

Beginner

Bible Study Guide

A Sabbath School Bible Study Guide for Beginner Children
GraceLink® Sabbath School Curriculum

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Year B, First Quarter

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A Publication of the Sabbath School/Personal Ministries Department

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Beginner Bible Study Guide (ISSN 1538-4861). Vol. 43, No. 1, First Quarter 2019. Published four times per year, mailed quarterly spring, summer, fall, and winter for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists® by the Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687, U.S.A. © 2019 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®. All rights reserved. No part of the *Beginner Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* may be edited, altered, modified, adapted, translated, reproduced or published by any person or entity without prior written authorization from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®. The division offices of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists® are authorized to arrange for translation of the *Beginner Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, under specific guidelines. Copyright of such translations and their publication shall remain with the General Conference. "Seventh-day Adventist," "Adventist" and the flame logo are registered trademarks of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists® and may not be used without prior authorization from the General Conference, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600, U.S.A. Art copyrighted © 2002 by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Beginner Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, Pacific Press® Publishing Association, P.O. Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653-5353. Periodicals postage paid at P.O. Box 5353, Nampa ID 83653-5353. Single copy, US\$10.99 plus postage. One year, United States: US\$27.60; Canada and foreign: US\$34.60. Prices subject to change without notice.

Printed in U.S.A.

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Basic Needs of Children*

All children have certain basic needs as well as needs that are specific to their age and stage of development. The basic needs of children are . . .

Physical

- Food
- Warmth
- Shelter

Mental

- Power—to make choices and follow plans

Emotional

- A sense of belonging
- Approval and recognition
- Expressions of unconditional love and acceptance
- Freedom within defined boundaries
- Humor—a chance to laugh

Spiritual

- An all-knowing, loving, caring God
- Forgiveness of wrongs and a chance to start over
- Assurance of acceptance with God
- Experience in prayer, answers to prayer
- A chance to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God

The Beginner Child

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church the GraceLink curriculum for beginners targets children ages birth through 2 years. However, both the beginner and the kindergarten materials are adaptable to 3-year-olds.

A general rule applying to the beginner child is: seat children so their feet easily touch the ground. For children under 18 months use walkers (without wheels).

To better understand beginner children, ages birth through 2 years, it is helpful to note characteristics of their growth and development.

Physical

- Vary greatly in their physical development
- Are growing rapidly
- Tire easily
- Cannot sit still for long

Mental

- Have an attention span of only one or two minutes
- Learn by active involvement and imitation rather than by instruction
- Learn best one ministep at a time
- Focus attention on what they see and/or touch

Emotional

- Are extremely egocentric—centered in themselves
- Fear separation from parents
- Cry easily; one crying child sets other children crying
- Express their needs by crying. The crying usually stops when needs are met.
- Become attached to adults who show love and acceptance of them

Spiritual

- Sense attitudes of respect, joy, and anticipation in connection with church, the Bible, and Jesus
- Can identify pictures of Jesus and lip His name
- Will fold hands (briefly) for the blessing before meals and kneel (again briefly) for prayer

Developmental Needs

In addition to the basic needs listed earlier, 2-year-olds need to experience:

- Power—to have a chance to manipulate objects, events, people
- Freedom—to make choices, to interact in learning situations, to sometimes move about at will
- Independence—to do some things unaided
- Security—to feel safe

**Children's Ministries: Ideas and Techniques That Work*, ed. Ann Calkins (Lincoln, Nebr.: AdventSource, 1997).

A Letter to Parents

Dear Friends,

The three lessons in this Bible study guide focus on serving others, Jesus' unconditional love, and joyful worship. Activities in the Do and Say section at the end of each lesson teach and reinforce these three important concepts.

We encourage you to study the options and try some of these activities as a part of your family worship. Involve your young child in worship now, and you will foster a love for Jesus and His Word that will last. Sing songs of praise and share meaningful scripture. Read together from books such as *A Child's Steps to Jesus* series for young children.

Make the time—take the time—to worship with your child every day. Years from now you'll be glad you did.

Our prayer is that these lessons will bring joy and peace to you and your child. Let us pray for one another as we work together to lead our little ones to Christ.

**Cordially,
The Editors**