	B	G
1. I found these stories confronting me more with spiritual themes.	+1 2 3 4 -5	5 5 5 3 1	1 1 7 0 1
2. They helped me to think more about being a Christian.	+1 2 3 4 -5	2 8 7 1 1	1 3 5 0 2
3. This series of lessons has helped me to see the reality of God's love more personally.	+1 2 3 4 -5	1 7 10 0 1	2 5 2 0 2
4. Because God will accept me, I would like to give Him my life daily.	+1 2 3 4 -5	6 7 5 1 0	1 3 5 1 1
5. These lessons have helped me to understand my relationship with God in a better way.	+1 2 3 4 -5	4 5 9 0 1	1 5 2 0 3

APPENDIX 6
POST-TEST, PART 2

APPENDIX 6

POST-TEST, PART 2

NAME: _____

NUMBER: _____
(not compulsory)

BIBLE TEST

GRADE 8b

MARKS

- 3 1. Match the symbols with the themes:
- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Ferris wheel | A Love gives |
| 2 Fur coat | B Sin is sick |
| 3 Red cross | C We are ashamed when God gives |
- 4 2. Summarise the story of "Mr Ugly": (4 lines - approx 3 sentences).
- 3 3. What was it that brought the change in Mr Ugly's life?
- 6 4. What spiritual lessons does Lem's death in the snow (for Freddy) teach us?
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- 4 5. Describe either the relationships between
 - A. The SS and the father of the hanging boy

OR

 - B. Uncle Joe who gave blood for Johnny

(write your answer on the back of this page).
- 4 6. Sitting on the garbage dump, what thoughts raced through Tony's mind?
- 3 7. In the story "The Hermit and the King" what caused the hermit to want to change?
- 3 8. What benefits and advantages did the hermit's changes bring?
- 3 9. In the story about "The Train" what was Sally's strongest feeling?
 - a. Fear of her stepfather?
 - b. Fear of the train?

Are you more fearful of

 - a. Death?
 - b. Meeting God in the judgment?
- 4 10. Which story illustrates this text? John 15:13 (use your Bible)
- 3 11. God's total acceptance of sinners is clearly seen in which story?

APPENDIX 7
RESULTS OF POST-TEST, PART 2

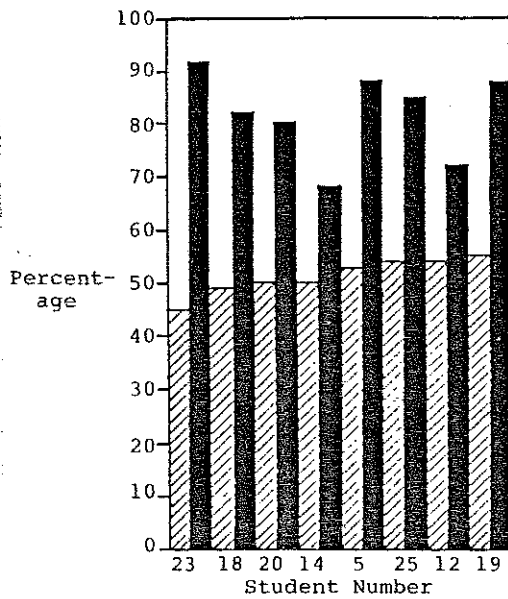
APPENDIX 7

RESULTS OF THE POST-TEST, PART 2

The results of the Post-test (Part 2) were very encouraging considering the number of stories told in the two week period. The lack of clues in the test questions and the length of time for memory both work against the possibility of good results occurring. Finally, the surprise nature of the test and the right or wrong nature of the questions would militate against the achievement of high marks by all the class. The marks range from 67%-90%. Eighty percent of the students received a mark of 80% or more.

Below are graphs of the student's numbers and results as they compare with previous Bible class results.

It is impossible to separate the influence of the storyteller's style, personality, and sex from the use of the narrative method. The present writer feels that the magnitude of improvement of some students evident in this comparison cannot merely be accounted for by these admitted differences.



Pre-test

Post-test

Fig. 20. Comparison of Bible marks Group One

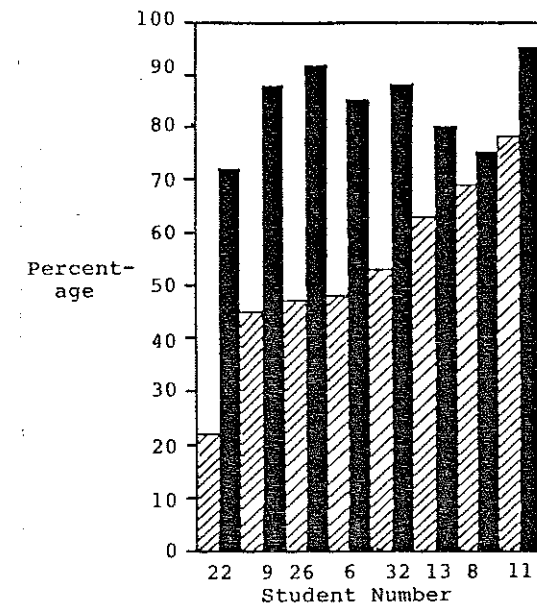
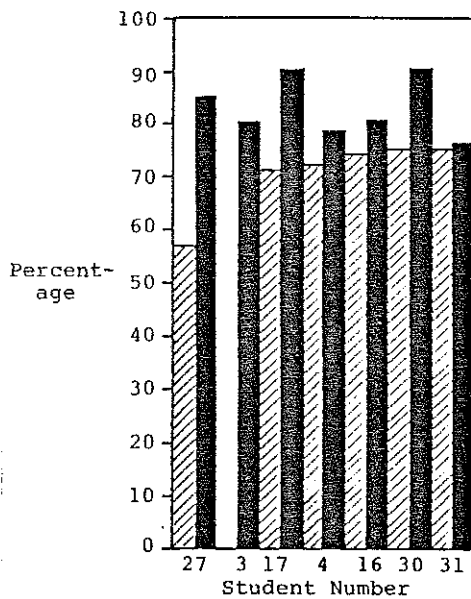


Fig. 21. Comparison of Bible marks Group Two



Pre-test

Post-test

Fig. 22. Comparison of Bible marks Group Three

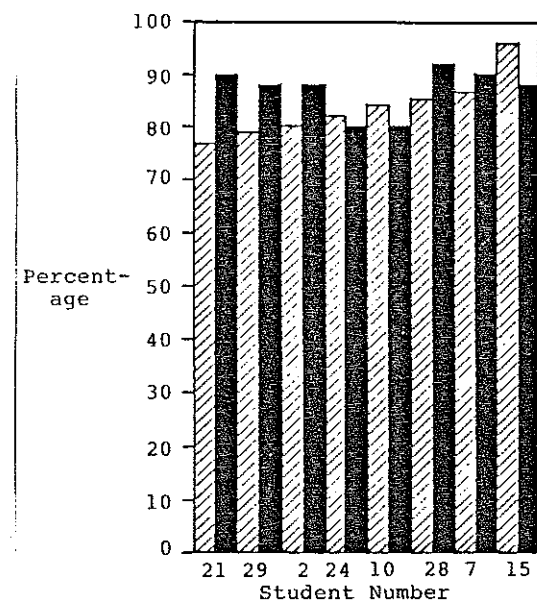


Fig. 23. Comparison of Bible marks Group Four

The following gives the facts upon which the above graphs have been based.

Student No.	Raw Score	Expressed as Percentage	Previous Bible Percentage	Percentage Difference
* 23	29	72	24	48
* 20	37	92	47	45
22	37	92	45	45
* 18	35	88	45	43
* 14	34	85	48	37
32	35	88	53	35
* 5	35	88	53	35
11	35	88	55	33
9	33	82	49	33
13	34	85	54	31
26	32	80	50	30
27	34	85	57	28
17	36	90	71	19
8	29	72	54	18
6	27	68	50	18
* 25	32	80	63	17
* 19	38	95	78	17
30	36	90	75	15
21	36	90	77	13
29	35	88	79	9
2	35	88	80	8
28	37	92	85	7
16	32	80	74	6

Student No.	Raw Score	Expressed as Percentage	Previous Bible Percentage	Percentage Difference
4	31	78	72	6
* 12	30	75	69	6
7	36	90	87	3
3	32	80	-	-
31	30	75	76	-1
24	32	80	82	-2
10	32	80	84	-4
15	35	88	96	-8

*Those student numbers asterisked comprise Group One discussed extensively in the next Appendix.

An Analysis of How Students Scored
in Each Question

The following analysis shows the distribution of marks given to the students for each question.

NO. OF STUDENTS	SCORE	NO. OF STUDENTS	SCORE
Question 1 -		Question 2 -	
15	3	28	4
10	1	2	3.5
6	0	1	3
Question 3 -		Question 4 -	
20	3	12	6
1	2.5	2	5.5
4	2	8	5
4	1.5	3	4
2	1	1	4.5
		1	3
		4	2

NO. OF STUDENTS	SCORE
Question 5 - 6	4
5	3.5
11	3
1	2.5
6	2
1	1
1	0

Question 7 - 27	3
1	2.5
2	2
1	1.5

Question 9 - 21	3
4	2.5
5	2
1	1.5

Question 11 - 17	3
1	2.5
9	2
2	1
2	0

NO. OF STUDENTS	SCORE
Question 6 - 18	4
2	3.5
2	3
7	2
2	0

Question 8 - 22	3
2	2.5
6	2
1	1

Question 10 - 28	4
1	1
2	0

Summary

Those who scored highly did consistently well in Question 1. In Questions 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 all the class

answered well while Question 5 was answered poorly. The unusual change to high marks in Group One indicated they excel in concrete thinking.

A COMPARISON OF BIBLE MARKS

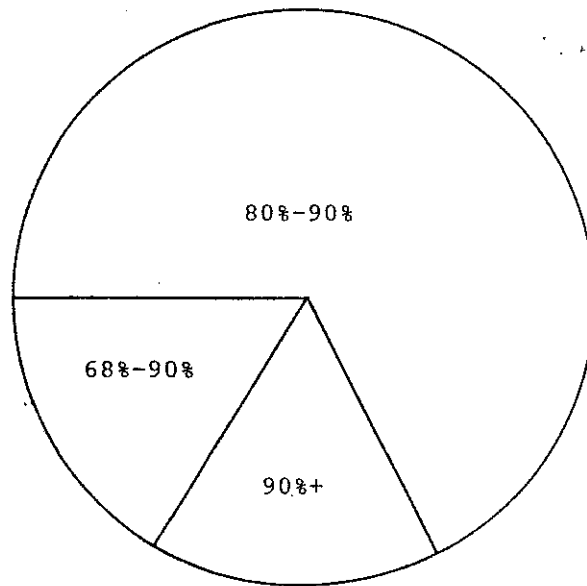


Fig. 24. Percentage of distribution of marks for the Post-test (Part 2)

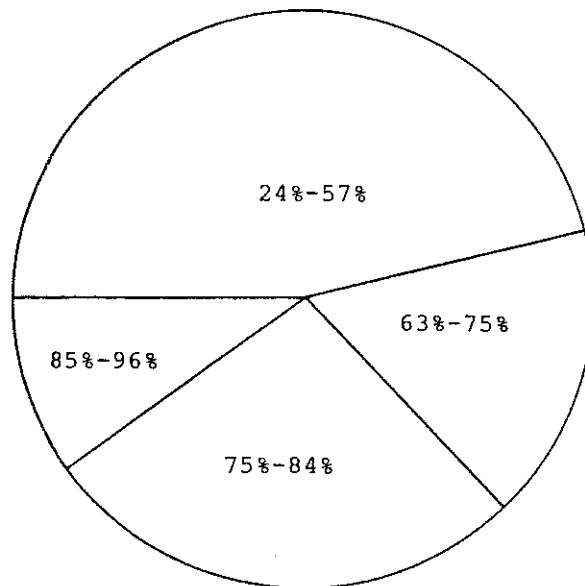


Fig. 25. Percentage distribution for the regular Bible marks

APPENDIX 8
AN ANALYSIS OF EIGHT STUDENTS

APPENDIX 8

AN ANALYSIS OF EIGHT STUDENTS

Group Divisions

The Pre-test revealed five boys and one girl who found the regular Bible lessons "hard to understand." This minority also expressed similar negative attitudes to the regular Bible lessons (for example, "dry" and "boring"). An analysis of the Pre-test showed that this group dominated the cluster of negative responses. There was some evidence, therefore, that student understanding and interest were closely related.

Four of the above six did not see themselves as practicing Christians and the remaining two did not know. Two others (a boy and a girl) were also unsure if they were Christians. Their responses to the regular lessons were that they were "dry" and "boring." While their interest level and commitment response was not linked with a difficulty in comprehension they were included with the other six. Together these eight were placed in Group One. Four of the eight had at least one non-Adventist parent while one is not an Adventist the remaining 23 students were divided into three groups. Group Two were selected on the basis of their previously

low Bible mark (45%-55%). Group Three were selected using the same criteria. This group had only seven students (57%-76%). Group Four were those who had scored extremely well in previous Bible lessons and who had also made significant unsolicited comments about the project's effectiveness. Two qualifications should be especially noted. First, Number 8's Post-test (Part 1) was mislaid prior to graphing. Secondly, Number 3 has been placed in group three not on the basis of a previous Bible mark (there was none) but because his responses follow a similar pattern to this group.

An Analysis of Group One

Interest

The following figures show the interest responses of these eight students to the Pre-test and Post-test.

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST (PART 1) RESPONSES

KEY: A = PRE-TEST B = POST-TEST (PART 1)

	SEX	M	F	M	M	M	F	M	M
STUDENT NO.	23	18	20	14	5	25	12	19	
Good	--	AB	-B	AB	-B	AB	-B	-B	
Very Good	--	AB	-B	-B	-B	A-	-B	--	
Interesting	-B	AB	-B	-B	-B	AB	AB	AB	
Not Relevant	--	--	A-	--	A-	--	--	A-	
Doesn't Affect My Relationship With God	--	-B	AB	--	A-	AB	A-	--	
Dry	--	A-	A-	A-	A-	--	--	A-	
Boring	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	--	A-	A-	
Hard to Understand	A-	--	A-	--	A-	A-	A-	A-	
Lead Me More to God	--	AB	--	--	-B	--	-B	--	
Help Me U'stand Myself	-B	AB	-B	AB	--	--	-B	--	
Alright	-B	AB	AB	AB	A-	AB	--	A-	
All I Expect Them to Be	--	A-	A-	-B	--	-B	A-	--	
Simple Enough	-B	AB	A-	AB	-B	-B	-B	A-	
Not on my Wavelength	A-	--	AB	--	A-	-B	A-	--	
Explain Bible Clearly	--	AB	--	A-	-B	A-	-B	-B	
I Can Remember Some of the Stories	--	-B	--	-B	--	-B	-B	--	
More Interesting Than Expected	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	
I Understood Them More Than Most Ministers' Bible Classes	-	B	B	B	B	-	B	B	

Fig. 26.

¹These are the only repeated negative responses.²Three days later they remembered the stories.

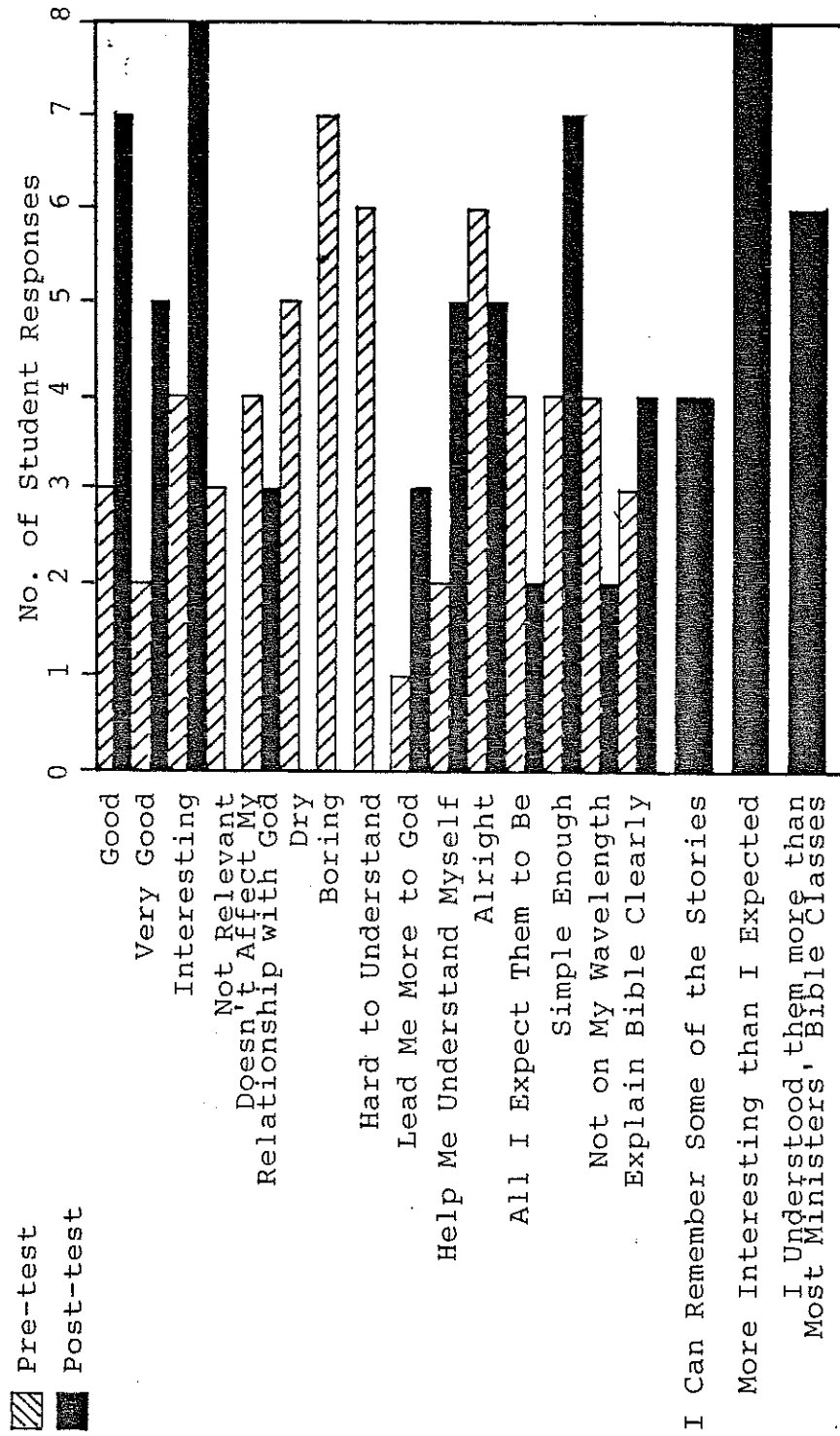


Fig. 27. Pre-test and Post-test (Part 1) responses -- Group One

From the above figure it is clear how this group dominated the following negative responses in the Pre-test:

7 responses out of 8 - "boring"

6 responses out of 6 - "hard to understand"

5 responses out of 8 - "dry"

3 responses out of 4 - "not relevant"

Only one other student (Number 2) had more than one of the above negative response but her commitment to Christ was very positive.

Comprehension

An examination of Group One, asterisked in the previous appendix, reveals the marked improvement in their Bible test results. Five from Group One are in the top seven students who have dramatically improved their Bible mark. The previous class average for their group was 51% compared with 84% for this Bible test.

The class teacher registered surprise at the high result of Numbers 5, 18, and 20. These students comprised three of the top four students registering at least a 43% improvement. A further eight students also dramatically improved their usual Bible mark. Even a subtraction of 20% to allow for differences in marking leniency (the reduction would fail the bottom student) does not seem to account for the unique improvement of this group. It may be coincidental, but interesting to

note that both Numbers 5 and 20 have a non-Adventist father.

If Goldman is correct in saying that those who are backward in religion are more likely to be thinking in concrete forms then the manner in which Narrative reached Group One can be easily explained.

Comparison of Willingness for Commitment

Six of these eight students signified that they were not "practising Christians" while the remaining two "didn't know."

The student responses in the Pre-test to Question 3 "I am a practicing Christian" are compared below with the responses to Question 4 in the Post-test, "Because God will accept me, I would like to give him my life daily."

	STUDENT NUMBER	PRE-TEST RESPONSE	POST-TEST RESPONSE
GROUP ONE	23*	5	3
	18*	5	3
	20	3	3
	14*	4	2
	5*	3	1
	25	5	5
	12	5	4
	19*	4	2

	STUDENT NUMBER	PRE-TEST RESPONSE	POST-TEST RESPONSE
GROUP TWO	22	2	2
	9	3	3
	26	2	2
	6	3	3
	32	1	3
	13	3	2
	8	1	-
	11*	3	1
GROUP THREE	27	2	3
	3	3	2.5
	17	2	1
	4	2	2
	16	1	3
	30	2	2
	31	1	1
GROUP FOUR	21	1	1
	29	2	1
	2	2	2
	24	3	3
	10	3	3
	28	2	1
	7	4	4
	15	2	2

*Signifies a movement towards a willingness for commitment of two response points.

While a statistician may quibble over the dissimilarities of these two questions, the writer feels that the adolescent would understand the ingredient of commitment in both questions. The major differences coming in the bottom level students does reveal the relationship of interest, comprehension, and commitment argued in this appendix. The chance of guessing the six results is highly unlikely (less than one in 700 million.)

Summary

Narrative has demonstrated its effectiveness in reaching those backward in religion by raising their interest, comprehension, and commitment toward God. It is surely this very group that the church should be considering in its ministry.

The resulting relationship between interest, commitment, and comprehension is envisaged by the writer in the following form.

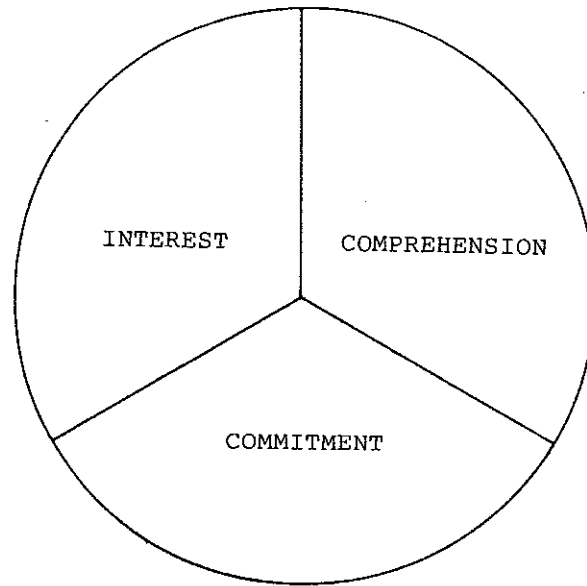


Fig. 28. Related factors in the dynamics of religious education

Each of the three components mentioned above is seen as being necessary for effective religious education. Several students analysed seem to have had interest and comprehension without commitment eg. Groups One (No.s 14, and 18) and Four (No. 7). There was also a girl (No. 2) who possessed a strong commitment to Christ yet found both teaching methods boring. She seemed to have little difficulty comprehending, but her interest was not aroused.

Group One has been formed mainly to include those students lacking all three. The writer feels that the

success of narrative for this group was due to its arousal of interest combined with it being a readily comprehensible medium. While interest has increased markedly for this group the more startling statistic is the complete reduction of "hard to understand" responses. This response had been unique to Group One. The writer believes these two factors are major determinants for raising the willingness of commitment to God exhibited by some students from Group One.

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST (PART 1) RESPONSES
GROUP TWO

KEY: A = PRE-TEST B = POST-TEST (PART 1)

SEX	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M
STUDENT NO.	22	9	26	6	32	13	8	11
Good	AB	--	AB	AB	AB	-B	A-	AB
Very Good	-B	--	--	-B	-B	-B	--	-B
Interesting	AB	-B	A-	-B	AB	-B	A-	-B
Not Relevant	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Doesn't Affect My Relationship With God	--	A-	-B	--	A-	--	A-	--
Dry	--	A-	--	--	--	--	--	--
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hard to Understand	-B	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Lead Me More to God	A-	--	AB	AB	--	A-	--	A-
Help Me U'stand Myself	--	--	A-	A-	--	AB	A-	A-
Alright	A-	AB	AB	--	AB	A-	--	AB
All I Expect Them to Be	--	--	A-	A-	AB	--	A-	--
Simple Enough	AB	--	AB	A-	AB	--	--	AB
Not on my Wavelength	A-	--	--	--	-B	--	--	--
Explain Bible Clearly	--	--	-B	-B	-B	--	A-	--
I Can Remember Some of the Stories	-B	--	-B	--	--	-B	--	-B
More Interesting Than Expected	-B	--	-B	-B	--	-B	--	-B
I Understood Them More Than Most Ministers' Bible Classes	-B	--	-B	--	-B	-B	--	--
I am a Practising Christian	--	DK	--	DK	--	DK	--	DK

Fig. 29.

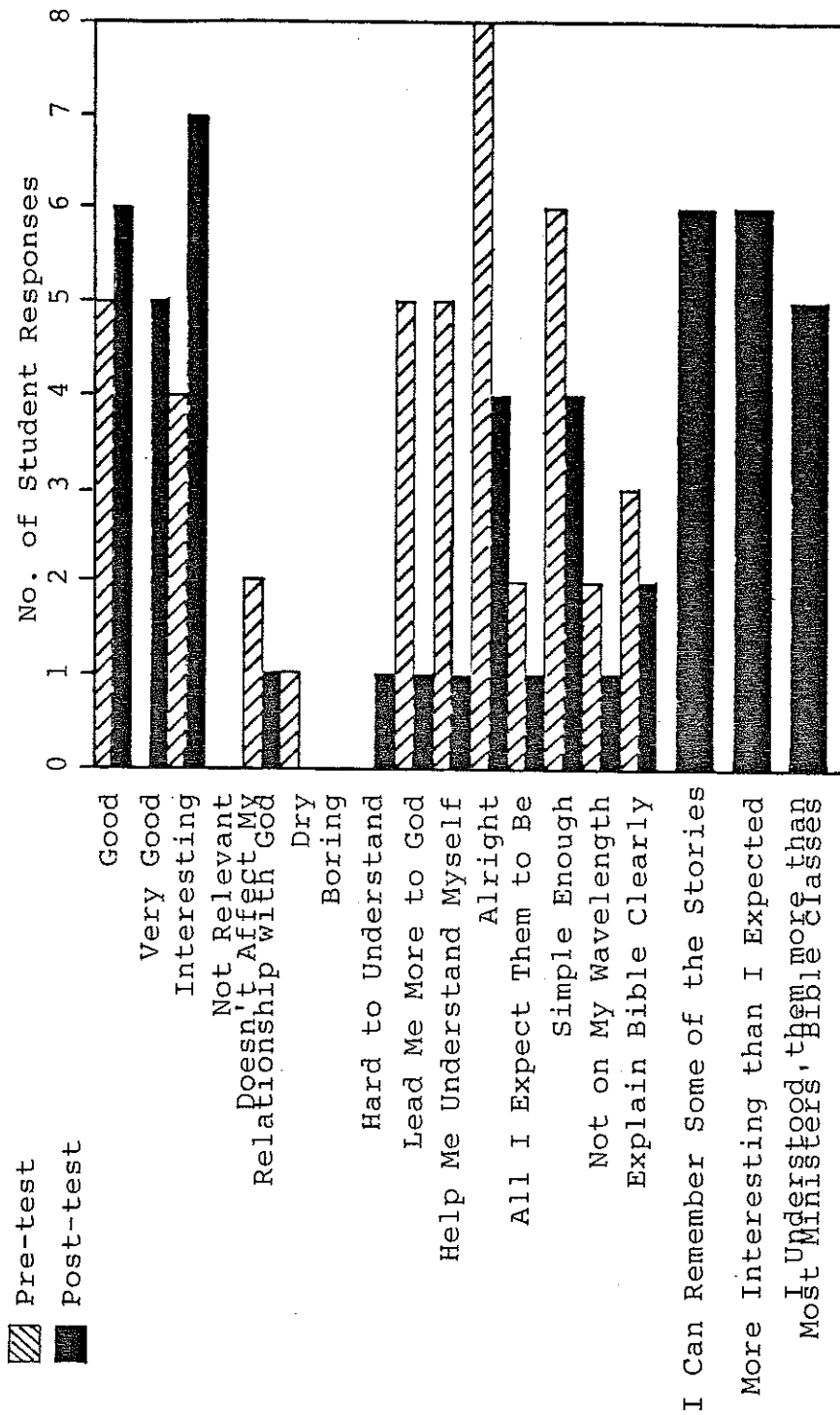


Fig. 30. Pre-test and Post-test (Part 1) responses -- Group Two

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST (PART 1) RESPONSES
GROUP THREE

KEY: A = PRE-TEST B = POST-TEST (PART 1)

	SEX	M	M	F	M	F	F	M
STUDENT NO.	27	3	17	4	16	30	31	
Good	AB	-B	AB	AB	AB	AB	AB	
Very Good	-B	-B	--	AB	-B	--	--	
Interesting	AB	AB	-B	-B	AB	AB	--	
Not Relevant	--	--	--	--	--	--	A-	
Doesn't Affect My Relationship With God	--	--	--	--	--	--	-B	
Dry	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	-B	
Hard to Understand	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Lead Me More to God	--	AB	A-	AB	A-	-B	A-	
Help Me U'stand Myself	A-	A-	A-	AB	AB	A-	A-	
Alright	A-	-B	A-	--	--	AB	AB	
All I Expect Them to Be	--	AB	--	--	--	--	AB	
Simple Enough	A-	--	A-	--	--	AB	AB	
Not on my Wavelength	--	--	A-	--	--	--	--	
Explain Bible Clearly	A-	AB	--	AB	A-	A-	A-	
I Can Remember Some of the Stories	-B	-B	-B	-B	-B	-B	-B	
More Interesting Than Expected	-B	-B	-B	-B	-B	-B	-B	
I Understood Them More Than Most Ministers' Bible Classes	-B	-B	--	-B	-B	--	--	

Fig. 31.

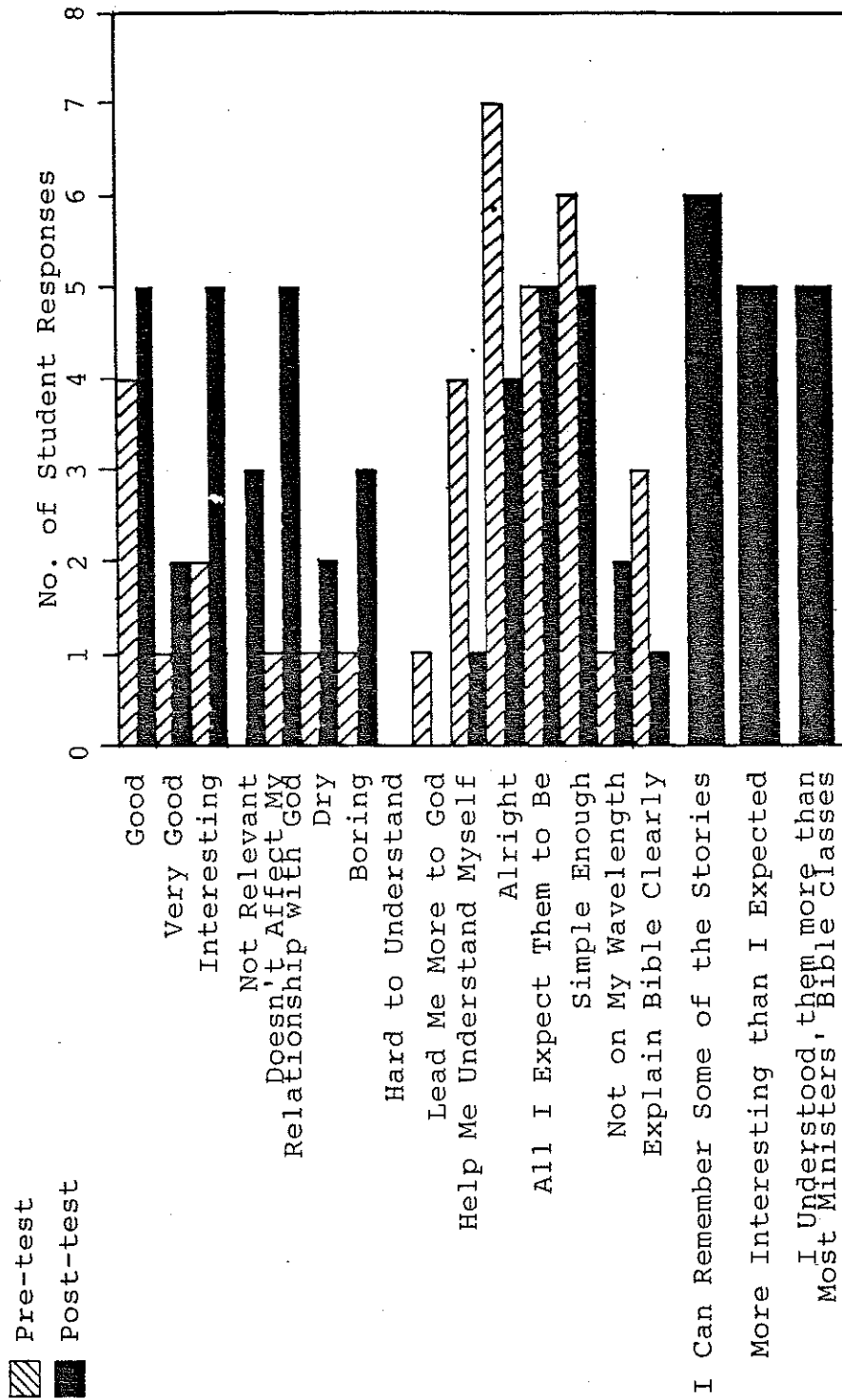


Fig. 32. Pre-test and Post-test (Part 1) responses -- Group Three

PRE-TEST AND POST (PART 1) RESPONSES
GROUP FOUR

KEY: A = PRE-TEST B = POST-TEST (PART 1)

	SEX	F	M	F	F	F	M	F*	F
STUDENT NO.	21	29	2	24	10	28	7	15	
Good	-B	-B	AB	-B	AB	--	A-	AB	
Very Good	-B	-B	A-	AB	AB	AB	AB	-B	
Interesting	AB	-B	-B	-B	AB	--	--	--	
Not Relevant	--	--	--	--	-B	-B	-B	--	
Doesn't Affect My Relationship With God	--	-B	-B	-B	-B	-B	AB	--	
Dry	--	A-	A-	--	--	-B	-B	--	
Boring	--	--	AB	--	--	-B	-B	--	
Hard to Understand	A-	--	--	A-	--	--	--	--	
Lead Me More to God	--	--	--	A-	--	A-	--	--	
Help Me U'stand Myself	-B	--	--	A-	A-	A-	--	--	
Alright	A-	A-	AB	AB	A-	A-	AB	AB	
All I Expect Them to Be	-B	--	A-	-B	AB	A-	AB	-B	
Simple Enough	-B	--	AB	AB	AB	A-	A-	AB	
Not on my Wavelength	--	--	--	--	--	-B	AB	--	
Explain Bible Clearly	-B	-B	A-	--	A-	--	--	--	
I Can Remember Some of the Stories	B	B	B	B	B	-	-	B	
More Interesting Than Expected	B	B	B	B	B	-	-	B	
I Understood Them More Than Most Ministers' Bible Classes	B	B	B	B	B	-	-	B	

*Indicated she was not a practising Christian.

Fig. 33.

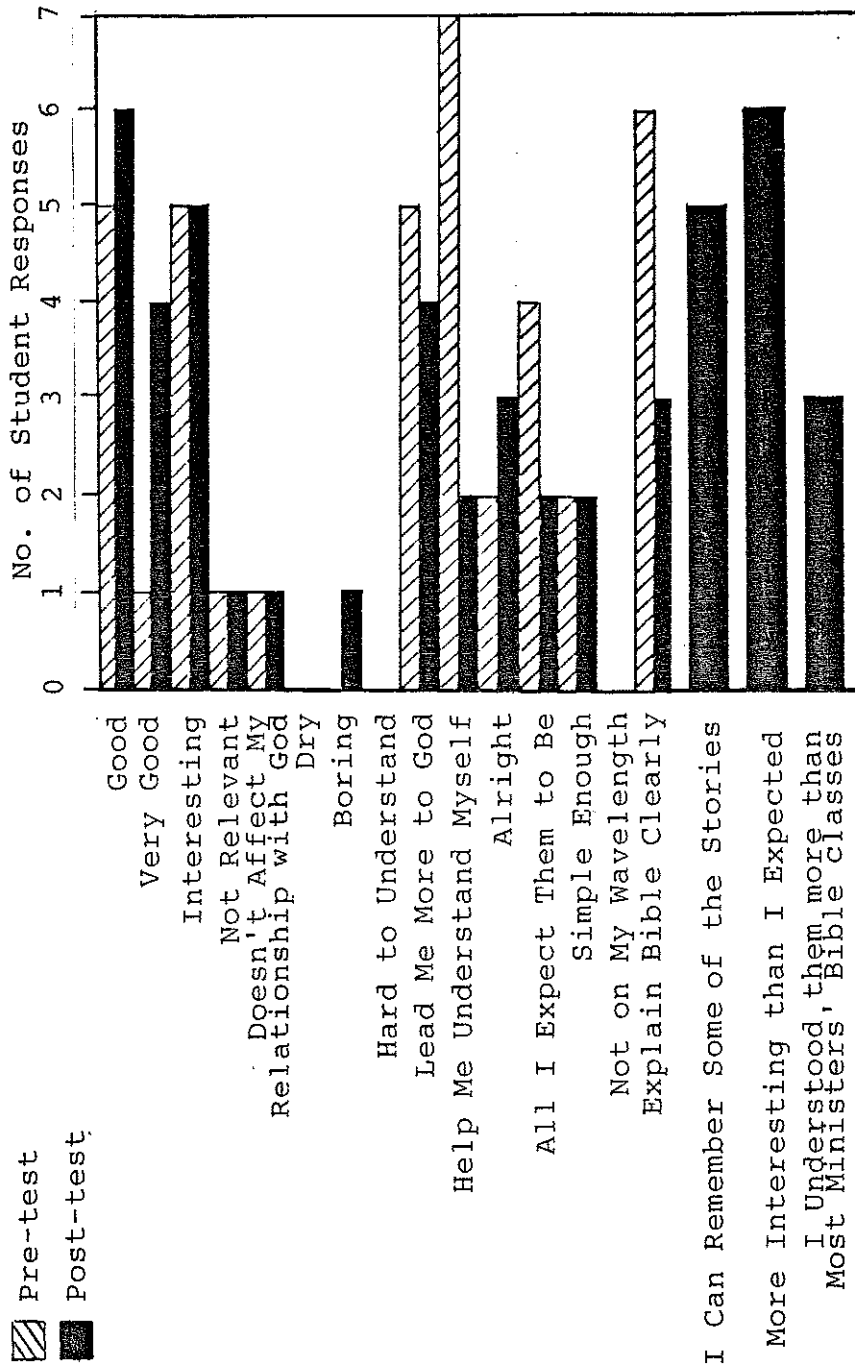


Fig. 34. Pre-test and Post-test (Part 1) responses -- Group Four

APPENDIX 9

VOLUNTARY RESPONSES TO THE PROJECT

APPENDIX 9

VOLUNTARY RESPONSES TO THE PROJECT

Comments were invited from the students at the end of Post-test, part 1, for a record of any other ideas or feelings they had about the narrative teaching. No more than one third responded. The laxity of discipline probably was a predominating influence on these responses:

Negative Comments:

- Boys No. 28 "The lessons seemed empty."
31 Ticked the boring square.
- Girls No. 21 "It is good for a little while but you would have to change every now and then."
7 "I think that if you were teaching a class and you had the same sort of thing every day it gets very boring. e.g. 2 stories, then writing every day."

Positive Comments:

- Boys No. 5, 20, 27 "An unreal teacher"
6 "Your a top teacher"
3 "I wouldn't mind having you as a permanent teacher"
- Girls No. 15 "The stories are a lot better than the Bible textbook."

- 18 "Heaps better than any other Bible teacher because your lessons were really interesting."
- 30 "The lessons were easy to understand and they were not boring."

APPENDIX 10
SELECTED REACTION SHEET RESULTS

APPENDIX 10

SELECTED REACTION SHEET RESULTS

NUMBER 1:

The reactions were quite similar. The girls dominated the feeling "sorry" in response to Question 1. No. 28 had a very different answer to everyone else's empathy or anger. "It makes me angry that he hasn't gone to great measures to reduce his fatness. It is his own fault that people laugh at him." Is this student's hostility, with other's failings, due to family pressures? We can only speculate.

NUMBER 2:

The diverse answers to Question 3 show how narrative teaches at a personalized level and at the stage of each individual's spiritual development. These answers reveal much about the student's present spiritual positions.

GIRLS

Q3. List some spiritual parallels between this story and mankind's relationship to God.

10. We would be close to God and then someone comes in and pulls us away from God. Like that lady gave the girl a present she didn't deserve like God gives us eternal life which we don't deserve.

17. Mankind is not very nice to God and then when God does something really nice, our attitude changes towards God.

30. Hosea and Gopha[sic]. Gopha didn't want to love Hosea anymore and she went and did her own thing. But eventually she turned back to Hosea.

21. God like the old lady loves us no matter how bad we are. Just like the old lady loved the girl even though the girl hated her.

16. If we get in trouble we blame it on God and then we sometimes get further from God when He still loves us.

15. He gives us the best even when we treat Him terribly.

24. We only like God on the outside, not the inside.

2. Sorry, because we are always sinning. We are always doing wrong.

25. Some people hate God like Chris hated the old woman.

32. Don't say anything bad about people to other people.

7.

19. They don't take any notice toward God and when God does something good to you, you feel bad.

BOYS

29. We are bad, but God gives us gifts that we don't deserve.

26. You meant a relationship with God but He loves us so much that he died on the cross so we could have eternal life.

13. That God loves us and we take it for granted.

14. We don't listen but he loves us anyway.

9. We don't do much for God but He does more than we deserve.

31. God loves us no matter who we are and what we do.

27. God loves us no matter what we are like.

- 4. The fur coat represents our reward in heaven.
- 5. That God can always hear what we say.
- 28. All men mightn't love God, but God loves all men.
- 12. Whatever you do, He still loves you.
- 8. A big relationship.
- ?. Dunno.
- 20. Can't answer.
- 22.
- 6.

NUMBER 3:

I have selected some of the spiritual answers to Question 5 as representative of the class. Some from the seven previously analyzed appear as well as some whose response to this project was negative. The questions in this reaction sheet endeavour to lead the students via the narrative, to a personal commitment to Christ. Number 27 shows definite movement when compared with his responses in the pre-test.

Because God has already accepted you, as you are, describe your attitude to Him:

GIRLS

- 15. I believe in Him and accept his love and love Him.
- 2. God is a great friend.
- 25. Loving, caring, kind, gentle person.
- 18. That He was caring and kind.
- 7. At the moment I don't know. I think I'll wait until I get older.

BOYS

27. If God can accept anyone I can sure accept Him.
3. I'm glad God loves me.
26. You should do good for Him and help others.
6. I think He is even a better bloke.
13. God accepts us no matter what we look like.
19. The best person in the world
5. You love Him very much.
28. Love.



APPENDIX 11
DAILY SCHEDULE

APPENDIX 11

DAILY SCHEDULE

DATE	DAY	TIME	TOPIC
3	Fri	10.45 a.m.	Administered Pre-test
6	Mon	8.40 a.m.	"Sin is Sick"
7	Tues	10.00 a.m.	"Sin Hurts God's Love"
8	Wed		SPORTS CARNIVAL - NO CLASSES
9	Thurs	9.20 a.m.	"Acceptance Without Strings"
10	Fri		SKIP-FOR-HEART - NO CLASSES
13	Mon	8.40 a.m.	"The Cost of Love"
14	Tues	10.00 a.m.	"Innocency Died Yet Still Loved"
15	Wed	10.00 a.m.	"Adoption Now Possible"
16	Thurs	9.20 a.m.	"Fellowship Brings Change"
17	Fri	10.45 a.m.	"Decisions are Necessary" Post-test (Part 1)
20	Mon	9.20 a.m.	Post-test (Part 2) and Quiz

APPENDIX 12

LETTER TO THE HEADMASTER

APPENDIX 12

THANK YOU LETTER TO HEADMASTER

23 Lindfield Avenue,
COORANBONG. N.S.W. 2265

4 October, 1984

Dear Pastor Krause,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Avondale High School for their helpfulness and co-operation with my Master's project.

The time spent teaching Grade 8b has been both challenging and profitable. It would be true to say that the level of spiritual understanding in this class pleasantly surprised me.

I would especially like to thank Mrs Cracknell for her counsel in helping prepare my ministry for these teenagers.

Thank you for making this project possible.

Yours faithfully,

Pastor Murray House

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