

Teachers Notes

In addition to this Teacher's Manual and the Resource Notebook which accompanies it, you will need to purchase *The Visual Bible—Matthew* videos or DVD (available through us or through your local Christian bookstore or several internet sources). When the teacher's notes say, "Show Matthew 2:1-12," for example, it means you will have to locate that segment on the video or DVD that contains that passage. Each video tape is marked according to what passages it covers, so you'll need to use an NIV translation to help you locate the passages.

I encourage you to watch the entire video in these coming weeks—you'll be blessed! Also, consider purchasing *In the Footsteps of Jesus* by Bruce Marchiano, which is also available in audiocassette form. The book will give you even greater appreciation for the videos.

Most lessons have 4 components: Attention Getter, Bible Lesson, Application Activities and Closing. You'll also find a Supplies Check List at the end of each lesson, to help you check to see that you've gathered everything the lesson suggests. The Attention Getter is designed to prepare students for the lesson, often through a game or interactive activity. The Bible Lesson shares the passage of scripture from the video, and gives basic explanation of the passage. Application Activities are designed to help students see how the Bible story relates to their day-to-day lives, and often includes activities where students can immediately respond to what they have heard. The Closing wraps up the class, often in prayer.

As you look over each lesson, you can decide if you want to do all the options, or pick those that will work best with your group. Sometimes, you'll find activity options for higher or lower functioning students; other times, the options are just different approaches. If your class has a mix of higher and lower functioning students (which is very likely), you'll want to choose the activity that you think would work best for the majority of students. If you have enough helpers, you could have some students doing the activity designed for higher functioning students while others do activities for lower functioning students. In either case, it will generally work best if you have one helper for every two students, and if you are free to oversee activities rather than needing to assist two students yourself.

The portions of the text that are in **bold** are designed as suggested scripting for you. Ideally, you'll be familiar enough with the material that you can use your own words, but this is possible phrasing. The lighter print material is instructions for you. Phrases in parentheses are intended students' responses, the answers we're assuming your students will give you. Information in boxes throughout the lessons is generally explanation about why the lesson is written as is, or is instruction about advance preparation you'll need to do for the lesson. You'll find that you'll need to read the lesson plan about a week before you plan to teach it, because often you'll need to gather supplies, prepare visuals or make copies of handouts. If you wait till the night before, you may not be able to include all the parts of the lesson.

You'll probably notice in several places that we've omitted some of the story details. This is not an oversight, but an intentional decision to simplify things in order to keep students from getting distracted by more complex details or concepts. Although you certainly may have a few students who could handle more details, the lessons were written with those would be considered "moderately mentally disabled" in mind, and our desire has been to present truth as clearly and simply as possible.

Several reviews are planned into the lessons. Often, the review lesson follows a different format than the rest of the lessons. Just a reminder—it could be particularly difficult for students with autism on weeks when your schedule is different than usual. They tend to thrive in settings where they know what will happen next, and a break in the routine can

be very upsetting to them. Try to give them advance warning that the following week will be a little different, perhaps even calling their home during the week to speak with a parent or staff member about these changes. If at all possible, have a helper available to assist those students with autism, should they need to go for a walk or have some time and space to get themselves together.

Generally, lesson plans are designed to fill an hour of class time. If you're doing music or snacks as well, you may find you don't have time to complete a lesson within your time frame. Be aware that several lessons are designed for use around holidays, so if you spend an extra week on a lesson, you might need to temporarily skip over another lesson in order to be teaching the stories that coordinate with a holiday at the actual holiday. Lessons within each unit build on each other and are designed to be taught sequentially. Most units stand alone, and so you could re-arrange the order of the units without great difficulty. However, throughout the year, you are building on things taught earlier. So you may find it best to teach through the lessons in the order they are given.

The Resource Notebook has supplementary visuals and classroom handouts. If your class is larger, you may find the visuals too small to use as they are. You can copy them onto an overhead transparency and use them that way. Some of the visuals are designed to be cut in half, or even into smaller pieces. If you make a copy of the original and cut the copy, you'll be able to keep your masters intact for future use. You have permission to make copies of the resources for use within your classroom settings. Feel free to make occasional copies of pages of this text if you'd like your helpers to be involved in different parts of the lesson. If you want a second copy of the teacher's manual to share with a co-teacher, you can purchase just the manual (without the supplementary resources) from us at a reduced price.

Underlying Theological/Philosophical Base:

I believe very strongly that God has made it possible for everyone to come into relationship with Himself. **Spiritual things are not understood through intellectual ability, but as the Holy Spirit opens**

our hearts to Jesus. I believe individuals with cognitive disabilities not only can come to faith in Christ, but can have a growing relationship with Him. I believe these individuals can exhibit both the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. In other words, **there are no second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God!** The people you teach are as important to Jesus as the elders of your congregation! He is as concerned about their needs and their spiritual health as He is concerned about any other member of your fellowship. That is why we seek to deal with the basic issues of Christian growth in this curriculum. Over and over, in these lessons, you'll touch on the recurring themes of **salvation, prayer, worship, witnessing, obedience and service.** These seem to be areas in which adults with developmental disabilities can excel as they grow in Christ. You have a significant responsibility as the teacher of this class!

Perhaps many in your church view your students differently than you do. **Look for opportunities to be an advocate on behalf of your students.** If your congregation sets limits on your students, they will be unable to experience all that God has for them in the days ahead. For example, God might want to use some of your students to pray for people in your congregation, or to serve the Body in a variety of ways. But if your church sees your students only as needy people who need their help, they will not be open to receiving from your students. So, you'll see **several times in these lessons, I've planned interaction between your students and others in the church.** This is intentional!

This series also includes a **missions project** for your class: Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse. It's important that students give as well as receive, particularly at the Christmas season. It can also help your church body to have a more balanced perspective on your students if they see them reaching out tangibly. If you'd like to participate in this particular project, you'll find the contact information in Lesson 12, but you'll need to contact Samaritan's Purse prior to that week, in order to get their brochures and video. Or you may want to substitute another project in which your church is already involved.

I'm praying that walls will come down...that as your congregation becomes more comfortable with your students, they will begin to value

them as individuals, as Jesus does. *I long for the day when individuals with developmental disabilities are not on the sidelines of our congregations, but when they are involved in significant, healthy ways!* Ideally, your students, although perhaps "segregated" in your class, need to be "integrated" into the Body life for worship, fellowship and service.

May God richly bless you as you seek to share God's love and truth with your students! May you see your students move beyond limits toward spiritual maturity.

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