

Biblical Worldview Scope for *Reading 1 and Phonics & English 1*

This document is our attempt to answer the question, “What must a student understand and value in order to comprehend first grade reading, phonics, and English grammar from a biblical worldview?” What follows is a list of the themes that we believe are essential for first grade students to understand and internalize. Early in the course students will be required to *recall* and *explain* these themes. However, as these themes recur, we plan to require students to *evaluate* ideas within these themes, *formulate* a Christian understanding of them, and *apply* what they have learned about these themes to real-life situations. We hope to achieve high levels of internalization whenever students are required to apply their learning.

Loving God and Others

Creation: God is love. Each Person in the Trinity delights completely in the other Persons. God also loves the people whom He made. Love is a strong desire for another person’s good. We need to love God more than we love anything else. God also made humans so that they would not be alone. God wants people to love one another. People who show love toward others act in a way that helps bring good things about for those they show love to.

Fall: Sinful people hate the things that they should love. Most importantly, sinful people hate God. Sinful people desire things for themselves instead of for others. When sinners describe the good that they want for other people, they leave God out of their description. Some people seek to harm other people instead of desiring good for others. Finally, sinners love good things more than they love God.

Redemption: Because God loves sinners, He saves sinners. Those whom God has saved can begin to love properly again. When people come to love God, they learn how to love others and do good for them. Students should internalize the need to love God and others and look for ways to do so. This provides opportunities to share the gospel with students who are not saved.

Helpfulness

Creation: God did not make people to do everything on their own. God created humans to work together and to help each other. Humans need each other to do the things God wants them to do in the world.

Fall: Some people only want others to help them; they do not want to help other people. They take, but they never give. Other people are proud, and they do not want to accept help from anyone else. Some people offer help, but they are not wise or skilled enough to truly help others. They need to learn to become good helpers.

Redemption: When God saves a person, He changes his heart so that he wants to help others. Most of all he will want to help others by sharing the gospel, but he can also help others by working for them. Students should think of concrete ways that they can help others.

Courage

Creation: Courage is endurance in doing good in the face of obstacles that make a person afraid. A courageous person loves God and all the good things God wants him to do. A courageous person will not let fear stop him from doing what pleases God.

Fall: Fear can cause people to avoid doing what they should do. It is natural to be afraid of evil and harmful things. But a courageous person does not let fear stop him from doing right. Sometimes it is wrong to be fearless. Some people do not protect their lives the way God wants them to. Sometimes people continue doing the wrong things instead of the right things.

Redemption: Christians can be courageous because God has given them a new heart. Christians should love to please God by doing good. Christians need courage because they live in a world in which bad, frightening things happen. Christians can have courage because they know God will make all things right in the end. Students should reflect on times when they will need courage and strategize for how they will act courageously in those situations.

Perseverance

Creation: Perseverance is continuing to suffer pain or hardship with joyfulness by hoping in God. A persevering person does not allow hardship to stop him from doing what he should do.

Fall: Sinners want their desires to be fulfilled without delay. They are not willing to wait for the joy of being with God for eternity. They want what pleasures they may have now. In addition, sinful desires can become so strong that a sinner will persevere through many obstacles to obtain his sin.

Redemption: A Christian can persevere in doing right because he knows that God, though He could accomplish all His will immediately, is willing to have it carried out by His people over the course of time and in the face of obstacles. Students should identify areas in their lives that require perseverance and develop a plan for developing perseverance.

Joy

Creation: Joy is delight in God and in the goodness of His creation. Joy is based on knowing that God is good above all goodness. Joy is based on knowing that God is a heavenly Father who gives good gifts to His children.

Fall: When people sin, they lose their joy because sin brings guilt and misery. People sin by taking delight in things that displease God. People also sin by not taking delight in God or the good parts of His creation that He wants people to love. People also sin by loving even good things more than God.

Redemption: Christ took care of the guilt of sinners by paying the penalty for sin. Christ gives the Holy Spirit to Christians, and He produces joy in them. Christians have joy because they know and love God. Christians can have joy even in times of suffering and trials because they know God loves them and brings suffering into their lives for their good. Students should outline what they can do to grow in the virtue of joyfulness.

Creativity

Creation: Creativity is the ability to observe the world God created and to think of new things that can be made from it or be done with it. Creativity is possible because the Creator made humans in His own image. God commanded humans to be creative when He told them to rule over the creation.

Fall: Sinful people use their power of creativity to do bad things. They find creative ways to break God's law. They find creative ways to hide their sin. They are creative about making sin look good to others.

Redemption: Christians should use their creativity to oppose evil. They should look for creative ways to undo the damage done by sin. In doing this Christians can bring God glory and show love to others. Students should develop some concrete ways that they can be creative in loving others.

Conclusion

Many of the students who will be learning about these virtues in first grade will not have been saved from their sin. We want to be careful to not merely tell them to be loving, helpful, courageous, persevering, joyful, and creative. We do not want to communicate to them that if they simply act in these ways, they will be good children.

We *do* want to instruct students that good people do act in these ways. But we also need to teach them that they can never be truly loving, helpful, courageous, persevering, joyful, or creative apart from the saving and transforming work of the Holy Spirit. We need to teach them that they will fail at these virtues, or twist them into vices, if they are not saved.

Teaching these virtues, therefore, is not merely helping students to become good; it is a gospel opportunity.