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EDUCATING THINKERS IN SABBATH SCHOOL:  
A CASE STUDY OF FOUR TO SEVEN YEAR OLD CHILDREN  
LEARNING BIBLE STORIES IN A COHESIVE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

presented by

Virginia Lorene Smith

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Teacher Education

  
Major professor

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EDUCATING THINKERS IN SABBATH SCHOOL:  
A CASE STUDY OF FOUR TO SEVEN YEAR OLD CHILDREN  
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By

Virginia Lorene Smith

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Teacher Education

1993



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EDUCATING THINKERS IN SABBATH SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY OF FOUR TO SEVEN YEAR OLD CHILDREN LEARNING BIBLE STORIES IN A COHESIVE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY**

by

Virginia Lorene Smith

The Adventist Church and the public education system both claim that learning should be reasoning-based. The purpose of this study was to examine whether a cultural subgroup providing religious education actually does break with the broader American educational context that, despite its espoused beliefs, practices memory-based learning. The subject is significant in view of expanded academic efforts to reform the practice of teaching to increase reasoning expertise of learners, and to combine the forces of school, community, and home in assisting children to reach their full potential.

The data was collected in a religious education setting of small classes. Families were expected to help their children prepare for the weekend class. Data collection was carried out using qualitative research methods including participant observation, interviewing, and audio-tape recorded class sessions.

The study revealed that the setting was well organized for adult-child interaction, and each of the classes engaged in a large amount of adult-child interaction. However, the research documented few opportunities for children to engage

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in reasoning-based learning. The volunteer teachers stated or implied beliefs that their role was to tell students what they should learn and ask the questions, while students' role was to listen, receive, and briefly reply. Consequently teaching behaviors followed traditional patterns. Although agreeing that children should be taught to be thinkers, the teachers did not appear to know how to teach toward that goal.

Certain children gave evidence of reasoning-based learning by questions they asked, and opinions and informational statements they made. Analysis of their parents' interviews revealed a large number of ways that the families participated together in preparation for Sabbath school, in other activities, and within the church community.

The study findings provide implications for families who want reasoning-based learning for their children, the church which is endeavoring to transmit its values to succeeding generations, and educators who seek to empower children to be all they can be.

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VIRGINIA LORENE SMITH  
1993

#### DEDICATION

To Dad,     who taught me to be a thinker and a workaholic;

To Mom,     who showed me how to be patient with all the  
              pressures of family life while achieving  
              objectives and having fun;

And especially to Calvin, Jennifer, and Darcy, whose love  
and reasoning-based enthusiasms have contributed  
immeasurably to my education.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would never have been completed without the help and encouragement of many people. I want to acknowledge a few of those who have been especially important.

My four committee members are each distinguished researchers. It has been a privilege to learn from them. Dr. Laura R. Roehler, my advisor and chairperson of the dissertation committee, has promptly read through more drafts of this study than she will want to remember. Her counsel has invariably been not only wise but gracious. Dr. Mark Conley, Dr. David Labaree, and Dr. James Mosenthal have all given unstinting assistance. Of course, I alone bear the blame for errors which remain.

Those I worked with on the study site have become good friends. Their willingness to be interviewed, tape recorded, and analyzed has made this publication possible. I hope to cooperate with them in other types of research in the future.

Thank you to Becky O'Ffill, Marilyn Riley, and LuWana Kumalae, who spent endless hours typing transcripts. When I found it necessary to recheck passages on tapes, I was amazed at their accuracy in sorting our multiple



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It's impossible to mention all the friends and family who cheered me on through this project. But a few cannot be left out. Dr. and Mrs. Harold Oakes not only badgered me into a doctoral program, but they were always willing to listen to tales of woe--and other tales--as events unfolded. Dr. and Mrs. Edward Norton provided hospitality and encouragement beyond measure every time I came back to East Lansing.

The biggest thank you goes to my husband and children who have borne the brunt of housekeeping, and lost vacations, and working weekends, and little attention throughout my course of doctoral studies. You three may now demand any favor, and I will be happy to fulfill it.

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EDUCATING THINKERS IN SABBATH SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY  
OF FOUR TO SEVEN YEAR OLD CHILDREN LEARNING BIBLE STORIES  
IN A COHESIVE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

Chapter 1: Introduction

In a Saturday morning religious education class for four to seven year olds, a lesson on Jonah is in progress. The teacher asks who saved Ninevah. "Did Jonah save Ninevah?" The students agree that, No, it was God who saved Ninevah. Then the teacher makes the point that God gives people a second chance. A child asks, "But what if they had a second chance and they did something wrong again?" Here was a "teachable moment," a priceless opportunity to encourage thinking with the teacher's method of handling the question indicating whether thinking was encouraged or stifled.

The children involved were part of a case study within a Seventh-day Adventist church, a cohesive religious community that officially advocates adult-child interactions using reasoning-based learning for educating thinkers from an early age. The purpose of the study is to examine whether this cultural subgroup providing religious education actually does break with the broader American educational context that also espouses reasoning-based learning but practices memory-based learning.

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A cohesive religious community is defined here as a close-knit community based on shared religious values rather than geographical or cultural homogeneity. Religious education is an important function of such a community because it endeavors to transmit a strong set of values to the next generation. The study does not seek a generic effect of religious community on learning. Although any religious community might have the ability to unite moral, spiritual, familial, and communal forces in support of its educational aims, the results across religious communities could be radically different because of many variables such as the particular aims that were set.

All of the participants in this study, while part of a cultural subgroup, are also active members of the wider American society. The dominant American ideas and patterns of behavior of the broader society that they encounter in everyday life are frequently at cross purposes with the official position of their church. The 40 children studied, together with their teachers and parents, provide the opportunity for an in depth look at what happens when espoused teachings of a cohesive religious community intersect with the lifestyle and educational tradition of the wider American society.

Two aspects of belief and practice are important to this research. First are the patterns of adult-child interaction inside and outside the family; second are the differences between the theory of teaching and learning, and



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the practice of teaching that leads to learning. The Seventh-day Adventist Church advocates and provides numerous opportunities for close-knit family life and close-knit church community participation. From daily family worship and Bible study to an educational system to weekend and midweek services to many kinds of camps and youth organizations: the church constantly emphasizes people togetherness. Most of the planned events are cross generational.

On the other hand, the dominant lifestyle patterns of American society today provide less adult-child interaction than in the past. American adults are increasingly committed to self-realization rather than self-sacrifice for their children (Bellah, et al., 1985; Yankelovich, 1981; Veroff, Douvan & Kulka, 1981). The increase in two career families, television watching, nuclear rather than extended families, single parent families, latch-key children, and day-care are all common features of life which indicate less family interaction (Healy, 1990; Ayers, 1989; Boyer, 1989; Uhlenberg & Eggebeen, 1988). Furthermore, the United States has lost most of the close-knit geographical communities which formerly transmitted values to succeeding generations (Carper, 1992; Mintz & Kellogg, 1988; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1978).

The second aspect is found in principles and practice of education. The Adventist Church officially espouses the need for adult-mediated instruction with the aim of

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Although educational researchers struggle to bring about change, the traditional and persistent American view of education sees teachers--or adults--as tellers of established information, and students--or children--as passive absorbers (Cuban, 1990; Cohen, 1988). Consequently, the typical school classroom is teacher-centered with an emphasis on compliance, memorization, and cultural transmission (Haberman, 1991; Cuban, 1990, 1984; Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin & Cusick, 1986; Goodlad, 1984; Jackson, 1968).

Thus, a cultural subgroup is endeavoring to combine the efforts of family and church community to educate thinkers who can reason in the midst of a society that emphasizes compliance and memorization. Therefore, this study explored, in one group of four to seven year old children, whether a cohesive religious community does indeed carry out their stated goal of educating thinkers despite the dominant American ideas and patterns of behavior.

The frame of reference in which this study was set will be presented, with a brief survey of each of the important components.

#### Background of the Study

Lifestyle in the United States has changed dramatically in this century. Traditionally home, church, and community shared the responsibility for cultural and values development. In the 20th century, close-knit geographical

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communities have largely disappeared, along with their stabilizing moral influence on the families, especially the young, within their perimeters (Carper, 1992; Mintz & Kellogg, 1988; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Brooks & Hopp, 1980; Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1978). The breakdown of the family has further aggravated the situation (Healy, 1990; Ayers, 1989; Boyer, 1989; Uhlenberg & Eggebeen, 1988; Bloom, 1987; Bellah, et al., 1985; Yankelovich, 1981; Veroff, Douvan & Kulka, 1981; Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1978). Although public schools have endeavored to fill the gap, there is a widening perception that "the moral life of our society is in disarray" (Bryk, 1988, p. 256; Bloom, 1987; Butts, 1988).

While American family life has seen tremendous change, the practice of teaching and basic ideas about education have been highly resistant to change (Cohen, 1988; Cuban, 1984; Jackson, 1968). Cuban (1984) found that the typical classroom experience remained constant between 1890 and 1980. Individual seatwork, passive acceptance of what the teacher says, learning facts, and giving back those same facts on tests are day-to-day reality in most classrooms (Haberman, 1991; Cuban, 1990; Cohen, 1988; Raywid, 1985; Rogers, 1984).

Over the centuries, there have been educators who worked to make education a liberating, meaningful *experience* (Cuban, 1990; Hogan, 1989). Current educational *theory* continues that effort by emphasizing interaction and participation as vital for learning that is an active

process of constructing meaning (Jones, Palincsar, Ogle & Carr, 1987). Adult assistance, especially the social aspect of adult assistance, is seen as crucial for learning in which cognitive control is gradually transferred from teacher to learner (Cole, 1985; Gavelek, 1985; Vygotsky 1978).

Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin & Cusick (1986) envision "empowered learning" which they describe as follows:

It consists of intellectual and character traits: the ability to act independently and responsibly based upon an accurate assessment of the consequences of one's actions; the possession of values and the ability to exercise sound judgment that encourages the fair treatment of others; personal autonomy and control; problem-solving, critical thinking, and higher-order reasoning skills; and the ability to make informed decisions (p.189).

Although there is wide agreement for this view of what is worth learning, the intellectual and character traits "are not effectively learned in contemporary schools" (p. 189). Educators continue to face the challenge of bringing theory and practice into line.

More research is needed on contemporary efforts to break away from the mainstream educational ideas and to find effective means of bringing about empowered learning. Within the past few years, researchers have begun to pay attention to a source of community which had been largely ignored, and which has been shown to positively effect school achievement--religious communities where families participate with others who share their values (Bryk, Holland, and Lee, in preparation; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987;

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Coleman and Hoffer (1987) and Greeley (1982) found that students achieve more in religious high schools. Coleman (1987) has written about the differential effects of religious high schools which he ascribes to social capital, "the norms, the social networks, and the relationships between adults and children" (p.36), particularly within an environment of shared values. Social capital is first found at home between parents and children, but it is augmented by family participation in a community that shares the same values, such as the religious community that makes up the constituency of a church related school. The evidence is accumulating that social capital benefits educational achievements in high school.

This study will look at whether social capital benefits younger children. Participation in a cohesive religious community that provides positive adult-child interaction would be expected to help children as well as high school students reach their intellectual potential.

But while studying the intellectual benefits of community participation, it is also important to look at the possibility that cohesive religious communities tend to repress and stifle independent thinking. Coleman & Hoffer (1987) concur that a community with strong and consistent values will be oppressive at least to some of its members. James (1988), Peshkin (1986) and Cookson and Persell (1985) described government and educational communities that employ

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social control in a repressive conformist environment. And Arons (1983) sees even the public schools to be overwhelmingly manipulative and a threat to the freedom of individual development. This possibility was kept in mind as the study unfolded.

The setting chosen for this research is a specific cohesive religious community, a close-knit group based on shared religious values rather than geographical or cultural homogeneity. Seventh-day Adventist church congregations take seriously the task of educating their children to be God-fearing, just and caring people. A close-knit community, its members share values and beliefs they think are worth transmitting. Included in church teachings is the concept that education should begin early to develop thinkers, rather than reflectors of others' thought. Reasoning-based learning rather than memory-based learning is needed to accomplish this task.

This key statement from Mrs. Ellen G. White, recognized by the church as a prophet, explains the church's position on education. (Masculine labels apply to both sexes and emphasis is supplied.)

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator--individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprises, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the

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sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions (White, 1903/1942, 17, 18).

Even though high ideals exist for educating thinkers, the Adventist church may mirror the gap between espoused theory and in-use practice in the public schools. No community, whether liberating or repressive, exists in a vacuum. Each is a reflection to some extent of wider society. Therefore, a dichotomy similar to that in public schools between espoused theory and in-use practice could take place in church education. Interest in examining such a possibility led to this research.

In 1989, immediately after completing doctoral coursework at MSU, the author assumed oversight of the Adventist church's world-wide curriculum for children's Sabbath schools, ages birth to ten. This responsibility added professional attention to a long-standing personal concern for the fit between theory and practice in educating thinkers who can reason.

As the plan for this research developed, it became obvious that a fruitful search could best be accomplished by allowing the unfolding description of events to guide the approach. Although hundreds of thousands of children attend religious education classes each weekend, little or no

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research could be located that had explored the meaning of this experience for the participants, or had examined the processes involved. As an initial step for investigating children's weekend religious education, a flexible method of discovering meaning and practice seemed most appropriate. This would be a search for patterns rather than an effort to measure specific incidents.

Given that the study was looking for patterns, and that an in-depth probe would be of more value than surface understanding, a case study approach seemed preferable. This conclusion is supported by Biddle and Anderson (1986, pp. 237, 238), where they said, "The major advantage of the case study is that by immersing oneself in the dynamics of a single social entity one is able to uncover events or processes that one might miss with more superficial methods. . . . the case study strategy enables the investigator to adopt (sic) methods to the task of discovery rather than to impose methods that may prevent the latter."

Thus a case study format was chosen.

### Research Questions

A group of little children with their teachers in a weekend religious education class sponsored by a cohesive religious community is also a part of the broader American educational context. All the beliefs and practices of the larger context impinge on whatever specific beliefs the small group holds. This particular cohesive religious

community professes the belief that youth should be taught to be thinkers, yet traditional American educational ideas and practice run contrary to educating thinkers. Because of these conflicting ideas, there is probably a dichotomy between espoused belief and in-use practice in educating thinkers in Sabbath school. This descriptive study set out to discover what happened regarding the church's stated educational belief and in-use educational practice to one group of forty children during the 20 minute Bible story time during Sabbath school each Saturday morning for three months.

The following questions guided the research:

1. To what extent does the Sabbath school Bible lesson time cultivate adult-child interactions?
2. To what extent does the Sabbath school Bible lesson time cultivate reasoning-based learning?
3. What factors seem to encourage adult-child interactions?
4. What factors seem to encourage reasoning-based learning?
5. What factors seem to hinder adult-child interactions?
6. What factors seem to hinder reasoning-based learning?
7. What appears to be the impact of adult-child interaction as a form of social capital on the development of reasoning-based learning?



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### Statement of Purpose

A church may promote close-knit family and community life to support adult-mediated instruction with the aim of educating thinkers from an early age. In order to see if church philosophy was carried out in practice, it was necessary to explore the congruence between the Adventist church's stated goals and the in-use practice, or the lack of congruence, within the wider U.S. society.

Hence, the purpose of this case study is primarily to describe what happens to one group of 40 children when they interact with family and teachers who are members of their cohesive religious community, but who are also members of the broader society that has prepared them to believe that teaching should be memory-based. Are adults unconsciously caught between the espoused beliefs of a specific cohesive religious community and the lifestyle and educational practices of the wider American society?

A secondary purpose of the study will be to extend the research on the effects of adult-child interactions in a close-knit community.

This research will provide feedback to Adventist curriculum overseers about the effectiveness of their curriculum with four to seven year old thinkers, and the factors that seem to enhance or inhibit the fulfillment of their goals. All educators interested in the combined influence of home, community, and school will have an additional resource for exploring the possibilities of

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### Methods

#### Participants

Sabbath school is held weekly in Adventist churches for every age group. This research was conducted in a Sabbath school of a suburban church near a large East Coast metropolitan area. Forty children, ages four to seven, comprised the group of students who met from 9:15 to 10:45. They were about evenly divided among blacks, whites, and members from India or Hispanics. Seventy-five percent of the children were from Adventist homes. The rest were brought to Sabbath school by babysitters, neighbors, or non-Adventist parents.

The volunteer leaders and teachers represented all the above ethnic groups, as well as men and women, young and old. All but one were well educated with at least a baccalaureate degree. The study focused on the 20 minutes during Sabbath school when six groups of children gathered around small tables with a teacher to study a Bible story. It was expected that study in preparation for Sabbath school would take place at home during the week.

The researcher, a stranger to this particular church congregation, found all the participants to be willing and cordial volunteers during the 13 consecutive Saturday mornings that Bible story lessons were tape recorded. All

the adults and children were so accepting that the researcher found it necessary to turn down some offers to participate in order to maintain needed detachment for observing.

### Materials

Each small class used regularly available instructional materials provided by the church. A lesson quarterly is produced at the church world headquarters and distributed around the world. It contains the weekly Bible story simplified for four to seven year olds, and suggestions for daily family worship centered around learning the story and the Bible memory verse that goes with it. The teacher's guide provides an article on general instructional practice, as well as weekly ideas for visual aids, focusing the interest, teaching for meaning, and applying the meaning to the children's life. Some teachers choose to use Bibles even though few of the children read. Standard visual aids of felt and paper cutouts are available for each teacher who chooses to use them. Some follow suggestions in the teacher's guide while others make and bring their own visual aids.

### Procedures

After securing permission for the study site, the researcher conducted tape recorded open ended interviews with children, their parents, Sabbath school leaders, and

teachers throughout the three month data collection period. Most of the interviews were conducted in the homes of the interviewees. Field notes were kept of each interviewing experience. For thirteen consecutive Saturday mornings, the 20 minute Bible story time was tape recorded for each of the six small classes. Field notes were made for the entire morning program. Occasional informal conversations with church leaders, teachers, parents, and children were also added to the field notes.

A tape recorder and microphone captured the conversation at each of the interviews and small classes. The purpose of a child's interview was to find out what sense he/she made of Sabbath school and Bible stories. The interviews started with open ended questions, then each child was told the same unfamiliar Bible story and invited to help illustrate it with felt pictures. Next, the child was asked to relate the story to another person. Finally, two more open ended questions were asked. Children's interviews were limited to 30 minutes except for unusual cases where a child wanted to keep talking and didn't appear to be tired. Except for two families whose interviews were held in the church, all children's and parents' interviews were held in their homes.

Sabbath school teacher interviews were also tape recorded with the purpose of inviting discussion about teaching beliefs and practice. All participants were very willing to expand on the open ended questions. A lesson

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quarterly was the only visual aid, used at one point to elicit the way the adult made use of it in teaching children a Bible story. The final question asked how the adult believed children could be educated in Sabbath school to be thinkers. Forty-five minutes were set for each interview, but in actuality, it was the time the adult had available that determined the length. Some lasted over an hour, some were 15 minutes.

The teaching sessions were tape recorded to capture adult and child conversation patterns and teachers' instructional practices that could be compared with responses during the interviews.

During the data analysis, special attention was given to the interview transcripts of the families of a group of children who seemed to make thought-provoking contributions to the Sabbath school class, and to the transcripts of the families of another group of children whose comments in class did not seem to reflect reasoning-based learning.

### Data sources

Transcripts of the tape recorded interviews and 20 minute class sessions and the accompanying field notes constituted the bulk of the data. Additional sources included information gathered from informal conversations with church leadership prior to the start of the study, and occasional visits with leaders or teachers or parents aside from interviews or Sabbath school time. In all instances,



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data from these additional sources were recorded in field notes.

### Data analysis

The work of analyzing transcripts of class sessions and interviews required three steps. First, all audio-taped transcripts were transcribed. Second, the transcripts were repeatedly read for patterns of stated belief during the interviews and interaction with children during the class sessions. Third, the patterns found in transcripts were compared and contrasted. For each step of analysis, constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was followed along with the strategies for analysis of Spradley (1980).

### Assumptions

The major assumptions of the present study are the following:

1. Young children are establishing habits of thinking which are influenced by instructional practices.
2. Young children can talk about their religious understanding.
3. A teaching style that stimulates children to be reasoners will help them reach their intellectual potential.

### Definitions

The basic vocabulary for this research includes a number of terms which merit definition in order to establish

a working vocabulary which is clearly understood by the reader.

**Adult-Child Interaction:** Interaction where a child's learning is positively guided and supported by an adult or a more experienced peer. Such guidance can result in the child achieving beyond what he/she could have accomplished independently.

**Adventist:** An adjective describing a person who is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church, or an activity or organization which is directly related to the denomination.

**Cohesive Religious Community:** A close knit community based on religious values rather than geographical or cultural homogeneity. Religious education is seen as an important function for the community because it endeavors to transmit a strong set of values to the next generation.

**Functional Community:** A community in which social norms and sanctions, including those that cross generations, arise out of the social structure itself, and both reinforce and perpetuate that structure (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).

**General Conference:** The central governing organization of the Seventh-day Adventist church which is the highest level decision-making body and which deals with church business on a world-wide basis. Periodic decision making sessions are held by the officers of this body with representation from all of the lower levels of church administration.

**Kindergarten Sabbath School:** One and a half hour long Saturday morning religious education classes for four to seven year olds in a Seventh-day Adventist church. A Bible story is studied for approximately 20 minutes during this time.

**Reflectors:** Individuals who have a tendency to accept the word of authority without personal investigation, and who seem satisfied with oversimplified answers and convergent solutions to problems.

**Social Capital:** The achievement advantage gained by social relationships between persons. It is "the norms, the social networks, and the relationships between adults and children" (Coleman, 1987, p.36). Within the family the amount of social capital is determined by the amount of adult-child interaction. If parents are participating with their children in a community that shares values, the social capital is augmented by the increased adult-child

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relationships within the community. Increased social capital results in increased intellectual growth (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987).

Thinkers: Individuals who have a tendency to value personal study (particularly of the Bible) over passive acceptance of authority, who continue to ask questions and seek to apply what they learn to their own lives.

### Significance of the Study

This research project deals with significant issues that are timely, particularly in view of the increased academic interest in two areas: 1) in reforming the practice of teaching in order to increase reasoning expertise of learners, and 2) in joining the forces of school, community, and home in order to assist children to reach their full potential.

The research reported here has grown out of an interest in Seventh-day Adventist religious education and its results, compared with current literature dealing with effective teaching methods and learning theory. It will provide feedback to Adventist curriculum overseers about the effectiveness of their materials for four to seven year olds.

In addition, educators in the public sector can examine a contemporary effort to break away from the mainstream educational ideas in order to investigate ways of developing empowered learning. Those who are interested in the combined influence of home, community, and school will have an additional resource for exploring the possibilities of social capital.

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### Overview of the Study

The written report of this research is divided into five additional sections. CHAPTER 2 is designed to provide a background for the study by presenting an overview of the literature, discussing:

- (1) Adventist church sources on adult-child interaction, educational research and popular press on religious communities as educators, social capital, and Adventist church theory on educating thinkers;
- (2) general educational literature on the broader U.S. societal patterns of adult-child interaction and educational belief and practice in which the church community is embedded;
- (3) general educational literature on the differences between espoused theories and educational practice, and how and why they are different.

CHAPTER 3 provides an overview of the context within which the case study takes place. This section includes a brief history of Adventist Sabbath schools for children, an explanation of how the Adventist church organizes religious education for children, and how the curriculum is designed and intended for use.

The methodology of descriptive research and the specific methods employed in this research are discussed in CHAPTER 4. CHAPTER 5 presents the findings of the study, interpretation of these findings, and the assertions about reasoning-based learning that emerged.

CHAPTER 6 gives the conclusions and implications of the study and personal reactions to the research process.

Throughout the narrative presented here, pseudonyms

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have been used for the group setting, the geographic location, and for all involved persons. In some specific instances, identities have been further blurred by switching gender. Pseudonyms and other devices are used in order to maintain confidentiality and prevent identification of the church, the location, or any study participant.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Members of a cohesive religious community, a close-knit group based on shared religious values rather than geographical or cultural homogeneity, are also members of American society. The dominant ideas and lifestyle of the wider culture influence the subgroup despite whatever distinctive religious beliefs they may hold. This study of one group of four to seven year olds receiving family and Sabbath school instruction, examines what happens to the Seventh-day Adventist belief that the youth should be educated to be reasoning thinkers, when the church members are influenced by the dominant social patterns that promote memory-based learning.

Of particular interest because they appear to influence the education of thinkers, are two points of comparison between church belief and U.S. society belief and practice: interaction between adults and children both inside and outside the family, and educational belief and practice.

Adult-child interaction is deemed important because this study follows the Vygotskian perspective that initial learning takes place in a verbal setting. Children's learning is largely determined by the amount of interaction that they have with adults and more competent peers. It

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goes almost without saying that for interaction to be positive and helpful for the child, it must be constructive, friendly, and enabling, not negative, unfriendly, or one-way communication.

Pointing out that children's development always occurs in a context organized and watched over by adults, Vygotsky insisted that children's experience of language is social from the outset. Instead of seeing children's gradual socialization with age, as Piaget maintained, Vygotsky held that children are social beings from the moment of their birth and that the social environment plays a crucial role in the acquisition of language as in all other aspects of development (Cole & Cole, 1989, p. 295).

The second point of comparison, educational belief and practice, is important in the education of thinkers because intellectual dispositions are acquired early that will affect patterns of learning throughout life. Berman (1984) supports this idea. "The tendencies toward lifelong learning begin in early childhood and can be enhanced or deterred through the formal processes of schooling" (p. 100). Speaking of elementary school, Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin & Cusick (1986) also record the long lasting influence of early education. "Here, at the most impressionable age, youngsters are quietly and effectively taught the meaning of education, the rewards for and value of applying oneself to the distinctive task of school learning and performance. Here may be etched indelibly the attitudes for a lifetime" (p. 19).

Evidence will be presented that current educational practice tends to promote memory-based learning rather than

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meaningful learning based on reasoning. Educational researchers wage a continuing struggle to change the practice of teaching; "however, education remains unchanged. Indeed, it is the most obdurate of our social institutions" (Doyle, 1992, p. 515).

The question might first be asked whether research on schools in general can apply to family or Sabbath school instructional practices. Certainly there are some major differences from the usual nature of teaching as described by Lieberman and Miller (1979). For instance, Sabbath school takes place only once a week and is taught entirely by unpaid volunteers who seldom instruct in isolation from other adults. Nor need the volunteer teachers ever worry about results, as their efforts are seldom if ever formally judged.

On the other hand, close similarities exist between week day classrooms and weekend religious education classes. The four commonplaces (Schwab, 1978; Lanier & Little, 1986) of teacher, student, curriculum, and milieu are present along with a forever inadequate knowledge base and vague goals. Home instruction, preparing children for Sabbath school, is quite another setting, but the same similarities hold. Therefore, it seems logical to cautiously apply educational research findings to Sabbath school and home instruction.

Section I of this chapter begins with sources showing the Adventist church's view on adult-child interaction in

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family and church community life, as well as available empirical evidence on whether the church is practicing its espoused belief. Second, because religious communities in general are the larger frame for Adventist adult-child interaction, the research on religious communities as educators will be presented along with sources on possible negative effects of close-knit communities. Third, social capital, an explanation for the effect of religious communities on education, along with alternative explanations for the success of religious schools, forms the next part of this section. The final segment shows the church's official view on educating thinkers and ends with an explanation of the basis for Adventist principles of education.

Section II of the chapter will draw from selected writings on the larger United States society in which the Adventist church community is embedded. It will be shown that society generally holds a wide variety of values, is not close-knit, and tends to provide children in the U.S. with a less than optimal level of adult-child interaction, and thus social capital. Section II will close with evidence for the fact that educational researchers also officially espouse educating thinkers.

Section III of this chapter looks at the traditional practice of teaching and the efforts to bring theory and practice into agreement. The section will end with a discussion of the explanations researchers offer for why the



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The Church: Adult-child Interaction  
and Educating Thinkers

Despite heroic measures to promote reasoning-based learning in public education, teaching practice remains little changed and there is evidence that society at large favors educational conformity. Within our society, the value of religious communities as educators is only now being weighed by educational researchers. Little work has been done to investigate whether the attitude of the wider society also holds in religious education. This study explores the stated goals of one religious community to educate thinkers who can reason and to encourage adult-child interaction.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church encourages and provides numerous opportunities for close-knit family life and church community participation. Multiple opportunities are provided for generational and cross-generational togetherness. One of the goals of the church community life is to educate the youth to be thinkers who will take personal responsibility to study for themselves and to live by their chosen values rather than accept passively what someone else says. Authoritative church documents bolster this aim.

The section begins with the church's espoused beliefs on adult-child interaction.

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### Adult-Child Interaction

Based on the Bible examples of family and community life, the Seventh-day Adventist Church encourages and provides numerous opportunities for close-knit family life and close-knit church community participation. (Flowers, Flowers & Sahlin, 1991; Flowers, Flowers & Holbrook, 1990) Publications are widely distributed to facilitate daily family worship and Bible study as well as weekend and midweek services, families are encouraged to educate their children in the church education system; and camps, conventions and youth organizations flourish. All these activities contribute to adult-child interaction in a value consistent environment.

Here is a sample of official Adventist statements emphasizing the importance of family togetherness, and encouraging parents to cultivate closeness to their children at home. Then follows the available empirical evidence on whether the espoused beliefs are actually carried out.

#### Importance of family togetherness.

As the following illustrates, church statements could hardly be stronger when addressing the importance of the family unit.

The work of parents underlies every other. Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. . . . The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences (White, 1905/1942, p. 349).

Cooperation between adults and children even in the

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planning of family enterprises, rather than authoritarian pronouncements from adults to children, are presented as the ideal form of family life.

In the home training of the youth, the principle of co-operation is invaluable. From their earliest years children should be led to feel that they are a part of the home firm. Even the little ones should be trained to share in the daily work, and should be made to feel that their help is needed and is appreciated. The older ones should be their parents' assistants, entering into their plans, and sharing their responsibilities and burdens. Let fathers and mothers take time to teach their children, let them show that they value their help, desire their confidence, and enjoy their companionship, and the children will not be slow to respond. Not only will the parents' burden be lightened, and the children receive a practical training of inestimable worth, but there will be a strengthening of the home ties and a deepening of the very foundations of character (White, 1903/1942, p. 285).

#### Importance of parent-child interaction.

According to the following selection of statements, it is friendship, cooperation, and interaction among family members that make the home a beneficial environment for children.

The home should be to the children the most attractive place in the world, and the mother's presence should be its greatest charm (White, 1913/1943, p. 114).

. . . if the children do not find in their parents and in their homes that which will satisfy their desire for sympathy and companionship, they will look to other sources, where both mind and character may be endangered.

Give some of your leisure hours to your children; associate with them in their work and in their sports, and win their confidence. Cultivate their friendship (White, 1913/1943, p. 124).

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slight self-gratification in time and leisure, in order to mingle with the children, sympathizing with them in their little troubles, binding them to their hearts by the strong bonds of love, and establishing such an influence over their expanding minds that their counsel will be regarded as sacred (White, 1952/1980, p. 220).

Fathers, spend as much time as possible with your children (White, 1952/1980, p. 222).

Parents have the privilege, and the responsibility, of being companions to their children. The time spent becomes occasions for tutoring children in the family culture.

In addition to parents, other adults can also positively influence children's lives.

Importance of adult-child interaction in the church community. Not only parents in the home, but every adult church member has a responsibility to the young people, as the following statement indicates.

There has been altogether too little attention paid to our children and youth, and they have failed to develop as they should . . . because the church members have not looked upon them with tenderness and sympathy.

They require more than casual notice, more than a word of encouragement. They need painstaking, prayerful, careful labor (White, 1954, p. 488).

To summarize Adventist espoused belief on adult-child interactions, both home and church community share the responsibility of providing adult attention, sympathy and instruction to the children.



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Empirical evidence. Is the church living up to the beliefs it espouses? Research evidence is limited on the extent to which Adventist churches are putting into practice their espoused belief in family togetherness and adult-child interaction. But the evidence indicates a gap between theory and practice. The available indicators include the percent of divorce among Adventist families, the proportion of families who frequently spend time together, and the percentages of young people who regularly attend church, their perception of the church climate, and the percentage of young people who perceive adults in their church to be caring and supportive. This information comes from two recent studies of Adventist young people.

A ten-year longitudinal study (Dudley & Kangas, 1988) began with 1511 Adventist 15 and 16 year olds from across North America. Twenty-seven percent had separated or divorced parents, 23% had family worship time every day, with another 18% reporting family worship once or twice a week; 88% attended church nearly every week.

The second source of data is a detailed survey of more than 12,000 Adventist North American youth (Benson & Donahue, 1990). The following results, measuring young people's responses, appear to correlate with adult-child interaction either at home or in the church community.

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Frequent parent/child communication	38%	49%
Frequent family worship	44%	31%
Frequent family helping projects	19%	12%
"My congregation has a warm climate"	58%	35%
"Teachers are caring/supportive"	49%	18%
"I often experience caring adults"	33%	27%

Adventist leaders agree that these figures leave much to be desired (Gillespie, 1992). There seems to be a substantial gap between the church's espoused theory and its practice.

The Adventist church is just one of many examples of close-knit religious communities. No claim is made in this study for a generic effect of religious education because the educational aims that are set, as well as other variables, would result in varying outcomes. However, because of the similarity in religious communities' ability to mobilize moral, spiritual, familial, and communal forces to support their educational aims, it seems to be worthwhile to consider recent research on religious education in general. The next several pages will introduce research on religious communities as educators, then consider the possible negative effects of such communities, after which a sampling of reports on cohesive communities will be presented, first from educational literature and then from the popular press.

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### Religious communities as Educators

In the last few years there has been a growing interest in the effect that families and schools within church communities have on achievement. Research on private schools has traditionally been ignored by public educators (Cibulka, 1989). But current educational literature reveals a growing interest in education within close-knit value-sharing communities or cohesive communities. This new interest arose simultaneously with the publication of two books comparing academic achievement in public and private schools, and the appearance, a year later, of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on . . . , 1983).

Greeley's (1982) Catholic High Schools and Minority Students and Coleman, Hoffer and Kilgore's (1982) High School Achievement: Public, Catholic and Private Schools Compared caught the attention of educators faced with a crescendo of complaint over the paucity of public school achievements. In rapid succession A Nation At Risk deplored "a rising tide of mediocrity" and challenged the profession to provide quality education enabling both high and low achievers to reach their potential.

A subsequent wave of reforms is endeavoring to produce effective schools. Many commissions have studied the problems and proposed solutions. Most reforms have been matters of policy change to be administered by the educational bureaucracy.

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and Hoffer (1987) continued their study and published a second report with stronger evidence that religious private schools are better performers. An educational sociologist of Coleman's stature would have been difficult to ignore. So, through the 80's, with the search for examples of academic superiority to examine, researchers reluctantly turned their gaze on the long neglected field of private education, particularly religious education. Because parental involvement seemed to be a crucial element in religious school success, there arose a wave of attention to parental involvement in public schools.

In the discussion presented here, ideas gleaned from varied authors about the significance of education by cohesive communities will be divided into two major areas: (1) educational literature on religious communities as educators and (2) the popular press. But before introducing the references on education by cohesive communities, it is important to look first at the possibility that close-knit communities have negative effects on those in their midst, especially the young.

In some literature, cohesive communities have been depicted as repressive environments that squelch creativity and enforce conformity to the group norms. A sampling of evidence will be presented next, along with references showing that the danger of repression lies with any type of close-knit community, whether based on religious values, geographical closeness, or institutional structure.



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Negative Effects of Close-knit Community.

Parsons (1987) visited 100 fundamentalist private schools in 30 states and found an emphasis on submission to authority that allowed a minimum of questioning. Reese (1985) found respect for authority to be "a central concern of fundamentalist education . . . [and] obedience to authority . . . reinforced in countless ways during the school day" (p. 191). Peshkin (1986) described the total control found in fundamentalist Christian schools.

The literature abounds with references to other types of repressive communities. James (1988) documented social control in both the private and public sectors. He presented the interesting historical case of three diverse types of private schools which arose within a Japanese American segregation center during World War II. Each was in opposition to public authority over education, but each responded with a different degree of aggressive authoritarianism. These cases raise questions about authoritarian schools in a democratic country. "There is a threshold of social control beyond which authority eclipses freedom of thought and action in the individual" (p. 3).

Cookson and Persell (1985) found social control and pressure for conformity in elite boarding schools. Arons (1983) accused even public schools of being overwhelmingly manipulative and a threat to the freedom of individual development.

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not only norms and values on its inhabitants, but perpetuated the social structure as well, has come under severe indictment of being repressive.

Some of the [1920's] best and most popular literature . . . attacked the American small town--commonly thought to be the repository of American values and character--as ugly, bigoted, conformist and suffocating to the creative mind, and full of twisted, unhappy, unfulfilled people. This was a common attitude among intellectuals and social leaders of the day. They continually reminded their readers that the small town was not a utopia but, rather, that it was sexually and intellectually repressive. They believed that progress and freedom in the United States depended upon the eradication of that village atmosphere and on the promotion of the more open, stimulating, cosmopolitan urban culture (Church & Sedlak, 1976, p. 364).

In The Hoosier Schoolmaster, Eggleston (1871) relates a story that is a good example of the heavy-handed community just described. It also offers evidence that within the educational framework, the repression could be not only on the students, but also on the teacher. Tyack (1974) substantiates the same charge with more evidence.

The Lynds, in their classic study of Muncie, Indiana (1929, 1937), documented the traditional, rigid community values and school practices in one homogeneous town. In the early twentieth century, the majority of Americans still lived in rural communities. This is parallel to the fact that 50% of American children were still in one room schools in 1913 (Carper, 1990). Most of them were likely being schooled in ways directed at protecting them from ideas foreign to their locale.

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Even an entire state was not immune to trying to control the education of its children. In 1922 a bizarre event took place in Oregon, a state which had "few blacks, few Catholics, few immigrants, and almost no southeastern European immigrants" (Church & Sedlak, 1976, p. 361). The Klu Klux Klan campaigned for, and got voted, a law requiring all children ages 8 through 16 to attend only public school, where they would be taught a common set of [Klan?] values.

One Klan pamphlet painted an apocalyptic vision. A terrified schoolmaster pulls on the bell rope of the school calling for help while an episcopal bishop (representing rich private schooling), a methodist elder, and a seventh-day adventist minister stand at the corners of the building and a Catholic priest comes running toward the school with crucifix held high and a torch in the other hand. No help came [and the school burned down], "The Last Torch of Liberty, Fadin' from the World" (Church & Sedlak, 1976, p. 360).

A functional community is one "in which social norms and sanctions, including those that cross generations, arise out of the social structure itself, and both reinforce and perpetuate that structure" (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 7). Coleman & Hoffer agree that a geographically or culturally close-knit community which is a functional community, imposes social control as well as transmitting the community social structure from one generation to the next, which would help the high status families while hurting the low status families. But they explain how the transmission works and identify the positive aspects of social control in a homogeneous community.

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A functional community augments the resources available to parents in their interactions with school, in their supervision of their children's behavior, and in their supervision of their children's associations, both with others their own age and with adults (p. 5).

Furthermore, the social consistency in the community suggests there is value consistency as well.

The values to which children are exposed are the values of . . . adults, not far removed socially from the family.

Schools in such a setting of structural consistency and value consistency reinforce both. They provide a locus and occasion for transmission of the generally held values, and they provide a social context within which children whose parents know each other and hold similar values can interact (p.6).

As a result, in past years parents with little money and little education were able to rear children who took advantage of further education and the life changes it brought. ". . . the decline of such communities in the present leaves parents, whether middle class or lower class, without a strong set of social resources, able only to draw upon whatever individual resources they have" (p. 8).

It is apparent that the danger does exist, not just for religious communities, but also for communities of any kind to be repressive to those within their borders; alternatively, the community can prove to be a strength and a support system to its members. If values are shared, the greater opportunity for adult-child interaction in community participation can result in augmented social capital, Coleman's concept that children's social interactions with adults is beneficial for their achievement, which will be



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This overview of possible negative effects of close-knit communities is followed by two segments covering other references on religious communities and adult influence on education.

### Educational Literature on Religious Communities as Educators.

The recent public attention to private schools as a socializing and educating force has been influenced in particular by Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore's (1982) book, High School Achievement, and by the follow-up, Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987). Using the HSB data base, Coleman and associates studied three types of high schools--public, Catholic, and other private schools without religious affiliation. According to their findings,

. . . students in both Catholic and non-Catholic private schools (examined separately) showed higher performance on the standardized tests than did students from comparable backgrounds in public schools. . . . For Catholic schools, but not in other private schools, this effectiveness was especially pronounced for students from disadvantaged backgrounds: those with less well-educated parents, blacks, and Hispanics (1987, p.xxiv).

The follow-up study produced even stronger evidence that religious private high schools promote higher achievement than other high schools.

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functional deficiency, then the private sectors are especially divergent: Catholic schools show a considerably less depressive effect of these family deficiencies in achievement growth than do public schools; other private schools show a greater depressive effect of these family deficiencies on achievement growth than do public schools (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 213).

Another difference showed up in the dropout rates:

. . . The dropout rates from Catholic schools are strikingly lower than those from public schools or other private schools. This reduced dropout rate holds both for those who show no signs of problems as sophomores and for those who as sophomores are academically or disciplinarily at risk of dropping out.

. . . the other private schools show no reduction whatever, when compared with the public schools, in the dropout rates of students who are at various levels of academic or disciplinary risk as sophomores.

. . . [In Catholic schools] Students from families with these deficiencies are hardly more likely to drop out than are those from families without the deficiencies, while these deficiencies make a strong difference among public school students, and an even stronger difference for students from other private schools (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, pp. 213, 214).

The researchers found these results consistent with the view that students drop out of high school because of "a lack of social integration, either into a well-functioning and structurally intact family or into a close community . . ." (p. 214).

Results found by Benson & Donahue (1990) in Adventist schools are consonant with other studies. Two of the findings are as follows:

Adventist schools send a higher proportion (66%) of their high school seniors on to four-year colleges than do either U. S. public high schools (30%) or U. S. Catholic high schools (51%). Adventist senior academies enroll minority

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students at a rate much higher (39%) than that found in other U. S. church school systems and even slightly higher than that found in U. S. public schools. More significant is the fact that minority youth in Adventist schools succeed to a much higher degree than minority youth in U. S. public schools. This is reflected in such effectiveness criteria as dropout prevention, enrollment in college preparatory curricula, and enrollment in higher education (p. 11).

Religious private schools usually are an outgrowth of a religious community that not only worships together and shares values, but also socializes together. On the other hand,

Private schools without a base in a religious community ordinarily draw children from a number of neighborhoods, and the parents have little or no occasion even to meet each other, except upon some school-related event . . . (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 215).

Coleman & Hoffer's (1987) second collection of data further revealed that graduates of religious high schools were more likely to go to college, and once there, were more likely to remain and do well. But a more important aim of their second study was to look at the issue concerning both the goals of education and who determines them. If the family, the community, and the larger society all agreed on goals, there would be less dissent on how to run schools. However, differences of opinion on goals and values force examination of divergent viewpoints. Coleman & Hoffer noted that public, religiously based private, and independent private schools

are three distinguishable orientations to the school. . . . the school as agent of the larger society or the state; the school as agent of the

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(religious) community; and the school as an agent of the individual family. . . . [In explaining the parenthesis] religion is not intrinsic to the orientation; what is intrinsic is the notion that the school is an outgrowth not of the individual family, but of a community of families that is both in direct interaction in everyday life and shares values (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987, p. xxvii).

The research of Coleman and associates has drawn attention to religious schools as a socializing and educating force under the aegis of communities that share values.

Next, references outside of educational literature will be cited first on education by cohesive communities and second on the significance of adult involvement in the lives and education of children.

#### Popular Press.

Examples of evidence for the significance of education by cohesive communities and adult involvement in children's education are not restricted to educational journals.

Reader's Digest (November, 1991, pp. 109-114) contributed to the topic with the "Tale of Two Schools." A Catholic and a public school were contrasted, with the Catholic school showing the same achievement differences that Coleman & Hoffer (1987) documented.

Newsweek has recently put out two special issues that relate to the subject of adult involvement in education. The issue entitled "How to Teach Our Kids" (1990, p. 6) was designed to encourage parental participation in education.



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In the introduction, the following advice is given to parents:

Everyone can learn--don't let any expert tell you differently--and everyone can teach. And the single most important skill that we must strive to master and then to impart is the ability to think and to think critically. . . . Of necessity much of the teaching will be done by others. But they can't succeed alone. Could any work be more important? The Bible commands us to teach our children, when we sit in the house and when we walk by the way. Teach our children when we lie down and when we rise up.

In accord with educational research which has consistently found reading skills related to home attitudes toward and habits of reading (Wells, 1981; Durkin, 1966; Heath, 1982, 1983; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989, 1990; Winter & Rouse, 1990) a few pages further along in the same Newsweek issue (p. 14), parents are given tips for helping their children be good readers.

Not only parents, but other adults as well, can powerfully contribute to children's social capital. In the Newsweek special edition, "How Kids Grow: Health, Psychology & Values" (1991, pp. 70-73), is a wonderful story of a girl from a dysfunctional family who received the will to succeed from the loving attention and impetus to achievement in the friendship and modeling of the lady next door.

Family Circle (September 3, 1991) included a back-to-school special to help parents get involved in their children's education in order to maximize their happiness and success in school.

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This sample of references from the popular press illustrates support for the concept that adults are very important to children's achievement.

The next segment will present explanations for the apparent success of religious schools, beginning with social capital that Coleman and Hoffer believe explains the benefits of parental and other adult involvement in education and the differences between achievement in private religious schools and public schools.

#### Explanations for the Apparent Success of Religious Schools

Various explanations have been offered for why religious schools appear to promote higher achievement than public schools. Social capital seems to be the strongest answer, but alternative explanations will also be presented.

#### Social capital

"Social capital" is a phrase used by Coleman and Hoffer to account for the success of adult-child interactions. They define social capital as the social relations, first of all between parents and children, that transmit behavior norms and sanctions as a result of time spent together doing things and talking about ideas. Just as the terms "physical capital" and "human capital" have been used in economics of education to show the effect of material assets and skills and knowledge, "social capital" defines the positive effect of adult-child interpersonal relationships within the family

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and within communities that share values. Substantiating evidence is the fact that a number of studies have shown that living in a single-parent household (assuming that half as many parents means less social capital) has a negative effect on school achievement, even among gifted students (Gelbrich and Hare, 1989).

Coleman and Hoffer theorize that human capital, the education and expertise of the parents--if not complemented by social capital, time and effort spent by the parents with the child--is irrelevant to a child's educational growth. A child with little human capital but much social capital will achieve more than a child with much human capital but little social capital.

A child's social capital is augmented when the parents are actively participating with the child in a community that shares values, because the opportunity for positive interaction with adults is increased. This community appears to recreate the functions of the close communities lost in the 20th century, while avoiding some of the negative aspects of those same communities, as explained in the following statement.

Religiously sponsored schools which have student bodies who share that religion . . . constitute first of all communities with strong values. They also are based, in most cases, on a functional community that shares the same place of worship. These schools are different from the geographically based functional communities of the past, because they are founded on interaction in only one arena of life--religion. For that reason they may escape some of the faults of schools of the largely closed geographically based functional

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communities described earlier (such as the transmission of the community's status system across generations), while retaining the capacity to maintain and reinforce a set of values. It is probably also true that the set of values they maintain are (sic) less easily manipulated to serve the interests of dominant families than were those of the geographically based functional communities (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 13).

Bryk references a number of researchers who have found "common purpose and shared values among the adults within [effective schools]" (Bryk, 1988, p. 273).

In studying the factors that make Catholic high schools "appear especially effective in educating disadvantaged youth" (p. 274)." Bryk, Holland, and Lee (in preparation) are finding teacher commitment and, "A number of structural features contribute to the formation of positive normative environments in Catholic schools. . . . The result is a predictable and nurturant environment for both the students and adults who form the school community" (Bryk, 1988, p. 274).

#### Alternative explanations for the success of religious schools.

Much of the attention to private school education has been of a negative nature, apparently to "protect" public schooling from unwelcome competition for government money (Cibulka, 1989). Even literature endeavoring to maintain a neutral position delivers a message not at all sympathetic to Coleman and Hoffer's interpretations. For instance, Alexander & Pallas (1987) find the achievement advantage in



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Catholic schools to be trivial, and Willms (1987) ascribes the advantage to statistical discrepancies. However, he does acknowledge a need for "policies that will facilitate improvement in the poorer public schools by emulating some of the practices of the more effective private schools" (Willms, p. 131).

One publication, (Chubb and Moe, 1990), reaches the same conclusion as Coleman, that private schools are better performers. But the authors offer an entirely different explanation. They propose that public schools are politics-based and governed by a top heavy bureaucracy, while private schools excel because they are market-based--decentralized and adaptable to the wishes of their clientele with little control from above. Market-based probably does characterize independent private schools, but in Coleman's study those schools do not show the degree of advantage evidenced by the religious schools. The religious schools can hardly be described as adapting to the wishes of their clientele with little control from above. The religious organizations which run them typically set high standards and hold to them regardless of individual wishes. The control is governed by the shared values of the religious organization, not by the incentive to please the students or their parents. However, a substantial majority of the parents might be able to effect a change in standards. Here again, the church community--not individual families--is influencing the school.

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Chubb & Moe concede that some public schools reduce bureaucracy and work like private schools when two conditions are met: first, when a socially homogeneous community agrees on basic educational policy. Second, when the school does not have serious problems, because serious problems would "undermine whatever homogeneity may exist" (p. 63). Here they seem to be defeating their argument by claiming that homogeneity--shared values--rather than market incentives result in more effective schools.

The alternative explanations for the apparent success of religious schools seem to be less compelling than the arguments for the effects of heightened social capital.

The final portion of Section I summarizes the Adventist church's official view on educating thinkers, presents the available empirical evidence on whether the goal is met, and ends with an explanation of the basis for Adventist principles of education.

#### Adventist Church Theory on Educating Thinkers

The authoritative Adventist church injunction, "to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought" (White, 1903/1942, p.17), is well known and affirmed church-wide. It is the mandate for Adventists to employ reasoning-based rather than memory-based methods of education. The statement, in context, makes it clear that independent thinking is not limited to Bible study, but should ideally be a pervasive trait of character.

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In order to actually teach students to be independent thinkers, teaching methods that encourage independent thinking are needed. Three aspects of instruction that are officially recommended by the Adventist Church are briefly referenced here: teach for understanding, teach active learners, teach for independence. Toward the end of the second section of this chapter, it will be shown that these three aspects of instruction are acknowledged by educational researchers to promote thinking.

Teach for understanding, not memorization.

As long ago as 1885, an Adventist publication counseled Sabbath school teachers to pay more attention to meaning than to memory.

Fifty years ago the principal labor of the Sunday school scholar was to recite verses. The child who learned the most verses to repeat, received the largest number of credit cards. It is well to have the mind stored with the words of the Scriptures, but it is quite possible to be able to repeat many verses, and yet be ignorant of their meaning. . . . We might as well read in an unknown tongue, as to read in our own tongue, and yet have no understanding of that which we read. There is far too little attention paid to the understanding of children. With a fair exercise of the memory, a child may answer all the questions in a lesson, and repeat all the texts cited, and yet have no true knowledge of the subject treated in the lesson (facsimile of 1885 Adventist magazine, in Spaulding, 1962, p.68).

Memorizing, by definition, is an exercise designed to enable one to reflect others' thought. Thinkers must grapple with meaning and understanding. Thinking is an active individualized process rather than a passive generic

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Teach active learners, not passive absorbers.

The instructor's view of how learning takes place and the roles of teacher and student will govern the way he or she is able to teach. The following statements reveal the Adventist espoused belief that recognizes students as active learners, constructing meaning that differs from others' understanding and contributing to the achievement of the class.

[Let the teachers] by their manner say to the students:

Let us study together. I have nothing that you cannot receive if you open your mind . . . By asking questions you may suggest ideas that are new to me. Various ways of expressing the [subject] we are studying will bring light into our class. If any explanation of the word differs from your previous understanding, do not hesitate to state your views of the subject (White, 1913/1943, p. 436).

It is a wise educator who seeks to call out the ability and powers of the student, instead of constantly endeavoring to impart instruction (White, 1938, p. 166).

This belief regarding the role of teachers as fellow learners with the students who are actively constructing meaning, flies in the face of the customary view of teachers as the source of facts which students are expected to master.

Finally, as preparation for life, active learners need encouragement and assistance to begin early to think independently and make choices.



### Teach for independence.

In response to the demands of life, children are forced to begin making decisions at an early age. Wise parents will encourage and assist independence, knowing they will seldom be present when their children face situations demanding informed decisions.

From infancy children should be trained to do those things which are appropriate for their age and ability. Parents should now encourage their children to become more independent. Serious troubles are soon to be seen upon the earth, and children should be trained in such a way as to be able to meet them (White, 1954, p. 122).

Since [youth] cannot always have the guidance and protection of parents and guardians, they need to be trained to self-reliance and self-control. They must be taught to think and act from conscientious principle (White, 1930, p. 379).

One way to help young people learn to be independent is to give them responsibility for leadership, with an adult back-up to ensure their success.

The youth should have a chance to give expression to their feelings. It would be well to have a judicious leader chosen at first, one who will talk little and encourage a great deal . . . After [the youth] have had a little experience, let one of their number take the leadership, and then another, and in this way let workers be educated . . . (White, 1938, p. 70).

There is a penalty for not teaching children to be independent thinkers. The dangers of forcing children to obey without learning to think become apparent later in life.

There are many families of children who appear to be well trained while under the training discipline; but when the system which has held them to set rules is broken up, they seem to be

incapable of thinking, acting, or deciding for themselves.

The severe training of youth, without properly directing them to think and act for themselves as their own capacity and turn of mind will allow, that by this means they may have growth of thought, feelings of self-respect, and confidence in their own ability to perform, will ever produce a class who are weak in mental and moral power. And when they stand in the world to act for themselves they will reveal the fact that they were trained like the animals, and not educated. Their wills, instead of being guided, were forced into subjection by the harsh discipline of parents and teachers (White, 1872/1948, p. 133).

On the other hand, the most successful instructors are those who encourage personal responsibility.

Those who make it their object to so educate their pupils that they may see and feel that the power lies in themselves to make men and women of firm principle, qualified for any position in life, are the most useful and permanently successful teachers (White, 1872/1948, p. 134).

In summary, official Adventist statements encourage independence and the teaching of active learners, with an emphasis on thinking rather than memorizing. The next paragraph will give the limited evidence available on how well the church practice matches with the beliefs.

Empirical evidence. Benson and Donahue (1990) conducted a comprehensive research project to document and evaluate the current condition of Adventist youth relative to the church. Over 12,000 sixth to twelfth graders, in addition to more than 2600 adults, were surveyed. Eighty percent of the youth reported family worship to be interesting and meaningful, but fewer than 25% of the

students responded that their church "congregation has a thinking climate" (p. 31) This is consistent with the researcher's experience in questioning hundreds of Adventist seminar participants as to whether their church has taught them to be thinkers or reflectors of other men's thought. Fewer than 25% respond that they have been taught to be thinkers by parents, or church, or education. It is apparent that the Adventist church members are failing to put into practice their espoused belief.

When the belief and practice are difficult to harmonize, someone may ask why it is that the Adventist church is endeavoring to educate thinkers. The next brief piece is supplementary material for any reader who wonders about the basis for Adventist educational principles.

#### The basis for Adventist educational principles.

Adventists advocate educating thinkers because their educational principles are based on Bible texts that show God's interest in meaningful and thoughtful understanding, and personal responsibility. (A few examples: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 3:13-18,21 and 4:5-7; Isaiah 1:13,18 and 33:6; Ezekiel 14:14; Daniel 6:4,10; Acts 17:11; Galatians 5:1,13; Philipians 1:9 and 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:15.)

One Adventist church bulletin states that:

God is a Person who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity, and the individuality of His intelligent creatures that their love, their faith, their willingness to

listen and obey may be freely given (November 2, 1991).

Although this is expressing the opinion of just one congregation of church members, it agrees well with innumerable authoritative statements by church leaders published in official publications. The idea of individual responsibility, especially for Bible study, is sounded over and over again, but church statements will reveal that the intended meaning differs from total independence that ignores Biblical or corporate counsel. The following quote discloses that personal responsibility is to be free of the influence of human beings, but dependent on the Bible.

1. Personal responsibility.

The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority--not one or all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support. . . . [There is a danger of people looking] to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves (White, 1888/1950, p. 595).

The need to stand free of control by others is strongly underscored in the next reference.

It is not God's purpose that any human being should yield his mind and will to the control of another, becoming a passive instrument in his hands. No one is to merge his individuality in that of another (White, 1905/1942, p. 242).

Humble dependence upon God is held as a significant

aspect of Bible study, as the following paragraph indicates:

We should exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures and should task the understanding to comprehend, as far as mortals can . . . ; yet we must not forget that the docility and submission of a child is the true spirit of the learner. Scriptural difficulties can never be mastered by the same methods that are employed in grappling with philosophical problems. We should not engage in the study of the Bible with that self-reliance with which so many enter the domains of science, but with a prayerful dependence upon God and a sincere desire to learn His will (White, 1888/1950, p. 599).

Be independent of human thought, but dependent on scripture is the central idea of the above passages, but such a unilateral stance is difficult to reconcile with the idea of a cohesive community. As will be evident, other statements moderate the view and indicate the need for cooperatively yielding to the counsel of others when something less than plainly revealed scripture is at stake.

2. Cooperative community spirit. Paul the Apostle is an interesting example of a thoughtful person who willingly yielded his right to personal opinion when church leaders disagreed with him.

Notwithstanding the fact that Paul was personally taught by God, he had no strained ideas of individual responsibility. While looking to God for direct guidance, he was ever ready to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship. He felt the need of counsel, and when matters of importance arose, he was glad to lay these before the church, and to unite with his brethren in seeking God for wisdom to make right decisions (White, 1911, p. 200).

In a statement which demonstrates the difficulty of

drawing a fine line between independence and cooperation, a church publication expresses the right of independent thinking, while setting limits on private judgment as ultimate authority. To be cohesive, members of a community will all look to the same source of ultimate authority.

The inherent right of the individual to discuss every phase of truth should not be suppressed. But to believe in private judgment as the ultimate authority means relativism, with as many interpretations of Scripture as we have individuals. Man becomes the measure of all things. We have the right to our own body of religious ideas and interpretation insofar as they do not deny or contradict the revealed Word of God . . . The right of private judgment does not necessarily mean the right to ignore or despise the church's position or to think differently from other people. Rather it means the right to think for ourselves (Heppenstall, 1979, p. 12).

3. The middle ground between self-reliance and dependence. Between the poles of ignoring other's opinions and allowing others to do one's thinking, there is a middle ground. Members of a close-knit community have not only personal responsibility but social responsibility as well. In order for harmony to prevail, each person must determine the limits of individual duty and be willing to defer to the judgment of the group in other aspects of communal life and work.

We should study the truth for ourselves. No living man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who it is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a perfect criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject to one another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us to learn what is truth . . . [On the

other hand] we should not become set in our ideas, and think that no one should interfere with our opinions (White, 1889, p. 1).

In the following counsel written to church workers, it is apparent that history provides evidence that the fine line between personal judgment and social harmony has not always been found. At the same time, the statement clarifies how the ideal of unity in diversity can be met by dependence on the same source of authority.

If self had not been so carefully, tenderly cherished, lest it should not find room enough to preserve its native dignity, the Lord could have used these differently constituted characters to do a good work . . . ; for in their diversity of talent, yet unity in Christ, was the power of their usefulness . . . There would be perfect harmony in their diversity (White, 1946, p. 101).

Thoughtful, caring individuals will put the good of the community ahead of their own selfish interests, even while they refuse to allow others to do their thinking for them.

4. The nature of "truth". A question could be raised as to the nature of "truth" in Adventist doctrine. Numerous quotations could be called upon to show that the Adventist church officially sees truth and knowledge as dynamic and constructed, rather than fixed and given, even though new ideas will always need to be measured against the Bible standard. The Bible is not inerrant, yet it is accepted as an authoritative standard.

Granted that the church will interpret its creed of doctrines; but such interpretations are not infallible in themselves. For in the history of our church, interpretations have undergone

change while basic truths have remained.

All truth tends to get colored by the human media through which it passes. Making the church's interpretation alone the final test of religious truth is like measuring water with porous vessels . . . (Heppenstall, 1979, p. 14).

### Summary

This first section of the chapter has shown that the church officially encourages adult-child interaction and independent thinking, but the actual performance in families and in church congregations apparently falls short of the high expectations. Yet research indicates that education by religious communities, including the Adventist education system, can result in higher academic achievement than in public schools or independent private schools, especially for disadvantaged students. Social capital, the adult-child interaction which is augmented by family participation within a consistent value setting, may explain the advantage claimed for religious schools.

Now the subject turns to the larger society in which the church community is embedded. Section II will present the evidence for U.S. societal patterns relative to adult-child interaction and educating thinkers.

### U.S. Society: Adult-child Interactions and Educating Thinkers

While the church in the United States advocates close-knit family and community participation, as well as



educating thinkers, the members of the church are also active members of U.S. society which has dominant ideas and a lifestyle that influence the subgroup despite whatever distinctive religious beliefs they may hold. Two aspects of belief and behavior will be documented because they seem particularly relevant to the way that children are educated to think. The first societal feature to be discussed is the pattern of adult-child interaction both outside and inside the family; second is research references on the current U.S. educational theory on educating thinkers.

#### Adult-Child Interaction Outside and Inside the Home

In this century, the place of family and community in the life of children has changed dramatically. At the turn of the nineteenth century, at least 70% of the U.S. population still lived in rural areas composed of communities "economically undifferentiated, socially homogeneous, tradition-bound, and [where] the relationships among its members [were] highly personal" (Charters, 1963, p. 765; Mintz & Kellogg, 1988). In 1913, 50% of American children were still attending one room schools (Carper, 1992), which suggests that they lived in small, close-knit communities where values were usually quite consistent and homogeneous. Teachers, friends, and neighbors augmented parents influence in interacting with the younger generation.

Various authors have documented the decline of the

small homogeneous community where family, church, and school shared the task of socializing and providing social control for its citizenry (Carper, 1992; Mintz & Kellogg, 1988; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Rath, Harmin & Simon, 1979). By contrast, the vast majority of Americans now live in urban communities "characterized by a high degree of division of labor, anonymity, social heterogeneity, and impersonality in relationships" (Charters, 1963, p. 765). Teachers, friends, and neighbors less frequently add to parents' influence in interacting with the younger generation. Children are hardly more likely to find interaction with adults at home than they do in the community.

By 1995 more than three-quarters of all school-age children and two-thirds of preschoolers will have mothers in the labor force. Yet the quality of surrogate care is too often inadequate. It is estimated that 15% of primary-age and 45% of upper-elementary-age children come home to a house without a parent or other adult. As women return to work, community agencies that have traditionally depended on volunteer support are no longer available to extend social networks, sports programs, scouting, and other activities to children who lack enrichment at home. For preschoolers, fewer women are available to take care of other people's children, and makeshift caregiving abounds. Not many fathers have working conditions flexible enough to fill these gaps, and good day care is expensive and hard to come by (Healy, 1990, p. 43).

Instead of the closeness and personal interaction that formerly resulted in the transmission of values, modern life offers a confusing welter of choices from all types of media, from instability in families, and from the assortment of varied ideas encountered in everyday life, in travel, and

in world events.

If the family as a unit had been exposed to all these choices, if the family as a unit could have discussed the reasonableness or unreasonableness of what had been presented, every child might have learned something of the meaning of these new ways of living. But . . . with both parents working and one or both away all day and, with more broken homes, there was even less family sharing. The consequence, we submit, has been a growing confusion in the life of children as to what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unjust (Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1978, p. 18).

Family talk is one of the sacrifices made to urban living. "Good conversation is a rara avis in homes today . . . Traditional sources of language exposure have ceded much of their neural real estate to television and the peer culture" (Healy, 1990, p. 88). Yet Kontos found that "home factors were the primary predictor of 100 children's cognitive and language development"(1992, p. 1).

All too often divorce adds a further dimension to the loss of adult-child interaction. Bloom (1987) supports this. "The most visible sign of our increasing separateness and, in its turn, the cause of ever greater separateness is divorce" (p. 118). Mulholland and associates found a negative effect on the school work of seventh and eighth graders even six and a half years after the divorce (Divorce, 1992).

Religion in the home has also declined in this century, and the effects are far reaching. After declaring that religion is an "element of fundamental primary learning that has disappeared" (1987, p. 56), Bloom places the blame on

the family for the consequent ills:

It was the home--and the houses of worship related to it--where religion lived. The holy days and the common language and set of references that permeated most households constituted a large part of the family bond and gave it a substantial content. Moses and the Tables of the Law, Jesus and his preaching of brotherly love, had an imaginative existence. Passages from the Psalms and the Gospels echoed in children's heads. Attending church or synagogue, praying at the table, were a way of life, inseparable from the moral education that was supposed to be the family's special responsibility in this democracy. Actually, the moral teaching was the religious teaching. There was no abstract doctrine. The things one was supposed to do, the sense that the world supported them and punished disobedience, were all incarnated in the Biblical stories. The loss of the gripping inner life vouchsafed those who were nurtured by the Bible must be primarily attributed not to our schools or political life, but to the family, which, with all its rights to privacy, has proved unable to maintain any content of its own. The dreariness of the family's spiritual landscape passes belief. It is as monochrome and unrelated to those who pass through it as are the barren steppes frequented by nomads who take their mere subsistence and move on. The delicate fabric of the civilization into which the successive generations are woven has unraveled, and children are raised, not educated (Bloom, 1987, pp. 56, 57).

Bellah, Madsen, Tipton, Swidler & Sullivan (1985) argue that many Americans have withdrawn into lifestyle enclaves based on a leisure culture and individual fulfillment, and have detached themselves from parental responsibility and public life with its concerns about social welfare. Without strong beliefs or real commitments themselves, parents are ill equipped to transmit either beliefs or commitments to their children.

After enumerating the evidence for a decline in the

well-being of American youth, Uhlenberg and Eggebeen (1988) conclude that:

Adults in our society are increasingly committed to pursuing their own personal happiness and individual self-fulfillment. The pursuit of self-fulfillment, or self-actualization, or self-realization necessarily implies a reduction in self-sacrificing behavior. In such an environment, children fare badly. The needs of young people are not going to be met satisfactorily in a society where adults are unwilling to sacrifice their personal goals for their children's welfare.

One is reminded that Durkheim (1961, 1973) warned years ago of the effects of allowing individualism to gain ascendancy over the good of society or community. Individuality is most fully realized and liberated by knowledgeably submitting oneself to society's rules. When the rules fail to exert a regulatory influence on behavior, Durkheim believed the incidence of dejection and pessimism and suicide rise in society.

This has been a sampling of evidence that a lessening of adult-child interaction in home and community has taken place, along with the social capital such constructive interaction could have provided. Most American children apparently do not live within an environment of shared values. Rather, they are more likely to be exposed to a varying array of conflicting values.

The next segment of this chapter delineates current U.S. educational theories on teaching and learning.

### Educational Theory on Educating Thinkers

During the 1970's attention turned from behavioral learning theories with their emphasis on control and manipulation to cognitive learning theories. Learners are now viewed as active constructors of knowledge and meaning, not passive assimilaters of information; reasoning-based learning is emphasized rather than memory-based learning; adult-mediated instruction takes precedence over teacher "telling" and independent study. These are not discrete factors in learning; they are closely interrelated. But, for the purpose of discussion, evidence for each of these will be presented separately.

#### Active constructors of knowledge and meaning.

Resnick & Klopfer (1989) have summarized the current view on active learning as follows:

Modern cognitive theory . . . offers a perspective on learning that is thinking- and meaning-centered, yet insists on a central place for knowledge and instruction. Cognitive scientists today share with Piagetians a constructivist view of learning, asserting that people are not recorders of information but builders of knowledge structures. To know something is not just to have received information but also to have interpreted it and related it to other knowledge. To be skilled is not just to know how to perform some action but also to know when to perform it and to adapt the performance to varied circumstances (pp. 3, 4).

The concept of active learning gained prominence in the 1970's, but it was not a new idea. Hogan (1989) documented the New England pedagogues of the nineteenth century who

were influenced by John Locke and Pestalozzi among others. For them, "Education involved more than acquiring 'useful information'; it also involved developing 'understanding' and cultivating the 'faculties' or the 'powers' of the mind" (p. 2).

Cohen (1988) recorded the contribution Dewey made to the idea of active learning. Knowledge itself began to be viewed as constructed rather than settled fact that is entirely authoritative.

The notion that learning is a process of active construction rather than passive assimilation . . . is still quite novel. John Dewey advanced a version of this view in the early years of our century, when he argued that school curricula should encourage children to reconstruct the great heritage of extant knowledge by a process of guided reenactment. But he did so in an age when most scientists and fans of science pictured knowledge as solidly objective and enduring, when the reigning psychology pictured the mind as more a passive receptor than an active creator of knowledge, and when Dewey and other reformers agreed that most school learning was in fact passive . . . The more radical notion, that scientific knowledge itself is constructed, not simply discovered, that science is more a feat of disciplined imagination than of quarrying hard facts, has begun to gain some scientific acceptance only in recent years. And the idea that minds actively construct knowledge is only beginning to be explored in psychological research and to be broadcast in educated opinion (despite earlier philosophical intimations and announcements) (pp. 22, 23).

A corollary to students constructing their own ideas is the fact that they are prone to misconceptions.

. . . observation suggests that many learning difficulties arise because the student does not enter the classroom as a tabula rasa, a clean sheet on which the teacher inscribes knowledge. Nor is removal of erroneous beliefs a simple

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matter of cleaning mistakes from the blackboard of the mind. Instead, the students arrive with complex sets of preconceptions which . . . are held strongly and are difficult to change.

. . . attempts to bring about changes in learners' conceptions might well be based on the conditions that Posner, Strike, Hewson, and Gertzog (1982) have set out: the learner must be dissatisfied with his or her existing conception, and must find the new conception intelligible, plausible, and fruitful (White & Tisher, 1986, pp. 885, 886).

Thus a teacher's work is not limited to assisting a student to construct meaning, but includes uncovering misconceptions and planning ways to help students accept new understandings.

#### Meaningful understanding rather than skill mastering.

Numerous researchers address the importance of meaningful learning. Haberman (1991) contrasts effective pedagogy which is characterized by directive, controlling methods, with good teaching which sets up learning environments that ensure student's thoughtful participation. One way that he describes good teaching is as follows:

Whenever students are being helped to see major concepts, big ideas, and general principles and are not merely engaged in the pursuit of isolated facts, good teaching is going on (p. 293).

Berman (1984) considers the first goal of life-long learning to be the development of meaning-making and thinking skills. Teachers' attitudes toward learning are crucial because, "The tendencies toward lifelong learning begin in early childhood and can be enhanced or deterred

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An important component of meaningful understanding is provided by schema theory, which asserts that related knowledge is organized in interconnected structures in the brain (Shuell, 1986). Schema is a problematic term because it has been interpreted in various ways (Alexander, Schallert & Hare, 1991). Herman, Anderson, Pearson, & Nagy (1987) defined it "as an organized network of concepts embodying some aspect of an individual's knowledge base" (In Alexander, Schallert & Hare, 1991, p. 335). It is so used in this study.

Schema theory has led to the realization that learning outcomes depend "on the nature and amount of prior knowledge that an individual brings to a comprehension and learning situation" (Alexander, Schallert & Hare, 1991, p. 335). Because each person has a different set of prior knowledge, organized differently in brain cells, schema theory provides insight into the biological mechanism whereby learners are active constructors of knowledge and meaning, with strong tendencies toward misconceptions. These fallacies can be carried for years unless someone facilitates the integration of better understanding. Adults are needed to detect children's misconceptions and to arrange learning experiences that help children grasp preferable interpretations. Such help is called adult-mediated instruction.

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### Adult-mediated instruction.

The Vygotskian perspective views learning as a process that initially takes place in a social setting. Children add schemata and construct knowledge as they interact with adults and more capable peers. The more interaction, the more learning takes place. Thus, adults are crucial to the process of learning.

Vygotsky believed that new psychological functions will first be manifested while children are in interaction with others who can support and nurture their efforts. These shared efforts are gradually taken over by the child and transformed into individual abilities (Cole & Cole, 1989, p. 295).

Olson (1992) also emphasizes the fact that children gradually assume responsibility for their own learning. As they accumulate prior knowledge, they become able to construct new meanings more independently.

. . . A child rarely constructs knowledge for itself but builds knowledge through shared intentionality in which the child takes a "loan on consciousness" from the tutor, who progressively turns responsibility for knowledge and action back to the child (p. 31).

Vygotsky's concept that initial learning takes place in a social setting organized and watched over by adults or more capable peers, which leads gradually to independence on the part of the child, informs much of current thought on teaching strategies (Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991; Brophy, 1988; Palincsar & Brown, in press, 1986, 1984; Gavelek, 1985; Raphael, 1985).

The concept of strategic teaching focuses mainly on the role of the teacher as model and

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mediator. As a model, the strategic teacher demonstrates how to think through a given task, how to apply the strategies, and "what to do when you don't know what to do." As a mediator, the strategic teacher intercedes between the students and the learning environment to help students learn and grow, anticipates problems in learning and plans solutions to solve them, and guides and coaches students through the initial phases of learning to independent learning (Jones, Palincsar, Ogle & Carr, 1987, p. x).

### Summary

Evidence abounds that current research on teaching and learning theory espouse adult-mediated instruction for active constructors of knowledge and meaning rather than directive, controlling instruction that aims to inculcate isolated facts. But, as in the Adventist church, a serious question arises as to whether teaching practice is congruent with the espoused theory.

The final section of this chapter is a view of what current classroom teaching tends to look like, a discussion of the efforts educators are making to bring the practice of teaching into line with espoused theory, and possible explanations for why theory and practice continue to differ.

### Efforts to Reconcile the Differences

#### Between The Practice of Teaching and Espoused Theory

While adult-child interaction has changed dramatically, the practice of teaching has been highly resistant to change. Although there is wide agreement regarding what is worthwhile learning, the intellectual and character traits

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"are not effectively learned in contemporary schools" (Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin & Cusick, 1986, p. 189). Educators continue to face the challenge of bringing classroom practice into line with the dominant view on how learning most effectively takes place. The same dichotomy found in the Adventist Church between theory and practice is found in public education.

### The Traditional--And Continuing--American Practice of Teaching

Much educational literature in the past few years has deplored the unchanging nature of classroom teaching. Educational researchers wage a continuing struggle to improve the practice of teaching; "however, education remains unchanged. Indeed, it is the most obdurate of our social institutions" (Doyle, 1992, p. 515). Reforms come and go, administrative models wax and wane, but what happens beyond the classroom door generally maintains an unvarying sameness.

Haberman (1991) described the customary tasks of American teachers.

. . . there is a typical form of teaching that has become accepted as basic. Indeed, this basic urban style, which encompasses a body of specific teacher acts, seems to have grown stronger each year since I first noted it in 1958. A teacher in an urban school of the 1990s who did not engage in these basic acts as the primary means of instruction would be regarded as deviant. In most urban schools, not performing these acts for most of each day would be considered *prima facie* evidence of not teaching.

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The teaching acts that constitute the core functions of urban teaching are:

- giving information,
- asking questions,
- giving directions,
- making assignments,
- monitoring seatwork,
- reviewing assignments,
- giving tests,
- reviewing tests,
- assigning homework,
- reviewing homework,
- settling disputes,
- punishing noncompliance,
- marking papers, and
- giving grades.

This basic menu of urban teacher functions characterizes all levels and subjects (p. 291).

While Haberman saw uniformity between 1958 and 1991, Cuban (1984) documented apparent uniformity in teaching patterns over 90 years of American schools. Despite intense reform efforts, methods are generally unmarked by change (Cuban, 1990). Classrooms are teacher centered and classroom practices tend toward memory-based learning.

Goodlad (1984) corroborates the findings.

We already have seen the extraordinary sameness of instructional practices in the more than 1,000 classrooms observed. Arraying these data by schools did not change the basic picture. We found some exemplary classes, but these were scattered about from level to level and school to school. These classes tended to be different in degree rather than kind. That is, the teachers tended to do somewhat more or less of what characterized the classes generally (p. 246).

Jackson (1968) also found life in classrooms to be predictable and more akin to submission than to curiosity. "Despite a half century of research and the development of several sophisticated theories, the teacher's classroom activities have been relatively unaffected by what the

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learning theorist has to say" (p. 157).

Although wave after wave of attempts to reform classroom practice have been ineffectual thus far, efforts continue unabated. The next segment will look at the current directions that educational reform is taking.

### Current Reform Efforts

After years of imposing external controls to fix education by legislating change, shuffling curricula, and fiddling with the educational governing systems, the most that had been achieved was minimal compliance, but no real change (Cuban, 1990; Cohen, 1988; Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin & Cusick, 1986; Powell, Farrar & Cohen, 1985; Sizer, 1984; Church & Sedlak, 1976).

Current reform efforts tend to involve active participation and leadership by personnel at the school district level rather than being handed down as dictates from higher levels of administration. Parent participation in the schools is a frequent topic. The major exceptions to district level reforms are the much talked about efforts to formulate national standards, a national curriculum, and to institute teacher certification exams.

### Local reform initiatives.

Without teacher commitment, administrative support, and staff-support activities to sustain reform efforts, there is no real hope of transforming learning and teaching;

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therefore, current attempts at reform emphasize measures that provide for actual teachers to actually talk to, learn from, and give moral support to each other, rather than top-down administrative decrees (Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1992; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1979; Miller & Wolf, 1979).

### Parent participation.

Public school settings are hampered by the lack of value consistency with many of their constituents, but rather than dwell on this issue, they emphasize instead what it is possible for them to do to encourage parental involvement in the schools. Since the early 1980's there has been a rising tide of publications on the value of home, community and school working together to provide education for the young. In AERA \*GSC Newsletter, (1990) Christopher Cross, Assistant US Secretary of Education, challenged graduate student researchers to make significant contributions to American education. At the top of a list of important education issues he placed "families, communities, and children's learning." In analyzing the Administrator and Teacher Survey, Chubb (1988, p. 40) found that, "The largest estimated influence on the effectiveness of school organization is the role of parents in the school."

Okey (1989) has noted that the most successful urban school reform programs have taken deliberate steps to

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strengthen the ties among family, community and school.

There are many other examples to show that public schools are working to involve parents in the education process.

Phi Delta Kappan dedicated the January, 1991 issue to parent involvement. The editor (p. 339), in introducing the issue, states that, "empowering parents will yield payoffs for school people, including higher student achievement and greater public support."

The Association of Teacher Education chose to emphasize the critical link between education and family by using "Pulling Together for the Future" as the theme of their 72nd Annual Meeting (1992). Kretovics, Farber & Armaline (1991) reported on Project SHAPE which empowers teachers to bring about school reform. These authors claimed that dramatically increased parent participation has contributed to improved achievement.

An issue related to parent participation is parent choice. A voucher system would allow parents to choose the school for their children and present a voucher valued at their share of the tax dollars allotted for education. Ten states now have some form of parental choice, and California is battling over a measure that would allow parents to choose even private schools, although a voucher would be worth only half as much outside the public school system. Proponents contend that schools would reform in order to compete, thus improving schooling. Educational organizations are fighting against the measure, because "it

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would siphon off more than \$1 billion from public schools" (Reinhold, 1992, p. B7).

### A national curriculum.

The last few years have brought a renewed bid for a common academic curriculum for all American students (Eisner, 1992; Cuban, 1990). A current twist on this old issue is the interest by big business in taking a hand in reforms. It is as though heavy weight businessmen believe they will be able to legislate change in teaching even though educational administrators failed to do so (Kaplan & Usdan, 1992). However, Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin & Cusick (1986) posit a reason why a national curriculum will not be embraced in the U. S., namely, the American "tradition of valuing pragmatism, utilitarianism, and individualism."

Some have questioned whether a national curriculum would meet the needs of the diverse cultures represented in the American public schools. Tyack (1974) argues that a one-size-fits-all education system does not work for a range of ethnic and cultural groups. It is only best for--or at least best in the eyes of--the dominant group. Tyack asserted that,

To succeed in improving the schooling of the dispossessed, educators are increasingly realizing that they need to share power over educational decision-making with representatives of urban communities they serve, that they need to find ways to teach that match the learning styles of the many ethnic groups, that they need to develop many alternatives within the system . . . (p. 291).

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These are suggestions which hardly fit with a national curriculum.

In contrast to a national curriculum of academic content, Butts (1988) campaigns for the specific teaching of civic values underlying democratic citizenship. He argues that such education is essential if citizens are to make well-informed judgments concerning public policies and practices. He believes that common ground can be found that will be acceptable to different ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities. His hopes have yet to be realized.

The final segment of this chapter explores researchers' explanations for why belief and practice are not congruent.

#### Why Differences Remain Between Espoused Belief and Practice

Researchers offer varying explanations for the failure of reforms to change the practice of teaching. Chubb & Moe (1990) attribute failure to the school organization; the institutions that govern the public schools are the problem. They believe a more competitive system with parent-student choice and school autonomy would result in higher academic achievement.

Goldenberg & Gallimore (1991) see staff development practices such as quick-fix workshops as the cause.

We do not think the answer lies in the creation of a huge, but temporary, training program but, rather, in permanent and fundamental change in schools. Such a change would ensure that the intellectual and professional life of a teacher becomes more stimulating, demanding, and satisfying.

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An indispensable feature of this change must be opportunities for teachers to do detailed and continuing analysis of their teaching in a context with the atmosphere and substance of a graduate seminar . . . [which] should become a permanent feature of teaching life, not a one-shot training program (p. 72).

Well, so much for heading home within the hour after the students leave.

Raywid (1985) sees teachers suffering from disaffection and psychic estrangement from schools because they lack alternatives and options that would allow for reforms. Sarason (1971) believes the intended outcomes of change are not clearly recognized, nor is there opportunity for teachers to discuss them. Top-down change efforts won't buy teacher loyalty.

Cuban (1990) suggests a political perspective, that reforms are not supposed to succeed in changing the regularities of schooling, because the dominant society is satisfied with the way education functions; and that all school personnel from school boards down to teachers are controlled by larger forces. However, he does cite persuasive evidence that schools, collectively and individually, "take initiatives and influence their surroundings" (p. 10); therefore, political perspective can not explain all the failure of reforms.

By combining an institutional perspective with the political perspective, Cuban (1990) claims to explain why reforms keep coming back around without making a substantial difference in classrooms. School organizations satisfy

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their constituencies by carefully giving evidence that they live up to what is believed proper for schools: teachers are certified, expected classes are provided, schools are accredited. "In this manner, the school organization signals external groups that it is responsive to their values" (p.10). This close union between public expectation and organizational practice is referred to as "tight coupling" (Cuban, 1990; Meyer & Rowan, 1978).

When it comes to classroom instruction, the tight coupling gives way to "loose coupling," as the administrators basically trust the teachers to do the right thing. Little formal evaluation or supervision takes place (Cuban, 1990; Meyer & Rowan, 1978).

Problems of school organization, staff development, lack of alternatives, and fuzzy intentions are all symptoms of what's wrong with reform efforts. Cohen (1988) goes to the root cause of the dilemma when he argues that the innate difficulty of change has been overlooked and underestimated. He contends that the practice of teaching is grounded in ideas that have been believed for hundreds of years. The role of teacher and learner, (or role of male administrator and female teacher, for that matter), the process of learning, the nature of knowledge--these age old beliefs handed down by the culture from generation to generation are the death knell of reform efforts. Because the beliefs have changed little, the classroom instruction has changed little.

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Contemporary instructional practices embody an old inheritance. In this inheritance, teachers are active; they are tellers of truth who inculcate knowledge in students. Learners are relatively passive; students are accumulators of material who listen, read, and perform prescribed exercises. And knowledge is objective and stable. It consists of facts, laws, and procedures that are true, independent of those who learn, and entirely authoritative. These ideas and practices have deep and old roots in academic habit (pp. 16, 17).

Evidence is accumulating to substantiate his theory.

Future teachers come to college with years of experience in observing classroom instruction. Their education course is designed to help them prepare to teach in a manner consistent with cognitive psychology's perspective of active learners actively constructing knowledge. Yet, Holt-Reynolds (1991b) found evidence that preservice teachers retained their initial beliefs about teaching practice. Coursework, rather than expanding their repertoire of professional rationales for instructional decision making, was unconsciously manipulated to fit in with preexisting assumptions based on their personal experiences in classrooms.

Alvermann & Hayes (1989) also concur with Cohen's conclusions. They worked with practicing teachers for six months to shift their pattern of recitation--teacher initiates, student responds, teacher evaluates--to a give and take dialogue with students. However, there remained "a marked stability in their patterns of verbal exchange" (p. 331). The researchers concluded that the intervention was

"mostly unsuccessful" (p.331) at least in part because the changes they were trying to make "conflicted with many of the teachers' experiences, beliefs, and intuitions" (p. 332).

Despite whatever ultimate reason there may be for the failure of school reforms, researchers do agree on the one fact that classroom practice has generally not come into line with educational theory espoused by schools of education in research universities.

### Summary

In this chapter it has been shown that in two differing milieus, the contradictions between educational theory and practice share similarities. Just as religious education in the Adventist community tends to differ from the meaningful, thoughtful, reasoning-based learning environment suggested by the church's espoused goals, most classroom teaching remains out of harmony with current educational research.

Both settings agree on the need for reasoning-based learning. They may differ in value consistency and amount of adult-child interaction. The church community tends to provide a consistent value environment for its children, and endeavors to supply adult-mediated instruction. The larger American society tends to expose its children to an environment consisting of multiple value systems, and has many features which limit adult-child interaction.

Thus this study sets out to observe whether a

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kindergarten Sabbath school within a close-knit religious community can transcend the influence of the ideas and practices of the larger American society and achieve the goal of educating thinkers. It also is an additional resource for exploring the possibilities with four to seven year old children of social capital which is vanishing from most environments in American culture. Data collected to provide initial answers to the following questions will be presented in CHAPTER 5.

1. To what extent does the Sabbath school Bible lesson time cultivate adult-child interactions?

2. To what extent does the Sabbath school Bible lesson time cultivate reasoning-based learning?

3. What factors seem to encourage adult-child interactions?

4. What factors seem to encourage reasoning-based learning?

5. What factors seem to hinder adult-child interactions?

6. What factors seem to hinder reasoning-based learning?

7. What appears to be the impact of adult-child interaction as a form of social capital on the development of reasoning-based learning?

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### Chapter 3: Description of the Setting for the Study

The setting for this research project was Valley View Seventh-day Adventist Church close to an East Coast metropolitan center. As in most Adventist churches, this one provides separate weekend religious education classes--called Sabbath schools--for each age group. The case study centers on the Bible lesson portion of a kindergarten Sabbath school with four to seven year olds.

As an aid to the reader, this chapter provides background information on the context within which this descriptive study took place. The first part of the chapter is a brief history of Adventist Sabbath schools and study material for children. Then the organization of Adventist religious education for children is described. Third is an explanation of how the curriculum is designed and intended for use. Fourth is an overview of the study site. Finally, even though the case study focuses on the time spent studying the weekly Bible lesson, for a rounded picture of what happens in a kindergarten Sabbath school one entire weekly program is described.



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## Historical View of the Seventh-day Adventist

### Sabbath School System

The historical roots of the religious education classes are closely tied to the history of the Adventist church, which initially arose from an event which prompted independent thinkers to value what they found in the Bible over the conclusions preached in their home churches. As a consequence they were individually expelled from a cross-section of American Protestant churches in the mid-19th century. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was formally organized during the early 1860's. The fundamental doctrinal convictions of the leaders, which included the idea that each individual is responsible to God for an understanding of the Bible as a standard of belief and practice, prompted them to begin to write Bible study material for young people in 1852.

The first regular Sabbath school was probably the one started in 1853 in Rochester, New York. There were two divisions, one for adults and one for children. In 1861 the first Bible lessons for small children appeared in print. The children's Sabbath school was divided into divisions for children and youth in 1869, and then divided again in 1878 when "The Bird's Nest" was established for younger children. The name was chosen because the group first met in a circular upper room of the Adventist church in Battle Creek, Michigan. This was renamed the kindergarten division in 1886. Since the mid-1900's there have been seven age-group

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By 1878 there were 600 Sabbath schools in the United States. The 128th Annual Statistical Report - 1990 (Yost, 1990) estimates 76,323 Sabbath schools worldwide with over 8 million members. Kindergarten Sabbath school is not separately reported, but it is safe to assume that almost all Sabbath schools have a kindergarten division. Probably more than 1 million children are studying the kindergarten lesson week by week.

#### How Adventist Religious Education for Children Is Organized

The Adventist church provides one and a half hours of religious education on Saturday morning for each age group from birth to adults. The kindergarten division of the Sabbath school provides for the needs of four to seven-year-old children. The program includes many activities that promote general literacy while teaching the beliefs and moral values of the Adventist community.

Before the actual program begins, there are activities provided for the children who arrive early. These might be music, a nature story, pictures to draw, color and/or cut, learning centers, opportunity to practice repeating a Bible verse to an adult, or a video to watch.

After the opening exercises of music, welcoming and prayer, a mission story usually features the part of the world where mission offerings are helping special projects. Students may take turns locating and naming the focus

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country on a large blow-up globe. A character-building or nature theme program may be presented also.

Approximately twenty minutes of the program time is allotted to studying the day's Bible lesson in groups of five to seven children with a teacher. This research will focus on the Bible lesson time.

One leader and one assistant are appointed and approved for each age-group division of the Sabbath school by the church board, but other helpers and the Sabbath school teachers are untrained volunteers enlisted by the leaders. They are picked with a certain amount of knowledge that they are upstanding citizens who will give accurate Bible information and loving attention to the children. In reality, they only have to meet two criteria: Be regularly attending the church and be willing to help. Usually they are adults, but they may be teenagers or even younger who, for one reason or another, prefer to help with the children rather than meet with their own age group.

The teachers are provided with all the information and visual aids necessary for the Bible lesson. The use they make of the provided materials is up to them. Some spend many hours creatively planning for the time spent with their group. Others walk in on Saturday morning and look over the lesson during the program that precedes the small group work. Nobody formally evaluates their efforts on the basis of what children learn, so their teaching strategies are intrinsically motivated, although the unconscious modeling

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of other volunteer teachers around them undoubtedly has an effect. Occasional workshops are held to assist them in teaching more effectively, but they are under no coercion to attend. If burnout occurs, it is easy for them to quit if another willing person can be found to replace them.

The religious education given in the home cannot be overlooked in this study. The Bible class meets only once a week for twenty minutes, but there is an expectation of daily study at home in preparation for the weekend class. A wide range of preparedness results. Because only pre-readers are involved in this study, they all require assistance in preparing for the lesson. Therefore, the home study pattern determines the child's readiness to participate in the Bible lesson discussion in Sabbath school.

#### How the Curriculum Is Designed and Intended for Use

Study of the same passage of scripture week by week is an important part of world-wide church unity. The General Conference Working Policy, 1990-1991 (p. 274) states that the church "provides systematic Bible study guides for all age groups in all world divisions, encouraging their daily use on a personal basis, and as the subject for group study and discussion in Sabbath School. This centralized plan makes provision for all Sabbath School members to study the same age-graded Bible lessons at the same time worldwide. In this way the Church is strengthened and unified,



utilizing curricula which are thoroughly planned and lessons which have been carefully edited by committees appointed to interpret the Scriptures, as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

In harmony with the church philosophy on the importance of Bible study, the world headquarters of the church organization produces study material for each age group. Children younger than four have a one year cycle of Bible stories, while ages four through nine have a three year cycle of Bible stories. Preteens and teenagers have a four year cycle of Bible topics related to their life needs. Adults have lessons covering a book of the Bible or topics which draw from various parts of the Bible. All material is designed to encourage personal Bible study, not replace it.

More than any other single event, the Sabbath school Bible lesson tends to unite the world-wide Adventist church of about 8 million Sabbath school members. There is no other frequent event in which all Seventh-day Adventists participate.

Approximately once in five years a group of representatives from the regional world headquarters meet to study the curriculum and decide on changes. Between times, the elected staff of the General Conference Department of Church Ministries oversees the work of curriculum preparation. Revision and updating goes on continuously with the assistance of representative reading committees.

Most material is recycled with modifications two or

three times. Newly written lessons are contracted from Adventist freelance writers who are actually working with Sabbath school divisions at the age level for which they write. The manuscripts as they come from the writers are sent to worldwide Adventist reading committees for evaluation. From their recommendations modifications are made and editing done at the General Conference by staff in the Department of Church Ministries. The manuscripts are then sent to the press for publishing in English, and sent to the regional world headquarters for adaptation and translation into other languages.

Every three months, from a national office, every Sabbath school receives the lesson materials for each age group. There are two types of exceptions. Some countries cannot afford the material on a quarterly basis. They may distribute a book for children that contains one page for each Bible story of the three year cycle, or they may simply send a letter to the churches that gives the dates of the next thirteen Sabbaths, the Bible story for children each Sabbath, and the scripture reference for each story.

The second type of exception has been the countries which were not allowed by their governments to hold any religious education classes for children. The number of such countries has dropped drastically in the last year or two, and these countries are now hurrying to organize children's Sabbath schools and publish the church's Bible curriculum materials.

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Along with the Bible lessons go encouragement and instruction for making the programs and lessons interactive with plenty of student involvement and participation. All of the suggestions may be used, adapted, or ignored as long as the basic Bible story or topic is covered.

Individual study is encouraged by take-home Bible lesson materials that are given to all age level participants with the expectation that there will be daily Bible study at home in preparation for the weekend class. Some come to Sabbath school having memorized the Bible verse and studied the lesson several times. Others spend no time and are unfamiliar with the topic. The religious education in the home is a crucial component of the church's enacted curriculum for children who are not able to study alone. The church philosophy reaches the four to seven year old Sabbath school members primarily through the family and the Sabbath school teachers.

#### Overview of the Study Site

The site of this study is the Valley View Adventist Kindergarten Sabbath school. Valley View is a moderately large church in a cosmopolitan suburb 15 miles from a major East Coast city. The membership of the Sabbath school reflects the multiracial mix of the surrounding area. Approximately one third are white, one third are black, and the other third are Indian or Hispanic. The children are too young to have formally joined the church, but 75% come

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from Adventist homes. The others are brought by parents who are not Adventist, or by neighbors, friends, relatives, or care givers.

The church is located on a hill at the convergence of two minor highways, two miles from a major road. Attractive landscaping surrounds the church; office buildings, a bank, and small businesses are the nearest neighbors.

The area has not always been a business district. The church located on this site 90 years ago when Valley View was a tiny community in a forest. A new church building was constructed in 1953. The Adventist community highly values the historical richness of this location. The membership of the church may have previously been double what it is now. Fifty other Adventist churches have organized in the surrounding area and attracted many of Valley View's former members. As the demographics of the area have changed, some Adventists have wanted to sell this church, but the majority of the remaining leaders of the church are against the idea even though many of them have moved to other suburbs and now drive as much as 20 or more miles to attend Valley View.

In the past, many members lived close enough to walk to church, but few if any do now. Transportation is not a problem. A large parking lot belonging to the church is half a block away. Regular bus lines have stops nearby, and a subway station is only two blocks away. A group of church members provide van transportation for those who need it.

Although this study focuses on the twenty minute Bible lesson time, readers may wonder what happens through the remainder of the program. For their benefit, one entire program is described.

#### A Kindergarten Sabbath School Program at Valley View

Little children come beautifully dressed on Saturday morning to a large room which reflects a literate environment. Colorful name tags encourage them to find their own name written on the bird, flower, animal, or other shape that is being used for tags during the quarter. The name tags hanging around their necks match the color of the table for their small group time. The walls of the room are decorated with posters and displays that include a few words. The children that I asked could read the words since they are usually referred to each week. The front of the room is decorated appropriately for the program. There is a piano to one side. Several songs are systematically used so that the children learn them very well. Two or three times a year the whole group is invited to the adult Sabbath school to put on a program. It frequently includes the favorite--and best known--songs.

Here is where the church philosophy finally reaches the thinking of four to seven year old children. What happens? Following is a description of what occurred during one full program during the three months the case study data was collected.

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Kindergarten Sabbath school meets in a large rectangular room. To the right of the entrance is a desk for various paper work. The secretary takes care of records here. To the left is a trellis entwined with artificial flowers. Grouped by color, name tags shaped like hearts hang on the trellis in reach of the entering children. Each one says, "Jesus loves (name)."

At the end of the trellis is a 30" high plywood stand covered with a felt picture of a foreign child representing a part of the world where special projects will receive funding from Sabbath school offerings. The felt child's hand holds the offering basket where each person who enters can put in an offering.

On down the wall to the right is a large bulletin board with a round "On Time" sign and crowns for each child who has arrived on time at least once since the beginning of the quarter. Children place stars on their crown every week when they arrive before 9:30 a.m.

The main section of the room has four rows of small chairs facing toward a very large flannel board which is covered with felt parts of the body and food groups and a list of words related to health. To the left at the front is a piano.

Along the sides of the room and at the back are six small low round tables surrounded with little chairs. Most of the tables have either paper or felt visual aids on them.

One has several little fire engines on it. A huge cupboard across the back of the room, and several chests of drawers in the back right corner complete the furniture in the room.

The general impression upon entering is a tidy room, attractively arranged, and organized for much activity.

### People

At least 15 children arrive early. They are clean and well groomed. The girls wear pretty dresses. The boys wear suits. Seven or eight adults arrive to help in one capacity or another. Whoever is close to the door offers help when a child is trying to get a name tag or put a star on a crown. All the adults are busy with various tasks. Three races, both sexes, and varying age groups are represented.

### Activity

Presession begins with 11 children crowded around one little table. A woman has large lady bugs for them to paste together. When completed, the bugs' wings can spread a little bit. The kids are engrossed in the activity. Children entering the room keep crowding into the group.

Near the entrance, several adults are sorting cuddly toy animals to share with other Sabbath school divisions. There is a lot of talk, but the children are oblivious to it as they work on lady bugs.

A child who was mentioned in every interview enters the room and heads straight for the male teacher sitting at

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table B, the table with the fire trucks. Immediately the two of them begin looking up and reading Bible verses, ignoring the fire trucks. After a few minutes that boy wanders elsewhere, and another smaller boy goes to table B for a hug and a chat with the teacher.

The animals are finally sorted and moved out of the room by adults from other divisions. The remaining helpers prepare items they will use during Sabbath school.

### Program

The leader rings a bell at 9:30 for presession to end and Sabbath school to start. It takes a few more minutes for everyone to gather in the four rows of little chairs. Adult folding chairs are in place here and there among the little ones.

Song: "On Time . . ." The children happily join in, well aware of the words.

Introduction: The leader puts on two felt lady bug puppets and talks about helper bugs that eat other bugs that aren't so good to have around. She explains that scientists are trying to use helper bugs instead of poisons to kill bugs we don't want.

"Does anybody know what's special about today?" (13th Sabbath is the last Sabbath of the quarter. A special offering is taken up for the projects that have been talked about. Traditionally, the program is an extra special culminating event for the quarter's theme, and everyone

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should be able to recite all thirteen memory verses without help.)

"Did you remember to learn all your memory verses?"

(In this Sabbath school, nice gifts such as rather expensive story books or Bible games are given to children who can say thirteen memory verses.)

"Did you remember to bring a special offering?" The audience response to the questions indicates that some but not all had remembered.

Song: "This is the day that the Lord has made . . ."

Prayer: "Who would like to be a prayer volunteer? Who haven't we had before? We want everybody to get a turn."

(There are several hands raised, but fewer for prayer than for other activities.)

Children are instructed to kneel and shut their eyes. One little boy remains seated. Teacher D motions to him during prayer. At first he seems to think she wants him to go up front, but after taking a few steps he catches on and kneels down.

Two children and the leader pray.

Song: "Come into my heart . . ." is sung while everyone is still kneeling.

"Here are helper stickers for my two helpers who prayed." (In this Sabbath school, people who help get helper stickers put on their name tag. These helper stickers are very popular and much sought after.)

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mentioned by every interviewee:] "I'm afraid I can't call on you to take up the offering, because you're rocking your chair. I'll choose someone who sits quietly. I want everyone to get a turn.

Song: "I'm glad I brought my offering . . ." Someone is chosen to bring the basket from near the door and carry it around to anyone who forgot to give before. Most gave their offering as they entered the room.

Prayer Song: "Father, accept this gift we bring . . ." Then the child carries the basket back to the secretary at the door.

Visitors: "Put on your visitor binoculars," the leader instructs. Everyone holds their hands rolled in cylinders to their eyes. Two visitors are identified, accompanied and introduced by members. A cousin brings one; a sister brings a little brother. "We're glad you're here," they are told by the leader.

Song: "Who's come to Sabbath school? . . ." Helper stickers are given to those who brought up visitors. The visitors also get stickers.

Theme: "I need lots of help today. I'm looking for helpers. We talked an awful lot about what this quarter? (Answer: Our body.) Why is it important to talk about the body?"

Answers: It's good for you.

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"Why does Jesus like us to talk about the body?"

Answers: He made us.

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So we can have the joy joy joy joy down in my heart (followed by giggles from the child who said it).

A child is chosen to wear the "anatomy apron" which has been used all quarter. It is an apron that goes over the head with drawings of body organs on both front and back.

Volunteers come up to name and place body organs with velcro over the drawings. Whispered hints help those who need them. Child: "How come you tell her?" Leader: "Well, we're supposed to learn, aren't we?"

Question are asked, such as: "What does the liver do?"

Answer: It's like a funnel that drains out the bad stuff. Leader: "It's a filter for bad stuff." (She is repeating what the child said, with one word substituted.) "That's one thing a nuclear power plant doesn't have, a filter for toxic waste. Maybe you were thinking of our other filters - the kidneys."

Song: "The gift of God is eternal life . . ." "Now I want you to make up more verses about the parts of our body that God has given us."

[Children's ideas for verses]

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2 feet to walk,

arms to hug,

a face that shows [Leader looks questioning then says, "OK, we can do that."]

2 arms to work with,

a mouth that talks.

Many other children have ideas they don't get to sing. Lots of hands wave. One teacher tries to call attention to the child beside him, but gives up without success.

A review of health ideas that are on the felt board under the heading of "My body is a temple for the Holy Spirit":

Exercise

Air

Sunshine

Posture

Water

Food

Rest

Abstinence ("Not taking drugs, or bad things.")

Keeping clean

Trust God

Brief review on all of them, i.e. "Should you drink a lot of pop? Who has to work real hard when you do?" (kidneys) "Is the food good just because it's in the grocery store?" (Making choices) "Sometimes mommies and daddies make bad choices and you can help them."

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Song: "I want to go to heaven some day . . ." (visualized song)

During the song the adult secretary is in front marking attendance on cards.

Instruction about saying memory verses: "Teacher can only give you one word of help."

### Lesson Study

To focus the children's attention, the instruction guide advised the teacher to ask how many hands each one has. Then paper and pencils would be passed out so hands could be traced. The teacher could help the children who needed help and ensure that each drawing had the child's name on it. The next questions would be, "Can you use your hands to help someone? What can you do?" To connect to the story the teacher would say, "Our story today is about a little boy almost your size who was a good helper for God." The papers were to be collected until the end of the class. Because of the time involved in reviewing thirteen memory verses, most teachers skipped this activity.

The Bible story for today is "A Baby Hidden in the Temple." Baby Joash was hidden by his aunt and uncle because he had a wicked grandmother who didn't want anyone else to be king or queen. When he was seven years old, Joash became king and did some very good things such as collect money from the people to repair the temple. He was a helper for God. As the teacher reviews the story with the

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help of felt pictures and asks the children (mostly fact) questions, some children wiggle, squirm, or tap their fingers on the table, but nobody is looking around. Even though the program had been extra long today, all the children are engrossed in their own little classes.

The written instructions for the teacher suggested that several objects or pictures such as the following be brought and handed out to the children: church, clothing, flower, dish towel, Sabbath school magazine. Then each child was to tell how the picture or object could be used to help someone. Again, there was no time for this application activity in most of the little groups.

Small cut, color and paste projects of paper crowns are passed out to help the children remember Joash and the memory verse which today is "I delight to do your will, O my God." Ps. 40:8. Memory verses take more time than usual, because teachers are listening to children review thirteen verses. As the bell rings to end the classes, the teachers who used the activity pass out the traced hands and remind the children to do something to help this week. Some children tell what they will do, and the teacher writes it on a traced hand.

While the classes were in session, the leader and secretary talked about what needs to change for next week which is the beginning of another quarter, so the theme and the offering projects will be different.



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Closing

It takes several minutes to gather the stragglers back to the rows of chairs because the teachers are still busy hearing individuals say memory verses. Once class is over, teachers are removing name tags and hanging them up. Seven children have said all 13 memory verses word for word and come to the front to receive nice hard cover books. Other children are wiggly and tired. It is time to go. Two are called up to receive gifts because they have had perfect attendance.

The leader says a closing prayer. As the children walk past the secretary's desk while leaving the room, they pick up their "Little Friend." This century old, eight page magazine has stories, puzzles, pictures to color, and the Bible lesson for next week. Parents and other care givers are waiting in the hallway for the children.

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## Chapter 4: Design and Methodology

This study set out to investigate one group of four to seven year old children within a close-knit religious community to see whether the community's espoused belief in reasoning-based learning is put into practice even though memory-base learning is the dominant educational practice of the wider American society. Chapter 4 provides a rationale and description of the research design and methodological procedures used in this dissertation. First, the research questions which guide this study are enumerated. Second, a description and a rationale of the research design are presented. Third, the selection procedures for the participants in the study are described. Fourth, the data collection instruments and procedures are specified. And finally, the data analysis procedures are described.

### Research Questions

This study of forty children, along with their parents and Sabbath school teachers, looks at whether an Adventist Sabbath school, whose adult members are influenced by the practices of the broader society, progresses toward the goal of educating the youth to be thinkers. The following questions guided the research:

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1. To what extent does the Sabbath school Bible lesson time cultivate adult-child interactions?
2. To what extent does the Sabbath school Bible lesson time cultivate reasoning-based learning?
3. What factors seem to encourage adult-child interactions?
4. What factors seem to encourage reasoning-based learning?
5. What factors seem to hinder adult-child interactions?
6. What factors seem to hinder reasoning-based learning?
7. What appears to be the impact of adult-child interaction as a form of social capital on the development of reasoning-based learning?

### Research Design

This is a descriptive case study which utilized participant observation, semistructured interviews, and audio-tape recording of five small Sabbath school classes, each comprised of one teacher with five or six children. (Not all forty children attended every week; an overflow class cared for extra children but did not meet regularly enough to be included in this study.)

The Adventist church has a wide-spread and consistent program for children that involves cooperatively the home and an educational setting within the value-sharing

community. The educational setting is called Sabbath school, the religious education class which meets each Saturday morning from 9:30 to 10:45. Approximately twenty minutes of that time is used for teaching a Bible lesson. The study set out first to understand how the program works and whether it promotes the official church stand on educating thinkers, and second to further the references available on social capital, the concept that adult interaction with young people, especially where values are shared, results in enhanced achievement. Of interest here were benefits other than achievement on standardized tests which most social capital research has looked at.

Apparently little research has examined the processes and effects of weekend religious education classes, even though hundreds of thousands of children attend them in the United States. Following the reasoning of Schwab's "grand strategy" (1978, pp. 220-224), as well as the "descriptive-correlational-experimental loop" discussed by Gage (1978, pp. 84, 85), it was important to begin with a research design that would allow flexibility to discover initial kinds of information that could later be built upon with more structured, quantitative research.

Rogers (1984) and Everhart (1975) note that quantitative research answers the question "How well?" while qualitative research--of which case studies are a form--answers the question "How?" A form of research that answers "how" questions could best meet the aims of this study.

Therefore, qualitative or discovery or interpretive research, as it is variously called, was chosen because of the advantage "of direct observation of human activity and interaction in an ongoing, naturalistic fashion" (Rist, 1975).

A case study format was chosen because it was important to observe the Sabbath school program over time and to collect samples of discourse in order to describe how the program works and to explore the ways in which adult-child interaction and reasoning-based learning are encouraged or discouraged. This was a search for patterns rather than an effort to measure specific incidents.

Setting forth the advantages of the case study, Stake (1978) points out:

When explanation, propositional knowledge, and law are the aims of an inquiry, the case study will often be at a disadvantage. When the aims are understanding, extension of experience, and increase in conviction in that which is known, the disadvantage disappears (p. 6).

Once the focus of the study was established, it was apparent that an in-depth study of one Sabbath school would yield more useful information than a cursory investigation of a wider sample of locations.

The major advantage of the case study is that by immersing oneself in the dynamics of a single social entity one is able to uncover events or processes that one might miss with more superficial methods (Biddle & Anderson, 1986, p. 237, 238).

Stake (1978, p. 5) expressed well what is hoped to be achieved by using the case study format for this research.



I believe it is reasonable to conclude that one of the more effective means of adding to understanding for all readers will be by approximating through the words and illustrations of our reports, the natural experience acquired in ordinary personal involvement.

The next section of the chapter will describe the selection procedures for the participants in the study.

### The Participants and the Selection Procedures

#### Choosing the Age Group

All Sabbath school members are expected to study at home during the week in preparation for the Saturday morning Bible lesson time. Because this research focused on adult-child interactions as well as evidence for reasoning-based learning, it was decided to use the oldest group who required adult assistance to study at home. Evidence that the child was familiar with the Bible lesson of the day or had learned the Bible memory verse would then be presumptive evidence that adult-child interaction had taken place.

Kindergarten Sabbath schools in Adventist churches generally are for the children ages four to seven. The next age group, seven to ten, would include good readers able to study by themselves. Therefore, the kindergarten age group was chosen.

#### Choosing the Sabbath School

Once the focus of the study was established and the age group chosen, it was necessary to obtain a reasonably sized

data base, a Sabbath school large enough to have at least five small groups of children, each with one teacher, during the Bible lesson time. With this in mind, the field of possibilities immediately narrowed. Only two kindergarten Sabbath schools in the preferred vicinity had enough members for five small groups. One of them had reconfigured the age groups because of the number of children who attended. Only four and five year olds formed the kindergarten Sabbath school, limiting the developmental range of the children and reducing the desirability of this church as a possible site.

A phone call to the administrator of Valley View, the remaining possible site, began the contact that soon led to permission being granted for the research to be conducted.

Approximately 75% of the kindergarten children interviewed were from Adventist homes. All were regular attendees at the Sabbath school. The group was almost evenly divided among black, white, and Hispanic or from India. The volunteer leaders and teachers, who willingly participated in the study by giving interviews and being observed, were all adult members of the Adventist church and represented each of the ethnic groups mentioned above. Therefore, this one site offered a tiny cross section of the multinational Adventist membership. The participation by children and adults made it possible to generate tentative substantive theory about what goes on in this Adventist kindergarten Sabbath school, and how it assists or detracts from the educating of thinkers.

### Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The predominant methods relied upon for data collection were semistructured clinical interviews, participant observation of the kindergarten Sabbath school, and the audio-taped 20 minute Bible lesson.

#### Interviews

In this study interviews are defined as purposeful conversation in order to get information. The interviewing techniques used were based on those of Posner & Gertzog (1979) and Rosaen (1989). Rosaen (p. 1) identifies the purpose of a clinical interview.

A clinical interview is about subject matter content carried out with an individual . . . for the purpose of learning about that person's perceptions of the subject matter content (cognitive structure) and its applications (function of subject matter content). Typically, the student is presented with a set of tasks that pose a particular problem, situation, or example. The interviewer observes the student's behavior, and questions the student about his or her thinking and what he or she knows about the subject matter content used to complete the task. The focus of the interview is not on whether the student's answers or explanations are right or wrong; a clinical interview is not a test. The focus is on learning about how the student thinks about the subject matter content and its application.

The interviews with children and adults, together with the tasks presented to each, will be discussed separately.

Child interviews. (See Appendix A for child interview.) The interviews with children provided evidence of the different ways they can talk about unfamiliar Bible stories after one hearing, and how the stories can be applied to everyday life. The children's task was to retell the Bible story and suggest how it applies to life today.

Interviews for children and their parents were scheduled when children would be relaxed without time pressure of another closely spaced appointment such as a mealtime or bedtime. Almost all the interviews were held in the interviewees' homes. A few took place Saturday mornings in the Sabbath school room after the class had been dismissed for the day.

After the tape recorder was turned on and the child had a chance to play with it a few minutes to see how his or her voice sounded, each one was verbally requested to help the researcher by taking part in the study. Assurance was given that it would be acceptable at any time to refuse to participate. (See Appendix B: Child's Consent Procedure.)

The semistructured clinical interview began with three open ended questions that encouraged talk about Sabbath school. Next, in order to generate prior knowledge (Anderson, 1985; Ausubel, 1968; Hirsch, 1987), the child was asked to tell what he or she knew about four key concept words which would be in the story. Third, the unfamiliar Bible story was told and the child was invited to help illustrate it with felt pictures. Then the child was asked

to retell the story with the visuals. Fifth, the key concepts were reviewed in order to check new ideas that had been learned from hearing the words in context in the story. Two each factual, interpretive and application questions were asked to stimulate and evaluate the child's thinking about the story. Finally the interview ended with other open ended questions designed to encourage the child to think and ask questions about Bible stories and Sabbath school. Children's interviews were limited to 30 minutes except for unusual cases where a child wanted to keep talking and didn't appear to be tired.

Adult interviews. (See Appendices C and D for adult interviews.) The interviews with teachers and parents focused on how they perceive and practice religious education with children. The interviews established a baseline for what adults say about teaching religion, and specifically Bible stories, to children, ages four through seven. Their task was to describe how they had taught or would teach a particular Bible story.

Appointments were scheduled for each interview. Parents' interviews were the same day as their child or children. Some Sabbath school workers asked for the interview to be given over lunch. Others with more available time arranged for an evening interview at home.

After the tape recorder was turned on, each adult was asked to sign the consent form, and any questions were

answered. Each person was assured that confidentiality would be strictly guarded (See Appendix E).

The semistructured interviews began with open ended questions about the importance and value of the Sabbath school for kindergarten age children. Then each adult was handed the current Bible story lesson quarterly and asked to describe how he or she had taught, or would teach, a recent Bible story lesson. Parents' interviews then shifted to questions designed to elicit information about the amount and kind of adult-child interactions that take place in the home, especially in the area of Bible study. Although the interviewer was a stranger to the parents, because they could guess that she would think this was good, it was quite possible that they might inflate the amount and kind of interactions taking place. There was no later evidence that this had taken place.

After the request to describe a recent Bible story lesson, Sabbath school workers' interviews shifted to questions about working with different kinds of children, amount and type of lesson preparation, and the preferred method of teaching and why. Interviews for different groups of Sabbath school workers were slightly modified because of their differing responsibilities within the Sabbath school.

All adults were asked to suggest needed alterations in kindergarten Sabbath school published materials. The final questions for each one related to Mrs. White's statement that the youth should be trained to be thinkers. They were

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invited to tell what they thought the statement meant, and to suggest ways it could be carried out in the Sabbath school. Forty-five minutes was set for each interview, with planned flexibility to accommodate the actual available time of each adult.

This completes the description of the interview instruments and procedures. The next section reports on the participant observation procedures of the study.

### Participant Observation

The techniques for participant observation in this study were based on those of Bogdan & Biklen (1992) and Spradley (1980). The participant observer faces the problem of determining and negotiating the appropriate degree of participation that allows the insider view while still adequately fulfilling the objectives of the study. At different points in the data collection process, the amount of participation may very well change to adjust to a differing situation. After starting out by looking for ways to help that did not interfere with the observation, this participant observer found it necessary, as the study progressed, to limit the degree of participation. As time went on, one Sabbath school worker in particular took it upon herself to see to it that the researcher had plenty of work to do. To just hang around and make notes seemed to offend her. Fortunately, a brief explanation took care of the problem.



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Soon after the start of interviews, participant observation began in the Saturday morning program concurrently with the audio-tape recording of the five Bible lesson classes.

As an observer every Saturday morning from 9 to 11 a.m. for three months, the researcher was as friendly and helpful as possible in order to create a comfortable rapport with the workers so they would relax and act much as they would have without an observer. Bogdan and Biklen's advice was heeded to interact in a natural and unthreatening manner. The method seemed to succeed, because the Sabbath school helpers were friendly and appeared to be at ease.

By participant observation, additional insights were gained, details were noted, and conversations were engaged in or overheard that enriched the data gathered on all of the research questions. Thus the generated theory was allowed to emerge as the study progressed.

#### Tape Recording the Bible Lesson Time

As they studied their Bible lesson for the day, five small groups of children with their teachers were tape recorded each Saturday morning for thirteen weeks. These small groups were the best opportunities to collect discourse that revealed how reasoning-based learning was encouraged or discouraged. The classes also provided verbatim samples of teaching methodology and behavior to compare with what teachers said about their beliefs and

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teaching practice during the interviews.

### Field Notes

In addition to the tape recording of interviews and Bible lesson time, field notes were kept to describe events, experiences and thoughts that were not captured verbatim (Bogdan & Biklin, 1992). Following Schatzman and Strauss (1973), this information was organized under observational notes, theoretical notes, and methodological notes.

A record of the participant observation experience constituted the major part of the field notes. Informal interviews are examples of additional information put into field notes. As the first one to the Sabbath school room on Saturday morning, the researcher welcomed the few children who arrived before the leaders and teachers. Over time, this provided several opportunities for informal interviews with children who were delighted to receive undivided attention from an adult.

Informal interviews also took place frequently during the observations. Spradley differentiated them from formal interviews as follows (1980, pp. 123, 124):

An informal ethnographic interview occurs whenever you ask someone a question during the course of participant observation . . . A formal interview usually occurs at an appointed time and results from a specific request to hold the interview.

In general, the field notes enriched the tape recorded sources of data by providing a written account of what the

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researcher heard, saw, experienced and thought during the data collection period.

### Data Analysis

Throughout the data collection period and beyond, all data were analyzed according to the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and as outlined by Spradley (1980).

Both the interviews and the small classes were audio-tape recorded so that exact quotations could be preserved. As quickly as transcripts were typed, they were studied for insights into categories of behavior, concepts, and interactions (Spradley, 1980; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in order to generate further ideas about what was happening in the Sabbath school, and to inform future data collection. Participant observations and informal interviews additionally informed the search for categories and patterns (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Once the bulk of the data was collected and transcripts were typed, varied means were used to analyze categories of data as explained below.

### Analysis of Teacher Interviews Compared to Bible Lesson Time

Transcripts of teacher interviews were repeatedly studied for indications of patterns of perceptions and behavior. The constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and search for patterns (Spradley, 1980) in

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these transcripts formed a baseline of teacher perceptions about the value of Sabbath school and how the teaching should be carried out. Then teacher's assertions were tested against the patterns found in the recordings of the small classes where actual interaction with the children took place.

### Analysis of the Lesson Time

The Bible lesson time provided samples of verbatim discourse in the natural interactions between students and teachers. These transcripts also were repeatedly studied for patterns of interaction that would suggest answers to the research questions. Although the concept of social capital implies more than the thinking level of adult-child interactions, it became apparent that identifying the teacher interactions with the students in order to count and score them would be worthwhile for establishing differences among teachers. An interaction was defined as the teacher and one or more children, including an initiator and a responder, communicating around one main topic. (See Appendix F for two sample class transcript pages, one from Class C and one from Class E.)

A scale of 0-4 (adapted from Roehler, 1990) was used for scoring interactions. A score of 0 was given for an interaction where there was no opportunity for a child or children to think. A score of 1 indicated that an interaction provided children a one-shot chance to think. A



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score of 2 was given when a teacher gave children a chance to build on initial thinking. A score of 3 would apply if a teacher continued an interaction with a score of 2 to encourage a serious thought process. The highest score of 4 would be given if serious thought was encouraged together with assistance on how to think seriously about the topic under discussion.

Appendix G lists sample criteria for specific scores. Sample interactions illustrating the different scores are as follows:

Score of 0

Teacher: "Good morning, children. I'm happy to see you today."

Children: "Good morning, teacher."  
 "Good morning."  
 "Did you bring stickers for us today?"

Teacher: "Yes. Before we finish you will get some stickers."

Score of 1

Teacher: "Who can tell me what story we are studying today?"

Children: "I don't know."  
 "They didn't study my lesson this week."  
 "The story's about Daniel."

Teacher: "Very good, Tommy. The story is about Daniel."

Score of 2

Teacher: "All day the king tried to think of a way to save Daniel, but finally he had to be thrown into the lions' den."

Child: "Why couldn't the king change the law so Daniel didn't have to be thrown into the lion's den?"

Teacher: "Why do you think it couldn't be changed?"

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Child: "The king should have changed the law."

Teacher: "Well, the laws of the Medes and Persians could never be changed. That's the way it was."

Score of 3

Teacher: "So who were the men who wanted Daniel thrown to the lions?"

Child: "They were the people Daniel worked with. Would that mean they were his friends?"

Teacher: "They should have been friends since they worked together, shouldn't they. How do you think Daniel felt when his friends planned to hurt him?"

Children: "I bet he cried."  
"Maybe he was really mad."  
"He should have told on them."

Teacher: "Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever had friends be mean to you?"

Children: "My best friend took somebody else on a picnic and didn't even invite me."  
"Jill is always my best friend, except when Sally comes to visit Jill won't even talk to me."  
"Mikey got mad and hit me with a stick."

Teacher: "How did Daniel act toward his friends who were being mean?"

Children: "I can't remember."  
"What did he do?"  
"What does it say in the story?"

Teacher: "Good idea. Let's read in the Bible to see what Daniel did." (Teacher reads the two verses that apply.) "So what did Daniel do?"

Child: "He went home and prayed."  
"He prayed."

Teacher: "How did you act toward your friends when they were unkind?"

Children: "I cried."  
"I was really mad."  
"I threw a rock at Mikey."

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Teacher: "How do you think God wants us to act toward people who pick on us or are mean to us?  
(Pause) What did you learn from this story of Daniel and the lions?"

Children: "Daniel prayed."  
"He didn't fight back."  
"God took care of him."  
"I think God wants us to be kind even when people are mean."

Score of 4

Children: "I want a Bible video for our story today."  
"Yeh, I do too."

Teacher: "All right. Let's have a video, and I'll start by showing you how I watch a Bible video. First I decide what story I want to watch. Why don't you choose for me today?"

Child: "Let's have David and Goliath."  
"Yeh." "Yeh."

Teacher: "Okay, now we know what story we will watch. The second thing I do is to read the story in the Bible."

Child: "But I want to see it on the video."

Teacher: "We'll do that in a minute, but first I'm teaching you how I watch and think about Bible videos. Now listen closely to the story from the Bible, because we are going to compare it with the video to see if they are the same or different."

[Teacher reads the minimum relevant part of the story from the Bible, and takes time to have the children measure how tall Goliath would be in comparison with their fathers.]

Teacher: "Okay, what is the first thing I do when I'm going to watch a Bible video? (Pause) What do I decide?"

Child: "What story."

Teacher: "What is the second thing I do after choosing the story?"

Child: "What you just did."  
"You read it."

Teacher: "What book do I read it from?"

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Child: "Bible."

Teacher: "Now the third thing I do is to watch the video and think real hard about whether the Bible story and the video story are the same. You help me by watching and thinking real hard." (Video is played.)

Teacher: "Now we come to the fun part. After I choose the story, read it from the Bible, and watch the video, then I decide how the stories are alike or different. Did you see any differences?"

Children: "Yeh."  
 "There's alot of difference."  
 "Goliath was taller than we measured."

[With hints from the teacher, other differences are stated.]

Teacher: "Which do you think was closer to the way the story really happened, the Bible story or the video story?"

Child: "I believe the Bible more than I do the video."

Teacher: "I'm glad to head you say that, because we should always compare people's ideas with what the Bible really says. We can trust the Bible. Why do you think the Bible and the video are different?"

Children: "Maybe the people who made the video forgot to read the story in the Bible."  
 "Maybe they changed the story to make a more exciting cartoon."  
 "Maybe they drew Goliath too tall so the cartoon would be scarier, and kids would like to watch it more."

Teacher: "You could be right."

Table 1 on page 122 shows the weekly scores for interactions in each class. For example, on March 31 for Class A, 3 interactions received a score of 0; 12 interactions received a score of 1; and two interactions received a score of 2. The averages at the bottom of the



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table are rounded to the nearest half number.

Once the interactions had been marked, counted, and scored, it was a logical next step to look at how talk was shared by teacher and children. Table 2 on page 123 shows how the talk during each class was divided. In the column for each class, the abbreviation A stands for Adult, when the teacher was talking without an interaction taking place. A-C stands for Adult-Child, for the talk taken up by adult-child interactions. C-C stands for child-child talk when children were interacting without input from the teacher. C-C talk was virtually 100% off task from the class objectives. All of the numbers on Table 2 are percentages. Thus on March 31 in Class A, 39% of the talk was by the teacher alone, 61% of the talk was adult-child interaction, and there was no child-child talk that could be picked up on the audio-tape.

In Appendix F it can be seen how the talk percentages were figured by counting lines of discourse. Each line was identified as the teacher telling, or the teacher interacting with one or more children, or children talking to each other.

This method of figuring percentages has a weakness in that lines of teacher talk usually have more words in them than lines of child talk. However, the intention is to look for evidence that children are being encouraged to think, rather than to minutely define how many words were spoken. Therefore, this acceptable convention used by Richardson &

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Anders (in press) provides accurate enough information for the purposes of the study.

Another point may be considered as well. In this natural setting, with five small groups all meeting in the same room, and extra adults also sharing the space, the secretaries who typed the transcripts did a heroic job of following the discourse of one class while ignoring all other sources of noise. Under such conditions, it would be impossible to type transcripts as perfectly as might happen from a controlled experimental setting. Consequently the percentages on Tables 2 and 3 should be considered to be a close approximation, but not an exact reproduction, of the class talk.

Table 3 on page 124 answers questions that might be raised about the adult-child interactions. How much were the children taking part? Again all the numbers are percentages, rounded to the nearest half percent, and based on counted lines.

All three tables have blank lines indicating when a particular teacher was absent. This study did not attempt to look at the substitute teachers who filled in as needed.

**Table 1: Weekly Interaction Scores**

Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D

Table 1: Weekly Interaction Scores

	Class A			Class B			Class C			Class D			Class E		
	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2
Mar 31	3	12	2	10	7	1	7	7	3	7	8	-	-	-	-
Apr 7	7	17	2	13	5	-	-	10	2	7	7	-	6	10	2
Apr 14	8	7	1	5	-	-	-	6	3	9	3	-	-	-	-
Apr 21	20	8	1	9	1	-	-	-	-	8	8	-	7	5	3
Apr 28	8	21	3	17	5	-	11	8	7	11	8	-	5	4	4
May 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	1	-	-	-	8	10	2
May 12	3	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	1
May 19	-	-	-	9	3	-	8	7	-	12	4	-	6	10	5
May 26	-	-	-	10	4	1	6	5	2	7	9	-	-	-	-
Jun 2	7	22	-	4	7	2	5	7	3	8	13	-	7	9	4
Jun 9	11	5	5	9	7	-	15	10	2	8	10	1	6	12	2
Jun 16	5	9	5	9	8	1	8	8	2	11	9	-	3	6	3
Jun 23	7	7	2	15	2	2	7	4	1	-	-	-	6	7	3
Averages	8	11.5	2	10	4.5	.5	6	7	2	9	8	-	6	8	3

Table 2: Adult and Child Talk as Percentages of Transcript Lines of Class Discourse

Table 2: Adult and Child Talk as Percentages of Transcript Lines of Class Discourse

	Class A			Class B			Class C			Class D			Class E		
	A	A-C	C-C	A	A-C	C-C	A	A-C	C-C	A	A-C	C-C	A	A-C	C-C
Mar 31	39	61	--	36	62	2	36	64	--	33	67	--	--	--	--
Apr 7	23	74	3	44	55	1	56.5	43	.5	19	78	3	17	83	--
Apr 14	24	73	3	17	78	5	30	69	1	28	69	3	--	--	--
Apr 21	17	49	34	39	48	13	--	--	--	21	71	8	10	89.4	.6
Apr 28	26	71	3	49	49	2	35	64.5	.5	38	62	--	13	87	--
May 5	--	--	--	--	--	--	62	38	--	--	--	--	29	71	--
May 12	12.5	86	1.5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	24	76	--
May 19	--	--	--	59	40.5	.5	67	31	2	36.3	58.4	5.3	19	81	--
May 26	--	--	--	40.5	58	1.5	51	48.5	.5	31.5	68	.5	--	--	--
Jun 2	15	84	1	53	41	6	51	49	--	18.5	80	1.5	24.6	75.4	--
Jun 9	8	64	28	28.6	69	2.4	37	63	--	43	56	1	24.6	71.5	3.9
Jun 16	15	81	4	66	33	1	24	75	1	49.6	49.6	.8	26	74	--
Jun 23	20	68.5	11.5	31	64	5	37.3	62.3	.4	--	--	--	42	58	--
Averages	20	71	9	42	54	4	44.3	55.2	.5	32	66	2	23	76.6	.4





Table 3: Children's Percentage of Transcript Lines of Adult-Child Interaction

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class E
Mar 31	30	32	30	25	--
Apr 7	33	31.5	21	27	25
Apr 14	30.5	27	23	22.5	--
Apr 21	41	27.5	--	28	31
Apr 28	30	30	24	28	21
May 5	--	--	23	--	27.5
May 12	36	--	--	--	26
May 19	--	35.5	24.5	30.5	30.5
May 26	--	23	18.5	30	--
Jun 2	34	25.5	28	23.5	22
Jun 9	39.5	31	23	29	29
Jun 16	36	21	22	23.5	25
Jun 23	37	25	29	--	29
Averages	31	31	24	27	26.5

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### Analysis of Student Interviews

As were the other interviews, the student transcripts were repeatedly studied for patterns of perception and behavior. In addition, triangulation (Evertson & Green, 1986), where three sources of information substantiate or refute each other, was used to evaluate information from and about the children. Questions to children and parents elicited coordinate information. Then participant observation or occasionally questioning a teacher filled in the third side of the triangle.

### Analysis of Interviews of Target Students and Their Parents

After student interview transcripts and Bible lesson transcripts had been analyzed, wide differences in student discourse were seen. Therefore, interview transcripts for two groups of four target students each, together with their parents' interview transcripts, were selected for special study.

One group was composed of children who asked idea questions, offered opinions, or added information to conversations during their interview and/or in the Bible lesson time. The second group of target students was comprised of children who did not contribute thoughtfully during their interview or in the Bible lesson time. They seldom made comments beyond one word unless the conversation was socializing or procedural in character.

The interview transcripts for these two groups of

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children, and those of their parents, were then compared for patterns of perception and interaction (Spradley, 1980; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

### Summary

In this chapter, a descriptive case study was defended as particularly useful for examining whether children are being taught to be thinkers or reflectors of others' thought. The setting of a weekend religious education class had previously been little researched; therefore, as a first step, it was important to observe interaction in a naturalistic way and collect samples of discourse in order to begin a search for patterns.

The kindergarten group of 40 regularly attending four to seven year olds became the focus group of the study because they are the oldest group that requires assistance--and thus adult-child interaction--in order to prepare for the weekly Bible lesson time. They yielded information on whether this Adventist group was putting into practice their espoused belief in educating thinkers.

Data collection instruments and procedures for conducting the study were presented. The search for patterns of perceptions and interactions was carried out by means of interviews, participant observation, and recorded Bible lesson times. Semistructured interviews were held with the focus group of children, their parents, and the Sabbath school teachers. Participant observation every

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Saturday morning for a three month period added to the data that was gathered. Bible lesson class sessions each week for the three months provided samples of discourse and behavior to compare with perceptions expressed in interviews.

The data analysis began as a search for patterns of perception and practice in the transcripts of the interviews and Bible lesson times, as well as in the field notes taken on participant observation and informal interviews. As a way of demonstrating differences among teachers, counting and scoring of teacher-child interactions followed. The wide variation noted among children's conversation led to the choice of two target groups. One group of four children evidenced reasoning-based learning, and the other group of four children did not. Their interview transcripts and their parents' interview transcripts were compared for evidence of differing patterns of adult-child interaction.



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## Chapter 5: Findings of the Study

This descriptive study of the Bible lesson time in a kindergarten Sabbath school looked especially at the adult-child interaction, comparing adults' stated perceptions of learning with evidence that they were encouraging children to think or reflect others' thought. The research set out to show that many elements were constant in this setting: the curriculum material, the church philosophy, the available time, the whole group program, the Bible lesson classes made up of small enough groups to provide individual interaction. However, the data revealed contextual variables such as opportunities to interact, organizational structure of small groups, external rewards, time spent socializing, garbled syntax, and misinformation. These affected the opportunity and the motivation for children to engage in reason-based learning.

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to present and interpret the data gathered through analysis of documentary materials including fieldnotes of participant observations, transcripts of audio-tape recordings of class sessions, interview notes and transcripts of audio-taped interviews. Patterns of perception and behavior discovered in the data, leading to suggested answers to the research questions, will

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be presented. Specific examples and supporting details will be drawn upon to demonstrate the plausibility of the assertions made.

The chapter will begin with a brief description of three types of teachers in order to set the stage for the following written snapshots of the five teachers in this study. Each snapshot will focus on four elements: evidence of planning, what counts as important, questioning patterns, and interaction patterns.

In the main section of the chapter, portions of small group exchange recorded during the Bible story lessons, backed up with excerpts from teacher interviews, will be used to suggest answers to the seven research questions addressed in this study.

Based on the class session findings, two groups of children were chosen for further analysis because of a distinct difference in the way they participated in class. One group made substantial contributions to class discussion, and one did not contribute meaningfully. The interviews with their parents were analyzed for patterns of adult-child interaction and perceptions of reason-based or memory-based learning. The chapter will close with the findings of that analysis.

First the description of three types of classroom teachers will be presented.

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A View of the Teachers.

The study showed that many constants held for these five classes, as noted above. Yet the teachers differed in the use they made of what was provided, in their communication styles with the children, and in their interviews. For some of the teachers, what they did sharply contradicted what they said.

In understanding the differences, it is helpful to consider three types of teachers as described by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987). Teacher A is a typical elementary school teacher. Assignments are given with little preparation or followup, and the teacher tells the students what they need to know.

Teacher B is a super teacher who carefully plans the lessons and assignments with the students' level of understanding in mind, then uses activities to activate prior knowledge and relate new knowledge to old. Students are carefully guided through each skill, concept, and activity. Much discussion and questioning takes place. Teacher B represents the consensus of what teachers should do. But the teacher does all the thinking rather than the students, and the classroom is just as teacher-centered as it is for Teacher A

Teacher C takes into account all the things that Teacher B does, but reflects the Vygotskian perspective by making the learning process student-centered.

Teacher C's goal is that eventually it should not be necessary to conduct activities for activating students' prior knowledge, to ask them questions in order to relate new knowledge to old, and so on. Students should be doing that by themselves and on their own initiative. Teacher C asks students themselves to recognize what is new and what is old information. Instead of asking questions of the students, Teacher C models the process of asking questions of the text or of oneself, and coaches the students in carrying out the modeled process (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987, p. 10).

Teachers after the order of Teacher C would be most likely to help the Adventist church achieve its aim of educating thinkers who can reason. It will be seen which type, A B or C the Sabbath school teachers resembled.

What follows is a snapshot of each of the five teachers. Their views as recorded in the interview on the subjects of lesson planning, what counted as important, questioning patterns, and interaction patterns are summarized and compared with actual occurrences during the Bible classes. All of the names have been changed, and in some cases the gender, in order to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Class A (See Appendix H for supporting data.) Over by the piano Jamie met with his little flock of boys. Serious but friendly, creative at thinking up activities but with firm control, Jamie had the appreciation of all the other teachers who were glad the more rambunctious boys didn't attend their classes.

Planning. The lesson transcripts support Jamie's description of the kind of planning done. He made it clear in his interview that he didn't spend much time preparing for the class, other than "thinking about it" and preparing "sound effects". Generally there was a lack of evidence for planning other than what could have taken place just before the small group met.

What counts as important. Even though in his interview, Jamie did not once mention meaning or helping children to understand, yet his class spent time each week on understanding the meaning of words and ideas. Perhaps he felt that understanding was so central to teaching that it was too obvious to mention. Six weeks out of ten the students heard a meaningful connection between the memory verse and the day's Bible story. Understanding appeared to be important in Jamie's class.

The questioning patterns. Jamie typically asked fact questions to uncover the students' knowledge of the day's Bible story. A traditional recitation format was followed: teacher asked fact question, students responded with short--frequently one word--answers, teacher corrected or affirmed them and added lengthy explanations.

Occasionally a second questioning pattern was used. Jamie sometimes asked idea questions that could have led to reason-based learning, but followed them up with rapid rebuttal if the child answered differently from the teacher's opinion. Despite the type of questions, there was



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a marked concern that the students understand the meaning of the lessons, as evidenced by the times the conversation returned to discussions of meaning. In opportunities where thinking was encouraged, Class A was the third highest among the five classes, with an average of 2.2 times per class period that an adult-child interaction received a score of 2. (See Table 1 on page 122, and Appendix G for sample criteria for scoring.) Jamie was eager for the class to understand the words and concepts used and to apply the memory verse to the lesson, but the questioning patterns tended to discourage students' attempts to think. For their answers to be accepted, students had to give the answers the teacher had in mind.

Interaction patterns. Jamie involved Class A in adult-child interaction an average of 71% of the class time. (See Table 2 on page 123.) Only one other teacher had a higher average. Jamie spent very little time "telling" the story. Instead, the entire Bible story was taught interactively. However, once the story was taught, and an activity had begun, Jamie sometimes withdrew verbally. His class had the highest average for the five classes of child talk without adult input (see Table 2).

Summary of Class A. Supporting data was largely lacking for lesson planning, as Jamie had acknowledged during the interview. Despite the fact that meaning and understanding were never mentioned in the interview, helping

the children understand the meaning of words and ideas, and telling them a meaningful connection between the memory verse and the day's Bible story counted as important in Jamie's lessons with Class A. The questioning patterns were typical classroom recitation, usually with fact questions, but fairly often with questions that could have encouraged children to think. Jamie most nearly resembled Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) Teacher A.

Class B (See Appendix I for supporting data.) Mr. King sat in the opposite corner of the room with his hand-picked class members. He ruffled feathers occasionally by unilaterally taking a child away from another class to join his. But his students loved him for several reasons as will be seen. If his class members arrived early for Sabbath school and saw him sitting there, they would head straight over for a hug and some talk before the program began.

Planning. Mr. King stated directly in the interview that he does not prepare the Bible lesson ahead of time and does not use the provided materials because his class likes to color. He said he could do without the teacher's guide. However, he did say that he reviewed the scripture passage for the Bible story in order to choose the best place for children to read from the Bible. His description fit quite well with the tape recorded lessons. Five out of the eleven weeks Mr. King was present, his Bible story contained misinformation; this would tend to confirm that preparation

had not been made. For two other weeks the Bible story was not touched at all. The children colored pictures every week, usually during the story telling. Three weeks out of the eleven, the children used Bibles to look up a text. Four other weeks, at least one of the children copied the memory verse into a notebook.

What counts as important. In the interview, when asked what he considered to be the most important purpose of Sabbath school, Mr. King responded that recognizing and greeting the children so they know you care, talking with them about what happened during the week, and establishing trust were most important. When asked how he prepared for the lesson, he reemphasized the same ideas. Knowing the children individually, praying for them, and being a friend to them were the most important lesson preparation he believed he could make. Therefore, inevitably, his class spent lots of time socializing. As part of his caregiving, he brought gifts for the children: candy, flowers, plants, and even fire trucks one week. As a result, external rewards were frequently important topics of conversation in the class.

The questioning patterns. The transcripts of the class sessions showed typical recitations where Mr. King asked a question, one or more children gave brief answers, then Mr. King confirmed or corrected the answers. But frequently his instruction was lecture style. The children interrupted in order to interact, and Mr. King politely

accepted their contributions. Also, when socializing or procedural matters formed the conversation, the children freely injected their ideas or requests. Although he accepted them, Mr. King seldom built additional questions on the children's comments. Consequently, Class B was next to the last of the five classes in opportunities where thinking was encouraged. An average of fewer than one time per class period, an adult-child interaction was given a score of 2, indicating that Mr. King had granted the children an opportunity to build on initial thinking (see Table 1, page 122).

Interaction patterns. Adult-child interaction was 54% of the talk in Mr. King's class. It was the lowest percentage for adult-child interaction among the five classes (see Table 2, page 123). While Mr. King was telling the Bible story, the children were usually quietly coloring. Their interruptions tended to be about needed crayons or others' misbehavior rather than contributions to the story.

Summary of Class B. Mr. King was frank in saying that he did not prepare to teach Class B. The data supported his statement. Friendship, socializing, and external rewards counted as most important both in the teacher interview and in the class interactions. Recitation style questioning was recorded, but Mr. King's teaching tended to be lecture. Though he graciously accepted all comments the students made, he seldom built on those comments, nor did he invite

the children to build on them. Adult-child interactions were usually child-initiated and short, with little emphasis on thinking about ideas. Mr. King most nearly resembled Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) Teacher A, a typical classroom teacher.

Class C (See Appendix J for supporting data.) Perhaps Mary's teaching experience years before helped her to be the best organized and the most thorough planner among the teachers. She was also very sweet to the children, yet controlled their behavior without apparent effort. Mary's table close to the classroom door always exhibited a model Sabbath school class for any visitor who happened to look into the kindergarten room.

Planning. In Mary's interview she described how she prepared for teaching Class C by reading the children's lesson and the teacher's guide, preparing felt pictures or other visual aids, reading the story from the Bible, and deciding how to teach an application of the Bible passage. The transcripts of her class reveal that she controlled the lesson time, carrying out the plans she had made.

What counts as important. Mary stated that the most important functions of the Bible lesson time were for the children to learn the Bible lesson, relate it to life, see its relevance and reality, and learn that Jesus loves and cares for them. During class time, these priorities stood out. The story itself was carefully and fully presented.

An activity followed that was designed to involve the children and bring out the life application from the Bible story. Mary clearly told the application to the children. She consistently demonstrated a warm and loving manner.

The questioning patterns. A classroom recitation pattern was followed. Mary presented the Bible story to quiet children although she asked them to help place felt pictures on the board. Then she used the activity time to ask questions and respond to children's answers. In her interview she described children who are fun to teach as those who have respect for the teacher, who are willing to listen and allow the teacher to ask the questions. This was the way class time was handled. Life applications of the Bible lessons were a priority with her, and she gave children an average of slightly more than two opportunities per lesson to build on their initial thinking about how the lesson related to their lives. This gave Class C the second highest average for adult-child interactions that received a score of 2 (see Table 1, page 122).

Interaction patterns. In her interview Mary expressed the opinion that children remember a lesson when they have both auditory and visual involvement. Either felt pictures, high quality picture books, or real three-dimensional objects were used weekly for the visual involvement. Because Mary reserved the right to tell the story without interruptions for the auditory involvement, her class spent an average of only 55% of the talk in adult-child

interactions (see Table 2, page 123). The interview did not provide evidence that Mary saw particular importance in adult-child interaction. Yet she closely held the children's attention during the class session. Class C almost tied for the top position with virtually all of the child talk taking place within adult-child interactions (See Table 2).

Summary of Class C. Mary believed in and evidenced thorough planning to achieve the priorities of helping each child learn the Bible story and its application with relevance to daily life. As a means to this end, it was also important that both auditory and visual involvement be provided for the children. This was accomplished by an uninterrupted telling of the Bible story, and by visual aids which the children usually helped use. When Mary deemed it appropriate for children to talk, they had opportunities to engage in traditional classroom recitation. The class was well planned and the teacher was warm and gracious, yet there was little evidence that children were being encouraged to think, although this class rated second highest in opportunities for thinking to occur (see Table 1, page 122). Mary was a super teacher such as Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) described by Teacher B.



Class D (See Appendix K for supporting data.) Doreen had volunteered many years in kindergarten Sabbath schools. Her affection for the children was an important part of her life. She especially enjoyed a student from past years coming by to reminisce about kindergarten class. With so much past experience, she felt quite confident of the lesson material and her ability to find ways to interest the class members.

Planning. Doreen said that she planned her lessons on Friday night by reading the story, memorizing the memory verse and preparing an activity for the children that was interesting. She added that this had to be finished before she became too tired. The evidence from the transcripts suggests that she may have tired easily. Seven of the 10 weeks, the children heard misinformation. Every week there was confusion over the whereabouts of the visual aids.

What counts as important. Doreen stated that it was most important to her that the children be interested and respond. To encourage interest and response, she gave stickers for every answer given, regardless. Thus, to the children, what counted was getting stickers. They guessed any sort of answer at every opportunity, and complained if someone else in the class gave the same answer.

The questioning patterns. Typical classroom recitation pervaded Class D transcripts, but with a difference. Doreen's questions were often unclear, which made it more likely that children would wildly guess in order to get

stickers, even though they didn't understand the question. Doreen would frequently move on without noticing the children's confusion. She noted in the interview that she told the story one week and asked review questions on it the next. Actually she asked review questions on several stories each week. Without visual aids or other means of keeping the stories straight, the children's answers indicated a mixing of the stories in their minds. Only one time during all the weeks did an adult-child interaction receive a score of 2 (see Table 1, page 122). This indicates that Doreen had challenged the children only once to go beyond their initial thinking.

Interaction patterns. From her interview, it is clear that Doreen wanted the children to participate in interaction. Furthermore, in answer to the question about what can be done in Sabbath school to help children become thinkers rather than reflectors, Doreen responded that children can be taught to think about information so they can answer questions. Therefore, teachers need to ask questions. Doreen did have an average of 66% of class talk as adult-child interaction, and most child talk took place within adult-child interactions (see Table 2, page 123). Much of the remaining talk was Doreen carrying on conversations to herself about what had happened to visual aids or what was happening in the class. The children were usually supportive and polite in helping her.

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Summary of Class D. Doreen had good intentions to plan her lessons in such a way that children would learn the Bible stories, be interested and respond. But she confused the children with misinformation and her lack of clarity. Yet to ensure their responsiveness she handed out stickers for any and every answer offered. Thus stickers became the driving force for the class. The teacher endeavored to keep the children engaged by asking lots of questions in a typical classroom recitation pattern. Only one time during ten class sessions did questioning go beyond giving the children a one shot chance at thinking.

Class E (See Appendix L for supporting data.) Mrs. Weaver was the other super teacher in the kindergarten Sabbath school. She planned for her class, and even tested activities on her week day kindergarten students. There was not one wasted moment of time. Mrs. Weaver was friendly with the children, even while she insisted on order, respect, and obedience.

Planning. Mrs. Weaver stated her belief that lesson planning is very important or something will be left out. Therefore, she read the story in the Bible, read the children's story in the quarterly which they take home to use during the week, and thought through how to present the story to the kindergarten age group. In addition she said she prepared an activity the children could work on and enjoy. She tested this in the kindergarten where she worked

during the week. What was said during the interview was evident in the class transcripts. Everything was lined up and ready to go before class began. Class E was a business-like class that spent little time on socializing.

What counts as important. In the interview Mrs. Weaver expressed the belief that the most important aspects of Sabbath school are for children to find warm caring adults aside from their parents, and secondly to learn the moral of the Bible stories as well as to understand that God loves us individually and has a plan for each of us. She modeled the warm caring adult, even while it was evident that she was in charge. Good behavior also came through as an important aspect of the class. "Nice quiet people" were more likely to get called on to put up pictures and answer questions.

Questioning patterns. The lesson transcripts for Class E were typical classroom recitation from beginning to end. Teacher asked a question, students gave short answers, teacher confirmed or corrected and expanded on the answer. But Mrs. Weaver had the best record among the five classes for trying to encourage thinking in adult-child interactions that received a score of 2 (see Table 1, page 122). This fit well with a statement Mrs. Weaver made in the interview.

Usually I accept the answers children give because I wouldn't want to say there is a right or wrong answer or half-right or half-wrong. . . . Kids need to learn that one answer is not necessarily everything. There are others that we can look to also that are just as correct. We don't all think alike. You might be thinking a little bit differently from the way I was thinking, so that is okay too.

The only times that the questioning pattern changed were when occasionally a child interjected a personal idea. It was accepted, but then the teacher went right back to where she was in the lesson and continued to work her way through the Bible story. One particular student made a practice of anticipating what the teacher was going to say, but no matter, the teacher continued through the story as planned, even though the student had already told much of the plot.

Interaction patterns. Class E transcripts show an average of 76% adult-child interaction (see Table 2, page 123). The only class that came close to that was Jamie with Class A that had 71%. Whereas Class A showed the highest average for child-child talk uninterrupted by adult input, Class E had only a few lines of child-child talk take place outside of adult-child interactions. Mrs. Weaver and Jamie had approximately the same proportion of talking to the students without interaction.

Summary of Class E. This was a friendly but business-like class that was well planned and showed it. The teacher was in charge and kept every student in line and on task. Warmth and care, and good behavior were important here. The recitation was largely predictable, but more often than in the other classes, these children were encouraged to go beyond their initial thinking. Though with some evident differences, Mrs. Weaver resembled the super Teacher B in

Bereiter and Scardamalia's research (1987).

Even though many elements were constant across these classes, the teachers brought their beliefs and personalities and expertise with them to the little tables, and many variables emerged. Now excerpts from teacher interviews and class session transcripts will be drawn upon to support possible answers to the research questions in this study.

Evidence of Adult-child Interaction and Reasoning-based Learning.

The analysis of the data set of interviews, lesson transcripts and field notes provided evidence for possible answers to the research questions posed in this study. The questions will be restated here with examples drawn from the data to support suggested answers.

1. To what extent did the Sabbath school Bible lesson time cultivate adult-child interactions?

The transcripts of the five classes that were tape recorded and observed for thirteen weeks generally showed that more than half of the lesson talk was adult-child interaction (see Table 2, page 123). The average proportion of weekly adult-child interaction for all the classes across the thirteen weeks was 64%. Within those interactions, 28%

of the talk on average was by children (see Tables 2 and 3, pages 123, 124).

It appears that the Sabbath school Bible lesson time did cultivate a sizeable amount of adult-child interaction. The second question looks at whether the interaction time was spent in reasoning-based learning.

2. To what extent did the Sabbath school Bible lesson time cultivate reasoning-based learning?

There was little evidence that reasoning-based learning occurred in these small classes. As stated earlier, no teacher/student interaction received a score higher than 2, on a scale of 0 to 4, for the student thinking level (See Table 1 and Appendix G). This means that students occasionally had a chance to build on their initial thinking, but there was no recorded incident where they were encouraged to engage in serious thought processes or where the teacher modeled for them how to engage in serious thought. During more than 45% of their interactions on average, teachers gave the children no opportunity to think. Another 45% of the interactions gave children only a one shot chance to think. An average of 9.5% of the adult-child interactions received a score of 2. Here are the averages for each class:



Average Percentage of Scores

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
A	36%	53%	10.9%
B	68%	28%	4%
C	35%	50%	15%
D	53.5%	46%	.5%
E	<u>35%</u>	<u>48%</u>	<u>17.6%</u>
<u>Average Across All Classes:</u>	45.5%	45%	9.5%

Thus an average of 90.5% of the interactions gave children either no chance to think, or a one shot chance to think. This would include occasions when memory-based learning took place. Therefore, it can be assumed that few opportunities for reasoning-based learning were occurring.

3. What factors seemed to encourage adult-child interactions?

Several different factors may have contributed to adult-child interaction:

The furniture. The seating arrangements in the Sabbath school room were designed to promote adult-child interaction. The small round tables provided space for one teacher to sit surrounded by five or six children.

The teaching guides. The instructional guides for teachers provided some motivation for interaction, although they have since been changed to include suggested interaction throughout the lesson. At the time of this research, in addition to questions about the facts of the story, there were weekly ideas for engaging children in conversation on applying the lesson to daily life. For instance, with the story of Queen Esther, the teacher was instructed to ask the children the following questions: What was it that made Queen Esther so brave? Could you tell me times when you need to be brave? What do we need to do to be brave?

Parent expectations. Parents expected interaction to take place. In their interviews, parents consistently mentioned the one-to-one interaction in the small classes as being an important aspect of Sabbath school. One parent talked about the bonding that occurs in the small group:

I think the interaction between the little guys and the teacher in the small groups is really important. (My child) is really bonded to his Sabbath school teacher. And I think that's really important that they have that bonding. You can't have that same bonding with a big group as with your little table.

Another parent emphasized the importance of children getting to talk to friendly adults:

The small group for the small children is great because it gives them a chance to talk. And kids like (mine) who start out quiet, it gives them a chance to feel more open. They can talk. It's important to have quality teachers who they can develop a relationship with and use as role models.

Traditional practice. The fact that class talk was more than half adult-child interaction was evidence that participants were accustomed to an interactive format during the Sabbath school class.

The right to talk. In addition to the factors already mentioned, children felt free to express their opinions and ask questions. They contributed to the interactive climate. Often a child-initiated interaction took place.

On April 7 a transcript showed that a teacher read and commented on the story of King Joash for 7 1/2 pages with no interaction. Suddenly a child interrupts:

Child: How did he get to be king?

Teacher: Get to be king? He got to be king because he was the son of the man who was the king before, you see. So that's the way it happened back then. When a king had a son, then the son would be the next king. That's the way it worked. It doesn't work that way in our country, does it?

Child: No.

Teacher: We elect our presidents by voting for them, don't we? But not back then. When you have a king it just depends on if you are in the right family. Then you may get to be the king or the queen. But if you are not in the right family then you don't. That's the way it goes. You can't be elected.

Child: I want to be the king.

At that point the teacher turns to fact questions about the lesson story without a comment on the child's wish.

On June 2 a teacher was relating the story of Daniel in the Lions' Den with only yes/no answers from the children. Then a child broke in:

Teacher: But you know, back then in that society of the Medo-Persians, if they signed a law they could not change it. That's right, they could not erase it. If they signed it they had to keep it forever. So the king knew he would have to throw Daniel into the lions' den.

Child: Well, he's the king, he could do anything. He's the king. He could change the law if he wants to.

Teacher: Well, in that society they couldn't. They just wouldn't do it.

The children's right to talk also has another side; their responsibility to be responsive to the teachers' efforts. One teacher expressed this very clearly:

If [children] show interest, if they respond then you get something out of it too. When you have response from the children it gives you more incentive to go ahead.

When talking about the reason for volunteering in the Sabbath school, another teacher also alluded to the importance of children's response.

So this is what I have been doing, and I enjoy it. In each class I get so involved with the children and think so much of them. When they get to the point of graduation I always feel bad about losing them because I really do get quite endeared to them. . . . I enjoy a class that I get response from, that they seem to be interested. That's what I really try to obtain--that they take interest in the class. And I try to do something so that they have interest in the class.

The same teacher went on to differentiate the fun students from the difficult students by whether or not they were responsive.

I've had a lot that have been responsive, but some of them I find hard. . . . The ones that are really [fun] are the ones that are interested.

When asked to describe the children who are really fun to

work with, another teacher was very positive in answering:

I think they all are fun to work with. I haven't seen any that have seemed, you know, what should I say, unmotivated. They all seem very motivated.

The furniture arrangement, the teaching guides, parent expectations, and traditional practice patterns all tended to encourage adult-child interactions. In addition, children frequently ensured that interaction took place by asking questions or by stating their understanding or opinions. Children's responsiveness also served as an incentive for teachers.

#### 4. What factors seemed to encourage reasoning-based learning?

All but one teacher interview confirmed that these adults wanted the students to learn more than the facts of the Bible stories. Four teachers emphasized the need for the students to apply their Bible lessons to daily life. One teacher expressed very clearly the need for the children to understand the meaning of the Bible lessons as well as to apply them to life:

The thing that I feel is important in regards to the lesson study . . . is that they not only learn the lesson from the Bible, but they are also able to relate that to their living today. How does that relate to you as a child where you are today? If it's not relevant then they aren't going to remember it. If it has no meaning for their life then it is not going to change behavior; it is not going to give them any substance for their faith if it isn't relevant and real to them.

Two other teachers hinted at the importance of meaning in response to the question, "What do you think is the value of the lesson time for the children?"

Well, there are a lot of examples that were put there in the Bible for us to learn and to use within our own daily lives.

The kids experiencing the value of what was taught, the moral of the story for example. Why was the story written? What was the reason behind the writing of this story? I think that is most important because there is a lesson to learn, or at least there should be a lesson to be learned in everything.

Another teacher also emphasized the importance of applying the Bible to daily life.

I think the value of the lesson time is knowing that the Bible is of help to us in that day to day experience. Knowing that it tells us how the Supreme Being loves us supremely and that we can always rely on help.

In the transcripts of the lessons is evidence that teachers tried to help the children understand, but usually by "telling them" what to understand.

In the March 31 lesson on the seige of Jerusalem was the following interaction:

Teacher: All the food was being sold for very high prices. And who did the people begin to blame?

Child: Elisha!

Teacher: And it wasn't his fault at all.

Child: It was not even God's fault.

Teacher: Tell me, why would they blame somebody like Elisha?

Child: I don't know. Probably just because they wanted to for fun.

Child: Because Elisha wanted to be kind.

Teacher: He was trying to be kind, yes. Sometimes the more we take the Bible to heart and the more we try to do God's will, the more unhappy people can get. We don't always make friends by following Jesus. Elisha didn't make friends by being as kind and as good as he was. He had made some enemies because the enemies resented what he was doing.

This teacher injected into the interaction a "Why" question which would lead to thinking beyond the facts of the story. One child attempted a possible answer. It would have been interesting to know his thinking, had the answer been probed. Instead, the teacher added his own thinking and interpretation which may or may not have matched what the child had in mind.

Another teacher endeavored to help the children get meaning from the lessons. On April 21 the class was doing an activity that applied the ten commandments to the lesson story.

Teacher: OK, this tenth one says, "Thou shalt not \_\_\_\_."

Child: Covet.

Teacher: Do you know what that means?

Child: Yeah, I know what it means.

Teacher: What does it mean?

Child: It means if you saw someone that had a toy you wished that you had, that's coveting.

Teacher: Yeah, you want it so bad you probably hated that person for having it. That's coveting.

The same day another teacher asked children to tell what a miracle is:

Teacher: Several miracles happened during Hezekiah's reign. Do you know what a miracle is?

Child: I don't know.

Teacher: I bet you do but it's hard to explain. What do you think?

Child: It's like if someone is blind and then God helps him like put mud in their eyes.

Teacher: And makes them see. Yes, you're right. That's right. Can you think of another example of a miracle?

Child: When someone is in their tomb and they're dead and Jesus makes them come back. He says, "Come forth."

Teacher: Did you hear that? That's right along this time, isn't it? In fact, tomorrow we'll celebrate the day that Jesus, on Sunday, arose from the dead. And there was a miracle, wasn't it? There are lots of miracles that take place that we take for granted. Just the sun in the sky is a miracle, really.

Child: Then there's Easter.

Teacher: That's right. It's a fun day, isn't it?

The teacher started out trying to make sure the children understood a word. The conversation begins as a quest for a definition, drifts into a selection of examples, ignores a child's comment that seems to indicate a lack of understanding, and never does return to the original purpose of the interaction.

The researcher sometimes had the impression that teachers felt under too much time constraint to take time for children's misconceptions or efforts to contribute to discussions. The teachers knew what they wanted to cover. And their role as teachers dictated that they tell right



answers. If children were allowed to control conversation, the class time would end without the teachers finishing what they had to say.

5. What factors seemed to hinder adult-child interactions?

Although it has been shown that adult-child interaction was pervasive in these classes, one factor could possibly hinder interaction, and that one factor was teacher perceptions of how learning takes place and the teacher's role in the process of learning. Three teachers revealed their perceptions.

During the lesson on King Joash, one teacher gave a little speech on the importance of listening and concluded it with an interesting comment:

And they taught him how to listen. They taught him how to listen to other people when they were talking. Because you know something? It is not a very nice thing when boys and girls do not listen to their parents and teachers. Because when you listen you learn, don't you?

In the interview, another teacher described a student as ideal.

He listens and pays attention . . . he is like an ideal student because he is quiet, but he will answer you when you ask him.

The same teacher discussed students who are challenging. Some are discipline problems, noisy, easily distracted, and never know the answers. But another kind of

child is also difficult to teach:

But the child that wants to tell you the story and not have the respect for you as the teacher to ask the questions and then he can respond when he is asked . . . [he is] really wanting to take [the teacher's] place.

In the interview, a third teacher expressed the belief that learning depends on the teacher. The statement could also be construed to infer the belief that children learn better when they are more docile.

It is nice to have a little more decorum, respect and obedience amongst the children, and of course we find those too. Usually, I think they reflect the homes from which they come, naturally. In these days we can't always assume that a child has two parents enforcing him, in fact quite often that is the exception. It's a happy exception when it does happen . . . That makes it very much easier to teach those children. They're used to parental restraint, which makes them quite considerate of the teacher and his job. They're really more docile, but that doesn't make them any less of a challenge, because you've still got to teach them. You've still got to see that they learn. And also you've got to maintain their enjoyment and their friendship too.

When reviewing the amount of adult-child interaction taking place in the classes, the percentages do not substantiate that teacher perceptions made a difference in the amount of participation allowed to children. Perhaps it is helpful to examine the extent to which various teachers controlled children's talk during Sabbath school. Teacher's C and E structured their classes so that child talk was limited almost entirely to adult-child interaction. (See Table 4 on page 158.)

Although several factors worked together to foster adult-child interaction in the Valley View Sabbath school,

yet the teachers seemed to believe that it was their role to tell the story and ask the questions and that children would learn best by listening. It was clearly evident that there was alot of interaction, but the problem was in the types and amounts of teacher talk.

Table 4: Percentage of Child Talk Within Adult-Child Interaction

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class E
Mar 31	100	90	100	99	--
Apr 7	90	95	93	88	100
Apr 14	89	82	96	85	--
Apr 21	37	51	--	72	98
Apr 28	88	87	97	100	100
May 5	--	--	100	--	100
May 12	95	--	--	--	100
May 19	--	96	78	77	99
May 26	--	90	93	97	--
Jun 2	97	64	98	93	100
Jun 9	47	90	98	95	84
Jun 16	88	83	93	94	97
Jun 23	68	74	98	--	100
Averages	80	82	95	90	98

6. What factors seemed to hinder reasoning-based learning?

As shown on Tables 1 and 2 (pages 122, 123), these classes exhibited high levels of interaction, but less than 10% of the interactions involved more than a one shot chance for the children to think. There was not one instance where children were encouraged to engage in serious thought about a topic under discussion beyond a simple question-response format. Several factors may have hindered reasoning-based learning in these small groups including external rewards, garbled syntax, flat contradictions of children's attempts to apply Bible lessons to everyday life, abruptly ended discussions just as a child endeavors to reason, and the teachers' guide. These factors will be considered next.

External rewards do not necessarily hinder reasoning-based learning, but as they were used in two of the five classes, they contributed to a less thoughtful environment.

The students in one class received--and therefore expected--gifts every week. The gifts were always handed out with lengthy discussion and fanfare. April 14 was an example of the effect the gifts had on learning. The class began with a substitute teacher who led a focused, interactive telling of the day's story about Hezekiah. No off-task talk or behavior by the children was recorded or observed. In the middle of the story the regular teacher

arrived very late and began to talk about Hezekiah. However, the students instantly shifted their attention to what he had brought them. Every comment made by the students until the end of the class period had to do with gifts. After the first sentence about Hezekiah, the teacher also shifted his attention to the presentation of gifts. All conversation about the Bible story was preempted by conversation about external rewards.

Stickers were the rewards in another class. They were handed out for any and every response, appropriate or not. Consequently, it was stickers that drove the class participation. Another factor also worked against reasoning-based learning in this class. The teacher frequently talked in garbled syntax. The following quote demonstrates the interaction of confusing messages and stickers. At this point in the conversation the children have just finished saying the memory verse, and the teacher began a review of the former lesson in order to tie it into today's lesson:

Teacher: Today we're going to have, who can guess what we are going to have today? Who can guess what we're going to have today, what I'm going to give you?

Child: Me.

Teacher: What do you think this is?

Child: Bibles.

Teacher: Right, Bibles today. Let's think about what? I have some new questions. I have some special ones. What last week happened that happened that was very interesting? Think of other lessons that happened. All right, think of some of the other things that happened last week.

Child: God.

Child: God sent a Bible.

Child: God sent a Bible.

Child: I said it, too!

Teacher: What? No, no, no. Last week, what happened? Remember the army was what happened? The army came in and was going to get the Israelites? They were all around. Nobody knows? They surrounded the what?

Child: Peoples.

Teacher: They surrounded the what? What did those people, Samaritans, and surrounded the what?

Child: The Lord.

Teacher: Surrounded the what?

Child: The Lord.

Teacher: That's right, the wall. And could they come out and get food?

Child: No.

Teacher: No. They couldn't come out and get food.

Child: I want a heart.

Child: I want a heart.

Teacher: No. Nobody's getting any [stickers] until I answer the questions. You didn't answer. You'll get it later then. Now then, what happened, so the people were what?

Child: Israelites.

Child: Israelites.

Child: Uh, children.

Child: Children.

Teacher: Chariots. Remember the chariots? They roared in there and the people were so scared, they were so scared, they ran away.

Child: I need a sticker.

Teacher: Children, they ran away and the camp was empty.

Child: I can't get a flower. I want a heart.

Teacher: So now the camp was empty.

Child: I want a heart.

Child: Can I have a heart?

Child: I want a heart.

Teacher: You'll get it after. So, now as they were, what did we say?

Child to another child: If you say something, you'll get a sticker.

The competition to guess any answer, even when it was apparent that children did not understand the direction of the teacher's questions, was unique to this class. Children in other classes received one or two stickers at the end of the period. Handled in that way, the rewards did not appear to dominate the conversation throughout the class sessions.

Contradictions of children's attempts to apply a Bible story to daily life would also seem to hinder reasoning-based learning by nipping in the bud a child's effort to reason out the connections between a Bible story and life. On April 21 a teacher was leading the children through the



story about King Josiah.

Teacher: And so Josiah had people to help him, and when many years went by he decided to clean the temple. The temple was all dirty again because after King Hezekiah nobody took care of the temple. Can you tell me how the temple would have looked when it was all messed up?

Child: Are we taking care of His temple?

Teacher: Yes, isn't our church, doesn't our church look nice and clean?

Child: No.

Teacher: Yes, it does. And we have things to do in Sabbath school. We have nice chairs to sit on, right? We've got flowers in church, right?

Child: But that's broken.

Teacher: You don't worry about what's up there, OK? Students I want you to be quiet right now. I've got something for all of you to do, but unless you keep quiet and we finish the lesson, we're not going to get it.

Finishing the lesson appeared to be more important to the teacher than applying the lesson to life. The activity the teacher wanted them to get to was a cut and paste project. As they worked on it, the children held a nonsensical conversation in which the teacher did not participate.

Dropping discussions just as a child expressed an opinion, asked a question, or offered additional information was another factor that seemed to hinder reasoning-based learning. No more than twenty minutes was spent in these small groups and frequently it is clear from the context

that teachers felt pressured for time. They appeared to be willing to drop children's contributions, which could become time consuming, rather than change their plans for teaching.

A teacher was telling the story of baby Joash whose grandmother killed all the heirs to the throne:

Teacher: "Do you think God was very pleased?"

Child: No.

Teacher: No. He was very, very unhappy.

Child: Wasn't he very sad and mad?

Later in the lesson the same child connected what the teacher was saying to a different Bible story. The point was being made that King Joash was not able to be a good king without help from others:

Teacher: Do you think he could do this by himself?

Child: No.

Teacher: No. He had to get help from what?

Child: God.

Teacher: He had to get help from God. Through the priest and his wife.

Child: Like, you know how the axle fell in the water? Part of the axle fell in the water? Elijah [and God had to help]. Just like [the story of King Joash].

Teacher: Part of the axe. Yes.

The teacher took the time to correct a factual mistake but ignored the application idea the child offered.

Chapter 1 of this study begins with the incident of the child asking, "But what if they had a second chance and they did something wrong again?" The teacher went right on to

the activity without commenting on the question. Later, when the children were taking turns pulling on a paper that brought a big fish into view, the teacher did say, without specifically referring to the question, that God will continue to forgive. Whether or not the child was still tuned in to the subject and understood the teacher's remark, it is impossible to know.

The teacher's guide also may have hindered reasoning-based learning. With undoubtedly good intentions, it contained instruction for focusing the attention, telling the story, repeating the memory verse, asking review and application questions, and doing an activity. In addition, an independent producer supplied activity sheets that were usually for cutting, pasting, and coloring. All together, it was far more than any teacher could hope to accomplish in the few minutes available. The publishers meant the guides to be suggestions only, but nowhere in the publication was that stated. Thus with a maximum of twenty minutes class time, it is probable that teachers could feel too much time constraint to explore ideas offered by the children.

Nowhere in the transcripts is there evidence that teachers knew how to lead out in reasoning-based learning. Because of that, or in addition to that, external rewards, garbled syntax, flat contradictions, missed discussion opportunities, and the teachers' guide all seemed to hinder reasoning-based learning.

7. What appeared to be the impact of adult-child interaction as a form of social capital on the development of reasoning-based learning?

By comparing the figures on Tables 1 and 2 (pages 122, 123), it could be assumed that the amount of adult-child interaction had little or no impact on the development of reasoning-based learning in this Sabbath school. These classes met for only twenty minutes or so each week. Perhaps more adult-child interaction is required to promote reasoning-based learning, or perhaps a different kind of interaction is required. Perhaps adult-child interaction must concentrate on exploring ideas. In this study, socializing, talking about external rewards, and brief chances to think did not appear to promote reasoning-based learning.

However, some children did attempt to engage the teacher in discussing ideas. In the story of King Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace, the teacher had come to the place where the king said he saw four in the fire and one of them looked like the son of God:

Teacher: The Son of God! Oh, my goodness. Do you think he was frightened?

Child: Uh, huh. He changed his life to believe in God.

The teacher ignored the child's comment and continued with the story. Farther along, the subject comes up again:

Teacher: They didn't even smell of smoke. That's the most important. They didn't even smell of smoke. And do you think the king realized that God was at work here?

Child: Yea.

Teacher: He did. He did realize it.

Child: And he changed his life to believe in God and he's going to be in heaven.

Teacher: Maybe. We don't know until we get there.

Child: I think he will because he changed his life with God.

Teacher: He did?

There the subject is dropped in favor of fact questions about the story.

In the lesson on Esther a child expressed himself on forgiveness:

Teacher: Is it okay for you to go ahead and hurt other people's feelings just because God is going to forgive you?

Child: No.

Teacher: No, because you might hurt that person so badly the person might. . .

Child: If you just do that and you know that God will forgive you, He won't.

Teacher: You are being presumptuous. We call that presumptuous.

Child: He won't forgive you.

Teacher: And, uh, He won't be pleased.

Child: Oh, God will forgive me, and then so you punch somebody else, like you break their back and say, Oh, God will forgive me, so he doesn't because . . .

Teacher: Well, He might, but you know, He might forgive you after a while. But if you keep on doing that, you are going to continue to do the same thing, and then you might die in your sin.

As has been shown, some children did ask questions and make statements that contrasted sharply with the typical yes/no or one word answers or mere socializing of other children. Therefore, representatives were selected from the idea group and the one word group. The interviews with their parents were analyzed to investigate what differences might appear. The last section of this chapter reports on that analysis.

#### Analysis of Selected Parent Interviews

Some children asked idea questions and added their opinions as well as additional information to class discussions. Other children generally contributed only one word answers unless a conversation related to socializing, procedures, or external rewards. The interviews with parents of four children from each group were analyzed to detect what differences among parent-child interactions and family practices might be apparent between the two sets of children. Secondly, the interviews were studied for indications of the parents' perceptions of reasoning-based learning. Parents' perceptions will be presented after the evidence on interaction and family practices.

### Interaction and Family Practices

In the parent interviews one section of questions and probes related to, "How do you help your child prepare for Sabbath school?" The next section related to, "What other kinds of activities does your family/child participate in during the week that contribute to religious education?" A third section queried, "Bible and Sabbath school preparation are just two reasons for talking with your child. Tell me about other times you have discussions or do things together." All the kinds of interactions and family practices that parents mentioned in response totalled 37. (See Appendix M.)

The differences between the two sets of parents was striking. Of the 37 responses mentioned, the parents of children who seldom participated in discussions of ideas in the Bible class mentioned no more than 10 kinds of parent/child interactions and family practices, while the parents of children who made idea contributions in class claimed between 19 and 30 of the kinds of interactions and family practices were occurring in the lives of their children.

Without a socioeconomic, racial, educational level, or age pattern emerging, each set of four families represented the various groups in the Sabbath school. From the transcripts and followup visits, a single common factor emerged that linked the sets of families. The parents mentioning the higher quantities of interactions and family

practices were extensively involved in the community life of the Adventist church. Teaching classes, singing in the choir, socializing with Adventist relatives or other members of the church, assisting with church projects, directing programs, and fulltime employment by the church were all reported. The second set of parents had no involvement beyond attending the weekly church service, and two families merely delivered the child to Sabbath school weekly and did not attend church.

Coleman (1987) argued that the social capital offered by a value sharing community has a powerful effect on the achievement of its children. This study appeared to substantiate that effect for the children of families who participated in the value sharing community. Those who practiced family togetherness by talking to their children, and giving them leadership roles and varied ways to be involved with adults, were appropriating the advantages inherent in a cohesive community.

#### Parents' Perceptions of Reasoning-based Learning

The church statement that youth should be trained to be thinkers rather than mere reflectors of other men's thought was the subject of one of the final questions each parent was asked. They were requested to explain what that statement means, or how they would relate it to their child. The answers given provided the best available evidence of their attitudes toward reasoning-based learning.



In most cases, there was a clear difference in the way parents of the one word group answered and the way the parents of the idea group answered. The initial impression from looking at the responses is of the difference in length. But qualitative differences appear as well.

Three of the parents of children who gave no more than one word answers unless the conversation was socializing, procedural, or regarding rewards, gave the following succinct answers:

"I agree with that all the way!"

"Sounds good!"

"I just ask him why he thinks the way he does."

One parent gave a longer answer:

To be thinkers they should not just take what is said. Whenever the minister or whoever teaches them or presents something to them, they should question it, analyze it for themselves, evaluate it, and think about it. Say, why is this so? Should this be so, or question it. Help them so they develop their own understanding. So they can become more knowledgeable about it. Develop their own ideas. Don't just take what is said. And in that way, they will become a better person. You understand yourself better and the world. And understand what you are doing.

The other set of parents made lengthy statements, up to several paragraphs long, including practical examples that they seemed to be working with at the time. The first example has differing views from the two parents. One emphasized the need for children to learn to personally depend on God through prayer and the Bible. The spouse added the importance of the method of instruction.

I think that means exactly what the Lord's been leading me to be thinking about the kids this week, that they have to develop their own relationship with the Lord. They have to learn to ask the Lord to guide them and know that they can get those answers through prayer and through the Bible, and that they have that resource available to them always. And I think that they should be taught to develop that on their own so that they learn to go to the Lord with everything and to give it all to Him.

(The other parent) I agree with that, but the other thing is if you look at the Jewish method of instruction, it was to listen to the response and then ask another question that guided the student's [thinking]. If in fact that was the model to teach the disciples, then that should be something we use as a teaching method.

The parent giving the following statement added the importance of communicating with parents to the idea of independent thinking.

Don't use peer pressure. Don't do what others say. You use your own judgment. You ask God to help you, you decide what's best, and at any point you always pray to God. Then if you have ups and downs, you talk to mom and dad. Don't ever keep anything to yourself, and we are there to help you, and you need to communicate . . . It is very, very important that you use your own mind that God has given you because He has given you intelligence and you need to use that.

The third family centered their understanding of learning to be thinkers around the idea of being responsible rather than blindly following edicts that proscribe certain practices but overlook others.

Well, that's the thing I think we are struggling with because when you teach them, that's what they're going to reflect. The big key word at our household . . . we are responsible for what we put into our own body, and we are responsible for what we do . . .

Instead of being in the dark ages where the scriptures were handed to you (you were told what the scriptures were), you weren't able to have access to scriptures and say this is actually what I read, I think that is what [Mrs. White] was alluding to. To apply that practically today, I think we can make

Adventism too much of a moral issue when really it's a cultural issue. We want them to reflect Adventism as a culture and tie it with a moral issue.

I think that is a lot of what our generation has gone through because we have the standards that we were brought up with; an edict that skirts were to be a certain length, and jeans were not acceptable . . . Kids our generation or before . . . got hammered with it. You either got in line or we didn't know if we were going to go to heaven or not.

Coming down to this generation it's going to get even more grueling. . . . We're picking on these kids--can't wear jewelry in here, but no problem having an abortion. Back to that question again, we have to reiterate to our children responsibilities for our own actions. What do you think? You have to ask these kinds of questions constantly. Because when my kids get to a certain age as teenagers, I don't want them to take everything at face value.

The last family to be quoted here saw learning to be thinkers in the context of making considered choices rather than rote learning of good/bad practices.

I think you should teach kindergarteners to be thinkers right from the very first . . . There's only so many times that you hear the fact that you can learn by rote, or you can learn by reason. Okay, this is how it works. This is why it works--teaching them to think these things through, rather than just presenting facts and memorizing them. Like the red light, green light [game where children held up a red, green, or yellow light to indicate their choice of whether something was bad for you, good for you, or okay to do sometimes]. It's teaching them to be thinkers because when \_\_\_\_\_ pulled out the ice cream, she didn't get all yellow lights! She got some green lights; she got some red lights; she got some yellow lights. And so then they could talk about why it's the way it is.

It was a great opportunity to avoid a major misconception our church has. Our health message is not necessarily an identification of sin. Our health message is identifying things that hurt you, and so because daddy drinks beer, that doesn't mean that daddy's a bad person. It means that beer can hurt daddy, and that's how we dealt with the red lights. Because the beer can hurt daddy and we love daddy, but everybody makes choices, and everybody gets to choose. You can choose what you will put in your body, just like your daddy gets to choose what he puts in his body. And we were just learning to choose the things

that would make our bodies the healthiest. God knows secrets about things that we don't know, and so He shared those secrets with us. We still are allowed to choose, but He just told us the secrets so we could make choices that would help us not to get hurt.

#### Summary of Chapter 5

The available evidence from this observational study demonstrated that these Sabbath school classes provided a sizeable amount of adult-child interaction. A major factor which could hinder the interaction was the beliefs expressed by some teachers that they should tell the story and ask the questions because that is the teacher's responsibility and children learn by quietly listening. While much interaction was taking place, little of it could be categorized as reasoning-based learning. The teachers expressed the importance of children applying the lessons to life and understanding the meaning of the stories, but there was no evidence that they knew how to promote reasoning-based learning. The instructional guides they were using did not offer them substantial help in directing the children in thinking. Therefore, the methods they employed to help the children learn--external rewards, telling children what to learn instead of listening and questioning--seemed to contribute to a lower level of thinking. Even the children who attempted to engage teachers in discussions about ideas were generally thwarted. Nevertheless, their manner of talking suggested that they were engaging in reasoning-based learning. The fact that children did contribute opinions

and ask application questions led to the analysis of two selected sets of parents' interviews. The two sets showed marked differences not only in the number of kinds of adult-child interactions and family practices, but additionally in the way the parents talked about helping children learn to be thinkers.

Chapter 6 will present the results and implications of this study.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

This study examined whether a cultural subgroup providing religious education to four to seven year olds could actually break with the broader American educational context that espouses reasoning-based learning but practices memory-based learning. The data from five small classes in one congregation showed that an abundance of social capital in the form of adult-child interaction was provided. But there were few opportunities for reasoning-based learning in the Sabbath school classes. As is observed in school settings, philosophy and practice of reasoning-based learning did not match. However, certain children gave evidence of being thinkers who were reasoning by asking questions, challenging the teachers on information, and offering their opinions on various subjects.

A secondary purpose of this study was to extend to a younger age group the research on the concept of social capital. The children mentioned in the paragraph above who gave evidence of being thinkers would tend to corroborate the value of social capital for learning, because they engaged in a wide variety of thinking activities at home with their parents and other adults.

Chapter 6 will begin with general conclusions, then

look at practical implications for parents, the Sabbath school, the church, and the producers of Sabbath school materials, and finally implications on teaching and learning and how they may differ from the adults' school experiences. Broader implications for further research and educational practices will be considered before the chapter ends with a personal reflection on the research process.

### General Conclusions

The data corpus was examined to describe what happened during the Bible lesson time in one kindergarten Sabbath school and to look at adult-child interaction during the class time to explore whether reasoning-based learning was taking place. The following conclusions emerged from the data analysis.

#### Valley View Sabbath School Was Well Prepared for Adult-Child Interaction to Take Place

There were several indicators that the Sabbath school was well organized for adult-child interaction to take place. The room furnishings, the parent and child and teacher expectations, plus the traditionally interactive routine all seemed to contribute to adult-child interaction taking place in the Sabbath school class. And indeed, the data demonstrated that each small class included hefty amounts of adult-child interaction. Therefore, the children's social capital was being augmented by their

participation within this community that shared values.

The Study Did Not Appear to Uncover Evidence That Social Capital in the Classroom Resulted in Reasoning-Based Learning

Even though all the classes included interaction, and children could be said to benefit from social capital, none of the interactions gave children more than a slight chance to build on initial thinking. No teacher seriously encouraged children to think or helped them learn how to think. On the contrary, children's attempts to express ideas were more tolerated than encouraged. Children were usually allowed to talk but not encouraged to share ideas. It seemed clear that their role was to listen, receive, and answer briefly. In fact, if they showed too much eagerness to participate and share their opinions, they appeared to be viewed as problems.

Teacher Beliefs Seemed to Guide Traditional Methods of Teaching

The process of analyzing the data uncovered teaching behaviors apparently linked to perceptions held about teaching and learning. Teachers tell students what they should learn; students learn by listening; asking questions is the prerogative of teachers; the students' role is to answer those questions. These were the beliefs that emerged either by statement or by practice. The regular use of small groups for studying the Bible lesson provided weekly



opportunities for adult-child interaction, but the interaction was commonly centered around socializing, procedural matters, and memory-based learning.

Although the teachers agreed that the children should be taught to be thinkers and said they believed the Sabbath school classes could promote the process, they did not appear to know how to enact the church's stated belief in the importance of educating thinkers.

#### A Direct Relationship Seemed Evident Between a Child's Contributions in the Class and His/Her Family Practices

The children who did exhibit reasoning-based learning by the ideas they expressed in class were from families who valued and fostered reasoning-based learning as recorded in their interviews. Their parents mentioned a wide range of ways that adult-child interaction and other educational practices took place during the week, many of which augmented the child's religious education.

Children who did not exhibit reasoning-based learning by their contributions in class were from families where the parents' responses during their recorded interviews included substantially fewer references to value and time being placed on adult-child interaction and other family togetherness practices.

A side effect of these differences was that the children who received more social capital at home also received more social capital at Sabbath school. The classes

were clear cases of "To him that hath, it shall be given." Children who were familiar with the Bible story, had learned the memory verse, and were accustomed to talking with adults about Bible subjects, were more likely to engage in interaction involving ideas with the teachers than the children who had little or no preparation for Sabbath school during the week.

Not only did some children lose the benefits of engaging in talk and activities involving ideas during the week at home, but they were apparently handicapped by their lack of background knowledge when they attended the Sabbath school class session.

#### Social Capital by Itself Is Not Enough

Adult-child interaction as social capital is a necessary base, but without appropriate instructional actions its benefit for reasoning-based learning appears to be lost. The uses made of social capital, the kind of instruction given during adult-child interaction, the teachers' view of their task and the students' task, all played a major role in the type of learning opportunities that occurred.

#### Social Capital Throughout the Week Appears to Contribute to Reasoning-based Learning

The children who contributed ideas in class were apparently participating in a wide range of adult-child

interactions throughout the week. Parents reported simple opportunities for their children to discuss ideas, to lead out in activities, and to share varied experiences. As the Vygotskian view of learning would predict, time spent with adults seemed to develop the children's ability to think and reason.

### Implications of the Study

Although this descriptive study of one small site cannot be used to predict what other Sabbath schools may be like, nor can it be used to generalize to other settings, yet the results are of value as an indication of possible areas for further study or attention. Implications for separate sets of people will be considered first, followed by implications for further research and educational practices in general.

### Implications for the Family

This study implied that the parents were a major influence on religious education and the opportunities that children had to engage in reasoning-based learning. Further, what children got out of Sabbath school seemed to be proportionally related to the religious education and family interactions they received at home. A statement written many years ago by a church leader apprised parents of the same prospect. "If parents and children see no necessity for [learning the scripture lesson], then the children might better remain at home; for the Sabbath school

will fail to prove a blessing to them" (White, 1938, p. 57).

If reasoning-based learning is a high priority with parents, the results of this study imply that they should consider occasionally visiting their child's Sabbath school class to see what kind of opportunities for this type of learning is taking place.

### Implications for the Sabbath School

Those who chose the Sabbath school teachers were influential in determining the teaching method the children would receive during the lesson time. Because the leaders who do the choosing may have little or no educational expertise, it would appear that criteria for the qualifications needed by Sabbath school teachers should be provided for leaders to use.

This leads to a further implication that the need exists for means of educating the volunteers who teach children. Research has shown a high correlation between teacher's instructional strategies and the kind of learning that takes place (Roehler, 1992; Duffy, Roehler, and Rackliffe, 1986; Sivan, and Roehler, 1986). If reasoning-based learning is a priority, a teachers' support group might meet before Sabbath school to share specific ways to engage children in more thoughtful discussion of the lesson. Thus each teacher would be sensitized to the need and have a larger stock of strategies to use. With some outside assistance for resources, the teachers could go beyond a

sharing of ideas to actual demonstration and practice and feedback, ultimately helping the kindergarten children to think seriously about the Bible story of the day and its application to their lives.

Another implication for Sabbath schools is the need to have realistic expectations about what even a skilled teacher can accomplish because of the strong influence of the home. Although parents may expect it, Sabbath school cannot make up for what is neglected at home. One mother who mentioned almost no Sabbath school preparation or adult-child interaction at home made the following statement to me. "Well, I should hope [they] know alot about the Bible stories. I've been sending them to Sabbath school for two years."

On the other hand is the negative implication of writing off any child. Change is possible. One interesting child was mentioned in every teacher interview and even by some of the parents. A foster child, he was totally unsocialized to Sabbath school at first, but over time made many positive changes. Unfortunately I was not allowed an interview.

Even whole families may change. As an example, one family I interviewed was making no effort to prepare for Sabbath school. I showed them simple ways to study with their child and suggested some easy family projects. Over the weeks of tape recording class sessions, their daughter came to class better prepared. She also began to

participate in the more idea-oriented interactions. Perhaps if Sabbath school teachers would visit in the homes of their students once or twice a year, they would come to think of such visits as "an irreplaceable tool" (Love, 1989).

### Implications for the Church

If the church really cares about educating thinkers, they will take seriously the implications of helping parents realize the magnitude of their influence on children, that reasoning-based learning within religious education is primarily their responsibility. In addition, the church will recognize the powerful potential inherent in their religious community. Social capital by the parents can be augmented by the community. Adult-child interaction combined with reasoning-based learning methodology would contribute toward meeting the expoused goals of the church.

This study further implies the need for the church to study ways to encourage parents and teachers to be thinkers themselves, so that they will be more likely to educate thinkers. Teachers have a strong tendency to teach as they were taught (Romberg, 1992; Warren, 1985; Lortie, 1975), which was largely memory-based. Both students and student teachers tend to interact at the cognitive level of the classroom teachers' interactions (Ochs, 1971). Without growth beyond these confines of history and example, teachers have little possibility of educating the thinkers

envisioned by church philosophy. (See Holt-Reynolds, 1991a.)

Perhaps the most serious implication is the need for the church to reconsider the whole subject of thinking for oneself. When religious practice is under consideration, there may be a fine line between too little thinking for oneself and too much thinking for oneself. The horrifying example in Waco has provided sobering examples at the extremes of the continuum. Almost a hundred people were willing to totally give up their right to think for themselves. In contrast, their leader was not willing to weigh his ideas in the light of anyone else's interpretation of the Bible. Both extremes were deadly. And a mixture of fact and rumor has it that the people at both extremes had former links to the Adventist church.

Perhaps the church should deliberate on their official interpretation of what it means to be a thinker rather than a reflector of others' thought. Ways should be explored for encouraging healthy independent thinking by every person associated with the church, including the children.

The study suggests that the five adult Sabbath school teachers needed sensitization to the importance of being thinkers in order to encourage the children to think. This raises the issue of cognitive dissonance and conceptual change. Strike & Posner (1985) made the point that change does not take place until people are dissatisfied with the status quo. Perhaps if the church organization agitated and

publicized the importance of thinking for oneself, dissatisfaction with the status quo could be broadened, and conceptual change made more likely.

### Implications for the Producers of Sabbath School Materials

The data showed that the Sabbath school teachers seemed unable to engage the children in reasoning-based learning beyond a low level. Most parents as well, did not give evidence that they were aware of how to spend time helping their children become thinkers. It would appear promising to make the publications going into the home and the Sabbath school the first line of offence to improve the skills of those working with the children.

This implies a need for material that those with minimal teaching expertise can follow. They need specific notation where and how interaction about ideas could take place in the program or lesson; they need useable material that works despite their little knowledge of theoretical underpinings. In addition, those who want a more theoretical background as a base for their actions should be able to find in the material a modicum of theory to increase their teaching competency, together with information on where to go for more details.

Videos could be made of examples/nonexamples of thinking activities and thinking processes. Teacher/parent-child interactions could be videoed and scored for level of thinking and used as explicit means of demonstrating



reasoning-based vs. memory-based learning. The tapes could be exemplars for adults to watch and discuss before practicing reasoning-based teaching with their own child or class.

It follows that the need for high quality materials implies sufficient editorial staff with adequate educational qualifications.

One further implication is that the publications should forthrightly state that the material constitutes suggestions, not mandates, designed to be useful for thinkers to educate thinkers, with the understanding that each local situation requires thoughtful adaptations.

#### Implications on Teaching and Learning and How This May Differ From Adults' School Experiences

In the past few years the Vygotskian perspective has brought about a major shift in the dominant views on teaching and learning. Initial learning takes place in a social setting, so opportunities for interaction and cooperative learning are crucial (Cole & Cole, 1989; McNamee, 1979). Learners are now understood to be actively constructing knowledge and meaning instead of passively absorbing what someone else says (Resnick & Klopfer (1989; Shuell, 1986). Consequently effective teachers are mediators who intercede between the students and the learning environment to support and assist the learning process, while helping children gradually assume

responsibility for their own learning (Collins & Mangieri, 1992; Winn, 1992; Jones, Palincsar, Ogle & Carr, 1987).

Adults whose education preceeded these dramatic changes in educational theory, may still be teaching with ideas in mind such as, "I Want to Be Able to Hear a Pin Drop in This Room;" "If You Want to Learn, Shut Up and Listen;" and "Do It Because I Said So." Just telling the teachers to get in line with new educational "facts" will not override their settled ideas and bring about change. The practice of teaching is grounded in ideas that have been believed for hundreds of years, and the innate difficulty of change itself has been overlooked (Cohen, 1988). A shift into a new way of thinking and instructing will not happen easily. The dissatisfaction with the status quo referred to above must take place first.

#### Implications for Further Research

The general conclusions of this study could be considered from various perspectives. Further studies of religious education classes could investigate the extent of reasoning-based learning across a number of Adventist churches, or issues raised by this study could lead to an intervention designed to include opportunities for reasoning-based thinking during adult-child interactions.

Alternatively, completely different activities take place approximately once a week and expect children to come prepared. Widely differing results ensue. Does the

difference have to do with the child's talent or diligence, or the teacher's strategies, or the materials used? Sessions such as music, art, dance, or language lessons, could be compared for thinking level and/or home influence and preparation. Perhaps effective teachers provide more opportunities for reasoning-based learning and/or independent thinking, and thus motivate the learners to prepare or practice.

Of particular interest to producers of Sabbath school materials would be studies probing the effects of different sets of lesson material written for untrained, volunteer instructors such as many parents and weekend religious education teachers. Traditional material where the instructor is guided to cover facts and drill the children on what they are to learn could be compared with lesson material which specifically outlines for instructors when and how to engage children in active discussion of ideas and cooperative learning, thus allowing better use of social capital. Dividing the latter group would make it possible to test the efficacy of providing/not providing instructors with a brief theoretical background on the importance of adult-child interaction and reasoning-based learning.

Equally interesting to both public and religious educators would be studies designed to encourage parent participation with their children in various types of community and educational enterprises, comparing the family compliance and the changes in children's learning and

contributions to the enterprises. Studies focusing on parents' attributions of responsibility for children's success in the various enterprises would provide additional data for considering ways to make collaborative efforts more effective.

It is hoped that this case study will add to the research base of educational reform and serve to stimulate more research on weekend religious education classes, as well as other collaborative efforts of home, community, and school that join forces to assist children in reaching their full potential.

#### Implications for Educational Practices

The results of this study are of value as an indication of particular practices among a particular population in a particular context, and as evidence that the practices differ from the espoused philosophy. A major implication is for Adventists, who here receive feedback from one setting, to scrutinize how the church philosophy is enacted at the kindergarten Sabbath school level.

Of more general interest is seeing what happens at one local Adventist church to the effort to educate thinkers who can reason. Just as public educators find a dearth of reasoning-based learning in public schools (See Chapter 2), the same appears to happen despite the best intentions of a small cohesive group trying to achieve results different from the mainstream society in which they live. Although

there is general agreement in both public education and this religious education setting that children should be taught to be thinkers, actually following through on these good intentions is apparently very hard to do.

### Personal Reflections

I near completion of this project with a sense that much more could be learned from this one site, and so many other sites may be similar or different but are unexamined. Yet I am both confirmed and comforted by Evertson & Green's (1986, p.165,6) statement that, "'Truth' can never be known. What the researcher and decision maker attempt to do is to collect sufficient and appropriate evidence to ensure that the description is as accurate as possible given the representational process used."

My primary purpose for this case study was to investigate whether and/or how children are being educated to be thinkers rather than reflectors of other people's thoughts. Although a low level of thinking was encouraged in the small classes, some children did demonstrate thinking for themselves. They provided the evidence that research on social capital can be applied to preschool age children, which was my secondary purpose for the dissertation.

Despite the time constraints imposed by my job which requires worldwide travel close to 20 weeks each year in addition to content editing of several parents', teachers', and children's publications, my continuing work on the

dissertation constantly informed the workshop and editorial decisions I made, as well as my observations when visiting children's Sabbath schools in many parts of the world.

Since this study was initiated, the publications have made strides in giving parents and teachers specific suggestions for engaging children in cooperative learning and discussion, welcoming and listening carefully to their comments, and fine tuning subsequent questions. "We are in the business of educating thinkers" is the message that we want to continue refining and communicating.

## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### Child Interview

Introduction: Make this discussion as interactive as possible. The purpose is to keep the child talking.

"Do you like talking in to a tape recorder? Do you want to try it out and hear how you sound? Have you noticed the microphone at your lesson table in Sabbath school? Do you have any questions about that?"

1. What is your favorite part of Sabbath school? What do you like about it?

2. Do you have a favorite song that you sing in Sabbath school? Why do you like it best?

3. Do you have a favorite Bible story? What do you like best about it?

"I am going to tell you a Bible story about a king's servant who helped a prophet."

4. CONCEPTS---"Before I tell you the story, I want you to tell me how much you know about some ideas which are in the story. I will say a word, and you tell me what you know about that word."

Jerusalem

prophet

message

a well



5. STORY---Tell the story while using felt pictures, rope and cloth. Encourage the child to ask questions. At some point in the story where visuals are being used, ask a questions such as, "Do your parents usually have you help this way, or do you just listen to them?" \_\_\_\_\_ Later in the story ask a question such as, "Do you usually just listen to (your mom) read the story, or does (she) like you to ask questions about it?" \_\_\_\_\_

6. RECALL---"Now I would like for you to tell me this story. You may use the pictures, the rope and the cloth."

Probes: What happened next? Can you remember anything else?

7. REVIEW CONCEPTS---(for two lowest rated concepts above)

"Before I told you the story you thought of \_\_\_\_\_ when I said the word \_\_\_\_\_ to you. Now after hearing the story, what else do you know about that?" (Repeat for second word). "How do you think you learned new ideas about those words?"

8. FACTUAL QUESTIONS---Why was Ebed-Melech afraid? What did he do to help the prophet Jeremiah?

9. INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS---Why do you think Ebed-Melech was kind to Jeremiah? How did Ebed-Melech receive the message from God?

10. APPLICATION QUESTION---What did you learn from Ebed-Melech's story that will help you?

Probe: When you are afraid?

11. Is there anything you wonder about in that story?

Probe: Can you think of (why that is)?

12. Have you heard other stories in Sabbath school that you have questions about? What question do you have?

Probe: Can you think of an answer to that?

13. Do you know what an Adventist is?

Probe: Why do you think you are an Adventist?

## APPENDIX B

### Child's Consent Procedure

I would like for you to help me by talking about Sabbath school. Have you ever heard of "research?" Research means studying something very carefully in order to understand how it works. Have you studied a toy or something in your house to understand how it goes? You can help me with research on Sabbath school by answering some questions, helping put pictures on the flannel board, and asking me any questions you want to, as well.

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you don't have to answer. And we can stop if you want to. Is there anything you would like to ask right now?

Are you willing to help me?

## APPENDIX C

### Kindergarten Sabbath School Worker Interview

#### Introduction

You have been leading/teaching/helping in kindergarten Sabbath school for some time now. You have had time to think about the whole experience of Sabbath school. In this interview, I want to give you an opportunity to talk about what happens there.

1. Talk to me about the one or two things that seem to you to be the most important.

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Why would you say that that is the most important?

\_\_\_\_\_ --Tell me more.

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: What do you think is the value of the lesson time for the children?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: [If their answers are inappropriate, ask:]  
And then what would you want to have happen?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: What is it that you want the children to gain, to learn that they did not know before?

2. Think about a recent lesson/program that you felt went really well. Describe the lesson/program and tell me why you think it went well.

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Describe for me the children who are really challenges to work with.

\_\_\_\_\_ --How do you feel about that?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Describe for me the children who are really fun to work with.

\_\_\_\_\_ --How do you feel about that?

\_\_\_\_ Probe: Let's assume that you ask a question and a child gives you an answer that is just exactly what you had in mind, how do you respond?

\_\_\_\_ --What about an answer that seemed to be correct, but you weren't sure, how would you respond?

\_\_\_\_ --What about an answer that was definitely off the wall, how would you respond?

\_\_\_\_ --Would you call on that child as often?

\_\_\_\_ Probe: What do you do about children who don't answer?

3. [Using as an example the last Sabbath school they helped with/taught/led:] Talk to me about the way you prepared.

\_\_\_\_ Probe: You haven't yet talked about the teaching aids. Tell me about those.

\_\_\_\_ Probe: [If needed:] You mentioned that sometimes you don't have time to prepare. How does the Sabbath school go differently on those days than when you have felt prepared?

\_\_\_\_ Probe: Describe what you would do if you found that the lessons were difficult or inappropriate to use.

\_\_\_\_ --Talk some more about that.

\_\_\_\_ Probe: What would you do if the lessons just didn't appeal to you?

4. You've been teaching with our materials for a while, and I would appreciate some feedback from you on what we might offer that you believe would improve the Sabbath school.

\_\_\_\_ Probe: If we could only change one thing at a time, what should be first?

\_\_\_\_ --Why?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Tell me how you think the provided material works for your individual class members.

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: How does that affect the way you use them?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Have you seen many changes in the material during the time you've been teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_ --What were they?

\_\_\_\_\_ --Have you made changes in the way you have taught?

\_\_\_\_\_ --Tell me how that happened.

5. Do you remember the statement where Mrs. White says that the youth should be taught to be thinkers rather than mere reflectors of other men's thought?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: What do you think that means?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Can you think of any specific ways that we are actually doing that in Sabbath school?

## APPENDIX D

### Parent Interview

Child's birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Month, Day, Year

Number of children in family \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the child's position in the family by checking one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Youngest      \_\_\_\_\_ Between oldest and youngest  
\_\_\_\_\_ Oldest      \_\_\_\_\_ Only

(If appropriate, ask the following:)

Father's church membership (number of years) \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's church membership (number of years) \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

#### Introduction

I have been visiting (your child's) kindergarten Sabbath school and have noticed (your child) enjoying himself/herself. Since parents' attitudes are so important, I would like to give you an opportunity to talk about what Sabbath school means to your family, and how you help (your child) prepare for Sabbath school.

1. Talk to me about the one or two things that seem to you to be the most important aspects of \_\_\_\_\_ attending Sabbath school.

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Why would you say that that is the most important?

\_\_\_\_\_ --Tell me more.

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: What do you think is the value of the lesson for your child?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: [If their answers are inappropriate, ask:] And then what would you want to have happen?

2. Recently the lessons have been about\_\_\_\_\_  
Which one do you especially recall as interesting?

I'd like for you to think about how you interact with (your child) about the lesson. Tell me how you prepared for that lesson.

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Besides yourself, does anyone else start the lesson?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: How do you get started?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: How does (child) act when it is study time?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: What is it you want \_\_\_\_\_ to gain, or to learn that he/she did not know before?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: How would you know that he/she has learned it?

\_\_\_\_\_ --Tell me more about that?

3. How useful for your study time are the papers that (your child) brings home? How do you use them? What would you do if you didn't have any of those materials?

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Suggestions for daily activity

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: The lesson story

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: The artwork

\_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Pictures to be colored

4. What other kinds of activities does your family/child participate in during the week that helps them understand more of the Bible, or helps them be better prepared for Sabbath school? How often are these done?



- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Listen to Bible stories read/on  
tape/record/video
- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Tell Bible stories
- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Discuss Bible stories
- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Listen to "Your Story Hour"
- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Request stories from "Our Little Friend"
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Bible and Sabbath school preparation are just two reasons for talking with your child. I'd like you to tell me about other times you have discussions with \_\_\_\_\_.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: [Ask them to elaborate on times that are mentioned.]

6. What would you suggest as ways to improve the kindergarten Sabbath school lessons?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Tell me more about how that would help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: What made you think of that?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: What kind of thinking would that ask children to do?

7. Do you remember the statement where Mrs. White says that the youth should be taught to be thinkers rather than mere reflectors of other men's thought?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: What do you think that means?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Probe: Can you think of any specific ways that Sabbath school can help \_\_\_\_\_ be a thinker?

## APPENDIX E

### Adult Consent Form - A To be Completed by Sabbath School Teacher

I, the undersigned, have received information about the graduate study dealing with the way in which the Adventist Church advocates educating children to be thinkers rather than reflectors of other's thought. I understand that this is a voluntary project and that I may choose whether or not I will participate.

By signing this form, I wish to indicate that I do volunteer to participate in the study by furnishing information through an interview which will take about 45 minutes, and by tape recording my Bible lesson class session for three months. Because my participation is voluntary, I may choose not to answer certain questions or to discontinue my participation at any time by simply stating my desires. I further understand that the reporting of the findings of this study will be done confidentially and that no names or identifying descriptions of settings or details will be used.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Adult Consent Form - B  
To be Completed by Parent or Guardian

I, the undersigned, have received information about the graduate study dealing with the way in which the Adventist Church advocates educating children to be thinkers rather than reflectors of other's thought. I understand that this is a voluntary project and that I may choose whether or not I will participate and allow my child to participate.

By signing this form, I wish to indicate that I do volunteer to participate in the study by furnishing information through an interview which will take about 45 minutes. I also allow my child to participate by being interviewed for approximately one hour. I understand that the researcher will share general information with me afterwards, although she must insure confidentiality by not telling me specifically what my child shared. Because our participation is voluntary, I or my child may choose not to answer certain questions or to discontinue our participation at any time by simply stating our desires. I further understand that the reporting of the findings of this study will be done confidentially and that no names or identifying descriptions of settings or details will be used.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix F

Sample Transcript Pages: Class E - April 14

INITIATION	REPLY	EVALUATION/ELABORATION	COMMENTS
<p>1 OK. Close your eyes. We're</p> <p>2 ready. Dear Jesus, we're</p> <p>3 thankful for this Sabbath day.</p> <p>4 We are thankful for your love,</p> <p>5 for parents, for family and</p> <p>6 friends. Be with us today,</p> <p>7 dear Lord, as we study Thy</p> <p>8 Word. Amen. Boys and girls,</p> <p>9 you are not to touch anything</p> <p>10 behind here. We are ready for</p> <p>11 our lesson now.</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18 [OK? Are we ready? Who wants</p> <p>19 to tell me what the subject of</p> <p>20 our lesson is?</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p>26</p> <p>27</p> <p>28</p> <p>29</p> <p>30</p> <p>31</p> <p>32 [OK, let's concentrate on doing</p> <p>33 our memory verse for the next</p> <p>34 few minutes. I delight.</p> <p>35</p>	<p>[Why did they move this table?</p> <p>Uhm. (Unison) Uhm. Uhm.</p> <p>Me, me, me. Me.</p> <p>They studied my lesson but they</p> <p>didn't study my memory verse.</p> <p>I delight to do thy will, O my</p> <p>God.</p>	<p>Because it is nicer around</p> <p>here.] SCORE: 0</p> <p>Remember what I said last week?</p> <p>We study our memory verse every</p> <p>single week and make sure you</p> <p>review the ones that have gone</p> <p>before so that by the end of</p> <p>the quarter you know all 13 of</p> <p>them.] SCORE: 1</p> <p>OK. (interaction continues -&gt;)</p>	

INITIATION	REPLY	EVALUATION/ELABORATION	COMMENTS
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1 So, Hezekiah became the king  
2 because he was the son of the  
3 king. [You know Hezekiah,  
4 everybody thought maybe he  
5 would be a bad king, too,  
6 because his dad was a bad king.  
7 But, Tommy, Hezekiah was a good  
8 or a bad king? Do you know  
9 which from your lesson?

Good.  
Bad.

He was a good king. He  
surprised everybody.] SCORE: 1

[Was it the same one like last  
week?

No, this is different. Joash,  
no, this is after Joash.]

SCORE: 1

16 And Hezekiah, the first thing  
17 Hezekiah did, Kevin, was say,  
18 "Clean up the temple." So he  
19 told everybody to go in and the  
20 priests went in and they swept  
21 the floors and they picked up  
22 all the clutter, and they  
23 opened the doors and the  
24 windows so the fresh air could  
25 come in. And the people were  
26 allowed to go into the temple  
27 and worship. And they started  
28 worshipping God again instead of  
29 their idols. Don't you think  
30 that was a good thing for that  
31 king to do? That's what made  
32 him a good king. But several  
33 miracles happened during  
34 Hezekiah's reign. [Do you know  
35 what a miracle is? Tommy, do

(interaction continues →)

## APPENDIX G

### Scoring System for Student Thinking Level in Teacher/Student Interactions

General principle: Give the highest score that applies somewhere in the interaction.

<u>SCORE</u>	<u>CRITERIA</u> (--Describing teacher action while interacting with child(ren))
0	<p>NO OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO THINK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--socializing</li><li>--talks about extrinsic rewards</li><li>--accepts students' irrelevant guessing to get stickers</li><li>--asks a confusing question, one without clear direction</li><li>--does not reply to a student's idea/opinion /contribution</li><li>--expects student repetition of what teacher said</li><li>--controls behavior or deals with procedural matters</li><li>--flatly contradicts student reply</li><li>--silences a child who is endeavoring to respond</li><li>--gives child a chance to read or put up felts</li><li>--asks for repetition of memory verse without application</li><li>--accepts silly answers without promoting thinking</li></ul>
1	<p>A ONE SHOT CHANCE FOR CHILDREN TO THINK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--gives children a chance to predict an answer</li><li>--asks question with only simple fact answer</li><li>--accepts yes/no without asking for more information</li><li>--expands on student's single word reply</li><li>--asks children to remember former lesson</li><li>--asks children to remember part of story already covered</li><li>--simply affirms child contribution</li><li>--asks rhetorical question</li><li>--gives directions for an activity</li><li>--gives directions on a procedure, i.e. knot tying</li><li>--asks for repetition of memory verse with application</li><li>--invites children to express an opinion</li></ul>

- 2      A CHANCE FOR CHILDREN TO BUILD ON INITIAL THINKING  
--builds further questions on first question  
--relates story that informs but doesn't tell  
      answer to subsequent question  
--tells how to memorize or remember  
--adjusts task to help child be successful  
--leads discussion of facts or opinions  
--leads discussion of memory verse  
      meaning/application
- 3      ENCOURAGEMENT FOR CHILDREN TO ENGAGE IN SERIOUS  
THOUGHT PROCESSES  
--probes child's answer to encourage thought  
--poses a dilemma and encourages discussion of it  
--invites children to ask questions  
--leads children to role play a situation under  
      discussion  
--invites children to express their understanding  
      through an artistic endeavor  
--asks children what they have learned in this  
      lesson  
--leads children to compare their opinion with  
      what the Bible says
- 4      A SCORE OF 3 PLUS INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ENGAGE IN  
SERIOUS THOUGHT PROCESSES  
--models how to engage in serious thought  
--leads the children through the process of  
      thinking seriously about a topic

## APPENDIX H

### Class A Supporting Data

#### Planning

On the subject of lesson planning during his interview, Jamie expressed a preference for word pictures, said he hardly ever used the teaching aids, and had no need to prepare for teaching the Bible story but a definite need to prepare something extra which the children expect. The purpose of the extra activity seemed to be chiefly to interest the children. He stated its purpose as follows: "But to give them little extra things to do, they like that. They're waiting to see what I have for them." A week when there was no time to prepare earlier, Jamie said his mind "goes crazy" during the preliminary part of Sabbath school in order to think of that something extra to do with the small group.

In the section of the interview that covered planning, Jamie reported that the story of the Syrian army was a lesson that turned out well. Then he was asked to describe the planning involved for teaching the story.

Jamie: I had to think about, because I have a son that age I had to realize that sound effects, things that you perceive without seeing, are very appealing to children. . . . I painted a word picture for them. . . . So that started the story and their imagination, and they needed very little help from me.

Interviewer: You haven't said anything about the teaching aids. Do you make any use of those?

Jamie: I don't really use those. Because most of them I find are not challenging enough for that age group. . . . Very rarely do I use the teaching aids. The week before last we had extra time and we played pictionary. They liked that. Each one who guessed got an extra sticker. So I don't use the teaching aids that I'm provided with. I rarely use, I shouldn't say I don't use them at all. Occasionally I do use them, but usually I think of something on my own.



- Interviewer: Does the time ever come when you don't really have time to prepare?
- Jamie: Yes, yes.
- Interviewer: Then what happens that week when you teach?
- Jamie: Then while they're sitting and listening to the preliminary part of Sabbath school, my mind is going crazy. That's the only way I can put it.
- Interviewer: Does the class go differently on those days than it does on the days when you prepare?
- Jamie: Yes, it does go differently. I, you know, definitely it is better when I do prepare.
- Interviewer: How is it better?
- Jamie: Because I have something besides the lesson. I can handle the lesson without any preparation because maybe because I've dealt with children for so long. But to give them little extra things to do, they like that. They're waiting to see what I have for them. That's the only way it gets better.

### Inaccuracies.

Jamie claimed that he did not need to prepare for teaching the Bible story. Since he helped his own son study the lesson for Sabbath school, he felt comfortable with the story. However, three different weeks Jamie gave the children minor misinformation: an aunt and uncle were said to be grandpa and grandma, Moses' sister Miriam was referred to as Mary, Esther's cousin was called her uncle. None of the children noted the discrepancies.

### Examples of Jamie's use of planning.

#### 1. Word pictures:

Four of the ten weeks Jamie used word pictures to involve children in the lesson study. For instance, the following exchange took place during the story of Jonah:

- Teacher: Well, the ship set out into the sea and everyone was getting ready to have dinner probably, and they were talking, and some were playing, and some were reading. Some of them were relaxing, some



were working on the ship. But Jonah was there all alone in the basement. And sometimes when you're all alone in the basement and you've got nothing to do, what do you do? What do you end up doing?

Student: Sleep.

Teacher: You just go to sleep. So did Jonah. For sometime he was so bored he fell asleep. He was fast asleep.

Student: He was snoring. (Snoring sounds.)

Teacher: Yes, he was probably snoring. Do you think anyone heard him snore though?

Student: Yeah, I saw a video of him.

Teacher: You saw a video, but do you think anyone really heard him snore? No, he was in the basement of the ship. Everyone was so far away from him. All of a sudden something happened. There was a storm. Everyone knows what a storm is?

Student: Yeah.

Teacher: So now, start from this way and tell me what you see in a storm. When we say there's a storm, what do you think of? What do you think of when you say storm?

Student: Thunder and lightning.

Teacher: What else do you think of?

Student: Waves.  
Rain.

Teacher: Waves, OK. Rain, right, rain also.

Student: Lightning and thunder and big waves.

Teacher: There's something else in a storm. Thunder, lightning, rain.

Student: And wind.

Teacher: Wind, right.

Student: And the whale.

Teacher: A whale's not in a storm.

## 2. Using visual aids activities that were provided:

Three times out of the ten sessions tape recorded, Jamie did make use of a visual aid activity that had been provided for all the teachers. Twice the children in the class had a cut and paste activity. The third time they merely watched as Jamie cut and pasted a box. Then they took home the pattern to do on their own. This record does substantiate Jamie's avowal that he hardly uses the teaching aids. It is quite possible that these three weeks Jamie had not had time to prepare, and using what was at hand was fast and easy.

## 3. Using self-selected visual aids activities:

On June 2 the lesson was on Daniel in the lion's den and how God protected him. Some planning had obviously taken place because Jamie taught the lesson by using a picture book brought from home. When the end of the story was reached, Jamie asked, "Would you like to see the other stories in this book? OK, you tell me this one. This is what story?" Teacher and children then looked through the rest of the book, identifying other Bible stories where God took care of people. It is difficult to know how much planning went into this, and how much of the result was serendipitous. This was the only class session where activity time did not degenerate into the children chattering about subjects bearing no relationship to the objectives of Sabbath school. This time everyone was right on task Jamie provided to the end.

June 9 the Bible lesson was on the first half of the story of Esther. Jamie handed out paper and crayons for the children to draw and decorate crowns. Both items could easily have been found in the supply closet during Sabbath school preliminaries.

June 16 the Bible lesson was on the second half of the story of Esther. Jamie's activity required only a piece of rope which could also have been found in the supply closet. The class spent almost half of the time learning how to tie a slip knot while talking about Haman being hung--not at all what the curriculum designers had had in mind. This macabre emphasis even included the following unneeded information:

Teacher: You know what they used to do in some states long long before there were policeman and laws, if people wanted to kill somebody? They'd make a knot like this. They didn't take the time to build gallows, but they'd hang them from a tree. Are you watching? Hang it from a tree and then put a guy on horseback and his head through here.

Student: Oh, I know what they did. They'd ride him on.



Teacher: Then they'd hit the horse. What does the horse do when you hit it? It starts running. Now he starts running and this gets tighter and tighter.

Student: And stuck.

Teacher: And the horse goes away, but the man, the rope is around the man's neck. Did you understand?

Student: So that's how you do it.

Teacher: This is, man's on a horse, he's sitting so it's not tight. But the moment the horse runs away, what happens to the man?

Student: Kills him.

[This conversation filled 7 pages of the 17 page transcript with children even tightening slip knots around their necks. One child was reminded of a movie he had seen, "Mistress of the Dark," which he repeatedly worked into the conversation, even three more times after the activity was ended.]

June 23 the Bible lesson was about Nehemiah superintending the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall. The activity, which the children were not overly excited about, especially because they could see that some other groups were using legos, was to share in drawing a blueprint for a church. Once again this required only paper and crayons which could easily have been found during the preliminaries.

### What Counts as Important

In his interview, Jamie did not once mention helping children to understand. Instead, he made several statements seemingly contrary to the idea. When asked to talk about the one or two most important things that happen in Sabbath school, he focused on life priorities:

Jamie: I think for children, even at this young age, they have to get their priorities right. They have to know which part of their life gets more importance than the others. . . I think Sabbath school, to put it very basically, is like sort of a reminder session, you know. At the end of the week you are reminded maybe you haven't been doing too well this week. It puts life back in perspective so they can start again in case they have been lagging behind in some area.

The next interview question was, "What do you think is the value of the 20 minute lesson time for the children?"

Jamie: It depends. It varies from child to child. For the child that has been studying his lesson every day of the week, it just, it's sort of a time where he can, in a way, show off and tell everybody he knows the answers. . . . And for the child who doesn't learn his lesson during the week, it's something new, something different and it holds his attention. He gains something from it also. It's just that both boys or girls, whatever, would gain something in a different way. For one it would be reinforcement, and for the other it would be just sort of discovery.

The next probe was an endeavor to uncover other thoughts Jamie might have about the children who have interaction with adults during the week in preparing for the lesson. The response was surprising.

Interviewer: So for the children that have studied during the week, do you think there's anything else that they might learn that they didn't know when they come to Sabbath school?

Jamie: Usually, I think, for children this age there's very little you can teach them that's new. The Sabbath school lesson is basically a story, a moral, and how you relate it to your life. So there's not really much unless the teacher is very innovative and can think of something. It's very hard to find new ideas to present to a child, because a child looks at something from all angles and by the time you explain something to a child, he's already discovered it himself. So I think it's just sort of an assurance to the child that, "Yes, it was worth learning my lesson. It is worth learning it every day because when I come to Sabbath school I know it and I can participate."

This response does not seem to predict a teacher who would pay a lot of attention to helping children understand words, ideas, and relationships.

Contrary to that projection, Jamie was creative at using illustrations to help the students comprehend words, ideas, and the memory verse's connection to the Bible story. When the lesson was about Nehemiah the following conversation took place:

Teacher: This week we study about a man who is a cupbearer. Do you know what that word means? Cup-bearer? What is a cup?

Student: Cup? Something you drink in.

Teacher: Yes, cup is something you drink in. Bearer. What do you mean by saying when you bear something?

Student: I bear you.

Teacher: To carry? Bearer, someone who carries the cup? What does that mean? Cupbearer is someone who carries the cup.

Student: Do they carry the cup everywhere like this?

Teacher: Ok, his name was Nehemiah and he was the king's cupbearer. What does that mean?

Student: I don't know.

Teacher: Did he carry the king's cup around?

Students: Yes.

No.

He gives it to him.

He give it to him with juice in it.

Teacher: Yea, when the king's thirsty, he fills up this cup and gives it to the king. Isn't that nice? The king doesn't even have to fill his own cup?

Student: Yea.

Moments later the teacher brings an idea in the story close to home to help the children understand what it means.

Teacher: Ok, Jerusalem looked terrible. Nehemiah was so sad because the city of Jerusalem was such a mess. How many of you have seen a place that's a big mess sometimes?

Student: My closet is a big mess.

Teacher: Sometimes have you gone downtown and you see some buildings that are old and falling apart and they are not kept



well?

Student: Yea, I see them a lot.

Teacher: When you see that, can you fix that building up by yourself?

Student: No.

Teacher: No. Nobody could fix it, and how about a whole big city. The whole city was a mess. Could you fix the city by yourself?

Student: No.

Teacher: No, and that was Nehemiah's problem.

Student: I can. I can. I would get a whole bunch of people to come. . .

Teacher: But you need people. Can you do it by yourself?

Students: Yea, that's teamwork. Teamwork. You need lots of people.

In six of the ten recorded class sessions, the teacher made an effort to link the memory verse meaningfully to the Bible story. In the following passage the story of Nehemiah was coming to an end:

Teacher: And so he had a big group of people and all of them were building the city of Jerusalem. And so, what is a laborer? Do you know what a laborer is? That's a big word.

Student: Together, together.

Teacher: No, it means someone who works and that's your memory verse, "We are labourers together with God." That means we all have to work together, right?

The illustrations to promote understanding were sometimes lengthy. The following word picture was to help the children understand the story about the Syrians besieging Samaria and the lepers finding the Syrian army gone, but lots of food left behind:

Teacher: Now let's stop the story right here and I want you to imagine something. Imagine that you are out with your friends, all four of you are outside playing. Ronnie says, "Hey Tim, can you hear that?"

Tim says "What?"

"I hear a police car." Sometimes do you hear things when you are playing even though you cannot see it, you hear it? "I hear a police car."

And Tim said, "Police car?"

Ronnie said, "Yes, listen."

Tim listened and listened, "Yea, I can hear a police car."

Time turned to Adam. "Adam, do you hear a police car?"

"Police car? I can't hear it." And everyone stays quiet so that Adam can hear it. He strains his ears. "Police car, hum," Ooooooh, Ooooooh, Ooooooh. "Oh yes, I hear it!"

"Billy, do you hear a police car?"

And Billy says, "No, I don't hear a police car." What would all three of you think? You'd think he was either deaf or a bit cuckoo, right?

Students: Cuckoo.  
Cuckoo? I'm not cuckoo.

Teacher: Right.

But then Billy would say, "Let me listen hard. Oh, yes. I hear it." All of you would be sure you heard a police car, right? Right.

Now, take another situation. You are all out playing again and Ronnie comes up to Tim and says, "I hear a police car."

And Tim listens and listens, "No, I don't hear a police car."

"Come on, I hear a police car. Don't you hear it?"

Tim says, "No, I don't hear a police car?"

So Ronnie goes to Adam, "Adam, do you hear a

police car?"

Adam listens and listens and says, "No, I don't hear a police car."

Then you go to Billy, "Billy, do you hear a police car?"

Billy says, "No, I don't hear a police car."

So what would you think? "Oh yea, maybe I was mistaken. Maybe I was wrong." So when no one hears a police car except you, you think that maybe you were wrong.

Ok, so now it was early morning and Elisha had already told the king, what had he told the king that they would have?

Student: Food.

Teacher: Food. So the next morning the Syrians were outside and they heard something. They heard horses, a lot of horses galloping and coming. Do you think only one of them heard it? No, the whole army. Every single man there said, "Oh, my, I can hear horses." Can you hear the horses? [Knocks on table] Can you make horse noises?

Students: [Knocking on the table.] "Hear mine."

Teacher: Hear the horses? Everybody heard the horses coming. So they all heard the horses and know what they thought? They thought, "The people inside sent a secret message to another army, a bigger army, a stronger army, a more powerful army, and they are going to come and kill us all. We better get out of here." So what did they do? They ran away for dear life. Do you think there was an army and horses?

Student: No.

Teacher: No. But they all heard it. God made them hear it. Wasn't that a very nice trick? God made them hear. So God uses many different ways to protect us. So He protected the people by making the bad guys hear what?

Students: Sound.  
Horses.

Teacher: Yes, the sound of horses.

The questioning patterns (The class session discourse below will also illustrate Jamie's interaction pattern.)

Jamie typically asked fact questions to uncover the students' knowledge of the day's Bible story. A traditional recitation format was followed--teacher asked fact question, students responded with short--frequently one word--answers, and teacher corrected or affirmed them and added lengthy explanations.

An example is early in the story of Esther:

Teacher: Let's start when Esther was a little girl. What happened to Esther when she was a little girl? Did she have parents?

Student: No.

Teacher: No. Her parents died when she was a very little girl. Can you imagine not being with a mommy or a daddy? That would be very sad.

Student: No home?

Teacher: Yes, but Esther was a very brave girl. She grew up with her uncle. [Actually the Bible says "cousin."] What was her uncle's name?

Student: Joash.

Teacher: No.

Student: King David.

Teacher: No.

Student: Joseph.

Teacher: No. What was this uncle's name?

Student: David is dead now. He is out of this planet.

Teacher: Mordecai.

Students: Mordecai  
Yea, Mordecai, Mordecai.

Teacher: And then it was time for the king to choose a new queen.

Student: I want to color.

Teacher: And uncle told Esther, "I want you to apply for the position." Just like you apply for a job. "I

want you to apply for the position, but don't tell anybody that you are a Jew." Is it hard to keep a secret?

Student: No.

Teacher: Yes, it is. It is very difficult, especially a very important secret like that. She couldn't tell anybody she was a Jew. And she had to worship on the Sabbath day, but she didn't want anyone to know she was a Jew. There she was in the palace and who was chosen to be the queen?

Students: (Unison) Esther.

Occasionally the teacher followed a second questioning pattern. Jamie sometimes asked idea questions that could have led to reasoning-based learning, but followed them up with rapid rebuttal if the child answered differently from the teacher's opinion.

The question "What's our story about today?" (Jonah), was followed by, "Now tell me, was Jonah a brave guy, was he very brave, or was he a coward?" Reactions to the question were equally divided between the two choices, but one child defended his "wrong" answer by making the point, "When he got in the ocean, he was brave." The teacher said, "No he wasn't" and went on to the next question.

Early in another lesson, the teacher asked, "What was the king's name?" (Hezekiah.) After a brief summary of the story's beginning, the teacher asked, "Do you think God hears your prayers?" Two children said "yes" and one said "sometimes". Here was a good opportunity to probe for understanding and to promote reasoning-based learning. Instead, the teacher gave the "right" answer: "He always hears your prayers. The answer He gives may not be the one you want, but He always hears your prayers."

Although Jamie used traditional questioning patterns and imposed an adult opinion on the children, there was a marked concern that the students understand the meaning of the lessons. Thus a bit farther along, after experimenting with the way a sundial works, the class abruptly returned to the subject of prayer:

Teacher: God always answers your prayers. Sometimes you may think He doesn't. Have you ever prayed for a toy? "God, I want a superman," or something like that?

2 different students: Yes, Yea.

Teacher: Sometimes you don't get it and you think, "Oh, God didn't hear my prayer." Is that what you think sometimes when you don't get it? That's not true.

God does hear your prayers, but His answer is, "No, you can't have it." Or He says, "No, later." Just like your mommy. When you want a cookie, you go and ask, "Mommy can I have a cookie?" Sometimes she says yes, doesn't she? Sometimes she says. . .?

2 different students: Because no. No.

Teacher: No, but does that mean she didn't hear you? No she hears you every time, but the answer is different every time because sometimes she feels you shouldn't have something.

Student: But sometimes when you're dreaming about a toy that you really want and then it comes true. That happened to me yesterday, because I was dreaming about Batman if I could get it at Ames, so I got it yesterday.

Teacher: See, sometimes we get it. But if you didn't get it that doesn't mean no one heard you. It just means that sometimes it's better to wait. That's what your memory verse talks about: "Not mine...

Students in unison: "Not my will but thine."

Teacher: But thine. It's not what I want, it's what God wants.

## APPENDIX I

### Class B Supporting Data

#### Planning

In his interview, Mr. King stated that he had been through the lesson cycle several times, so he did not need to prepare the lessons. He continued, "The thing I want to do is to know the children individually, pray for them individually, and be a friend to them. I pray each time that I teach that I have something for each individual, to make them happy in Sabbath school, and that they'll learn something."

When asked about the use he makes of the teacher's guide: "I think they fall behind the times with those helps. I find my kiddies do like to color pictures, they do like to illustrate things. That's where I get the most use out of those things. . . . [When] I see them getting restless, I pull out these pictures and the old lesson helps, and the crayons, and I'll have them crayon the pictures. While they're crayoning the pictures I'll be referring to the lessons from which the pictures illustrate.

Interviewer: Do you have all of them working on the same pictures?

Mr. King: No, each has an individual one. They look over at each others as I talk about them.

#### Inaccuracies.

Five of the weeks Mr. King was present, he gave misinformation on the lesson to the children. Some was confusion of names such as calling two different kings by the same name. One week he taught that the lost book of the law was found when a wall of the temple was being repaired, an interpretation not found in the Bible account or any of the lesson helps recommended to the teachers. Another week he had Queen Esther marry King Cyrus, and the next week he said the Persians choose to kill the Jews on their feast days of Purim, rather than the Jews establishing Purim as a memorial of their deliverance. No child made a remark about any of the discrepancies.

Examples of Mr. King's use of planning.

The only planning Mr. King claimed to do other than thinking about the children and praying had to do with use of the Bible. "[If] it's hard to tell which [verses] would be most direct in the kiddies' minds onto the lesson, . . . I do review those scriptures first," to get Bibles out ready for the children to use. "I've got several Bibles there, and the children that have enough instruction I have turn to the lesson scriptures. Sonetimes we'll read the lesson scriptures, at least about three or four verses directly out of the Bible. . . . I try to have [the older boy] [open up the Bibles to the scripture] for all three Bibles and have them all set for the others when they come.

The field notes plus the lesson transcripts show that children used Bibles three weeks out of 10. Four other weeks, at least the older child was copying the memory verse into a notebook, but not from the Bible. On March 31 the following minimal Bible use took place:

Mr. King: Now let's look for our lesson scriptures. Our lesson scriptures are in the book of Kings. We're studying about a king again. Here are the momory scriptures. I'll put them right in front of Jeremy there, and Dennis has one there.

The lesson continued, but the Bible was not mentioned again. On June 2 the difficulty of Bible use occasioned some interaction:

Mr. King: Now you know where it is? Psalm 34:7. Can you look it up in the Bible? Can you look it up in the Bible and find Psalms? See if you can find Psalm 34.

Child: Okay, that's here.

Mr. King: And Sally, see if you can find it. Okay, now I want you to look up that memory verse in the Bible. Psalm 34.

Child: I don't know where Psalm 34 is.

Mr. King: And I want Jeff to do it too.

Child: I can't find Psalm 34.  
Too bad.  
Too bad, too sad.

Mr. King: See this is Psalms and see what this number is? That's 109. You want less so you turn it back here and you get less. You get Psalm what?



Child: I got it.  
Oh, I've got. I've got it.

Mr. King: Yes, were's verse 7? You've got Numbers, you haven't got it.

Child: Too bad, too sad.

Mr. King: Missy, you haven't got it.

Child: I don't have it?  
Too bad, too sad.  
Shut up, Charles.  
How do you know my name?  
It's on your name tag.

Mr. King: Okay, now read it from the front. The angel of the Lord . . .

Child: [Reads the verse.]

Mr. King: There are extra words because they left some of the words out in the memory verse. But that's the entire verse and Sally has found it first. So without a doubt Sally takes home the plant. Oksy, that a good try there, Jeff. Don't mope about it now. You did your best. Now let's get on with the lesson. Who is the lesson about?

Jeff: Daniel.

Mr. King: Let's give it [a second-best plant] to Jeff for a consolation prize. Go give it to him.

### What Counts as Important

Mr. King was a very indulgent teacher, as he hinted at in his interview: "If a group gets restless enough to make it impractical to go on, they get a little bit noisy and throwing off, 'let us color this,' 'let us do that,' it kind of results in disarray. Then after the lesson study I go ahead and proceed to their request; put those pictures in front of them and the crayons. Those who have been with me long enough know that I'll do that if they're adamant enough."

On March 31 the class began with the memory verse:

Mr. King: Let's learn today's memory verse.

Child: But do we get our trains?

Mr. King: Oh, yes. You get the trains for attendance.

So the children say the verse, and Mr. King begins the day's Bible story by linking it to last week's story. Barely into the story:

Child: Can we color?

Mr. King: Yes, you can color very soon. Now there are some nice pictures to color and I want to tell you about this week's lesson. Here are some nice ones for you to color. You can color that tree picture there. And I'll give you some crayons right now.

Child: Oh, boy.

Handing out gifts could result in hurt feelings and disagreements. For example on April 7 Mr. King apparently gave a birth announcement he had received to a visitor in the class.

Mr. King: We'll give you this, right. We've got to be kind to our visitors. You get things every week, you do.

Child: No, I don't!  
Yes, you do!

Mr. King: Yes, you do. You aren't going to get no more.

Child: Remember you got that train?

Mr. King: Remember you got that nice train?

Child: So, everybody else got that train.

Mr. King: No, not everybody.

Child: No, I didn't get one.

Mr. King: Sally didn't get one. You've got to be kind and share things. Now there's a lesson in our \_\_\_\_\_. Do you know the tune, "Jesus Loves Me?" I'll sing this song here, and we have different words to it. (Singing) "Sometimes friends," put your heads together, "Sometimes friends come here to play, and be kind and I will say, you be first, you take a turn. Self-denial I will learn."  
Let's all sing it now.

Child: I don't want to.

Mr. King: You need it more than anybody else.

On April 14 Mr. King arrived very late. A substitute teacher had been guiding the attentive children through the Bible story. That changed instantly.

Child: Where were you, Mr. King?  
Mr. King, before we go home, can we have some of that candy?

Mr. King: So did God work miracles for Hezekiah, the lovely king that learned to be good like God had told them, and put all of the bad things out of the temple? You bet He done miracles.

Child: Mr. King?

Mr. King: Yes?

Child: Before we leave, can we have some of the candy?

Mr. King: Oh, yes, and I've got a very, vbery special kind.  
. . . Come on, come on now. Look up now. What's the trouble, sweetheart?

Child: Can I color?

Mr. King: I've got something special for you today. It's not an Easter egg. It's something that's gonna even have more surprises in it than an Easter egg.

Child: For everybody?

Mr. King: One for everybody.

Child: Ooh, I can't wait

The conversation stayed on the subject of external rewards until the class time ended several pages of transcript later.

The Questioning Patterns (The following class session discourse will also illustrate Mr. King's interaction pattern.)

1. Typical recitations: On May 19 the lesson was the fiery furnace.

Mr. King: But angels were watching over God's people and there were three of God's people there on that plain, in that great, big crowd of people. And what were their names? Do you remember their names?

Child: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Mr. King: Right. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. And the order went out to all the people that when you hear the bands playing, when you hear the cymbal and the harp and all kinds playing, what were they do do, Charles, when they all played?

Child: Bow down.

Mr. King: They were all to bow down and worship this big idol.

Child: They were lost?

Mr. King: Well, when that happened everybody bowed down. Who do you think didn't bow down?

Child: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Mr. King: Right. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't bow down.

Child: Why?

Mr. King: They knew that the Lord their God was the one to worship, not this old, gold idol. They knew that God did not agree with Nebuchadnezzar. They knew . . . [And a lecture continues.]

The child who asked the discrepant question, "They were lost?" was ignored.

2. Children interrupting lectures: The above story continued in lecture form for two pages

Mr. King: . . . It was going to burn them all up. In fact, the men that threw them in, the men that threw them in, the fire came out and killed them too. The flames licked up and they licked up the men that had thrown them in there.

Child: Our memory verse showed that picture.

Mr. King: Yea. Those men that threw them in were killed by the furnace. But how many people do we see in the picture?

Child: Four.  
One was Jesus.



Mr. King: Right. [Then the story reverted to lecture form.]  
                     On May 26 the memory verse had been repeated,  
                     a little socializing had taken place, and the  
                     Bible story begins and is uninterrupted for one  
                     page.

Mr. King: What do we call it when one little boy has another  
                     little boy? If I have a little boy and he has a  
                     little boy, who is he? Who's the second one?

Child:       Your son.

Mr. King: Is he my son or my grandson?

Child:       Grandson.

Mr. King: Grandson, that's right.

                    [The story goes on for another uninterrupted page.]

Mr. King: God struck his head and made his head silly, so  
                     that he went out like a cow and ate grass and  
                     lived out on the grass instead of living in his  
                     palace.

Child:       I never heard that story.

Mr. King: You didn't hear that one?

Child:       No.

Mr. King: I don't think we emphasize that one so much in our  
                     lessons.

                    [The story continued lecture form until misbehavior  
                     prompted an activity.]

## APPENDIX J

### Class C Supporting Data

#### Planning

In her interview Mary explained how she plans the lesson:

First of all, I read the lesson to my children out of Our Little Friend that they take home with them every week, and then I read the teacher's aids which give tips, ideas on what you might do. And the medium that they use to teach in the teacher's aids are felts, so we have a felt board and then we have our own felts that we can use to make a picture.

I don't always think the picture with felts . . . [covers] exactly what you need. I think the kids get tired of that every week. We have in our home My Bible Friends which is a set of books, . . . the pictures are excellent, you couldn't get any better illustration, so I thought, "Great, this particular story is in there." . . . these are just good pictures that the kids kind of stay glued onto those pictures while you are reading it, and then they make the story very easily understood.

Then the last thing I do in preparing is that I always read it from the Bible because I have found in a couple of instances where the lessons that they've drawn are not necessarily the lessons that I would like to draw from it, and so maybe there are two different ways of looking at that, or maybe I didn't think they were right in the lessons that they draw, and they were trying to pull something over on the kids. I don't want to do that because the kids might think back later, "That's not what that was about!" or "I was taught this and I don't think it's true." I don't want that to happen, and so I try to read it in the Bible to make sure that what they are trying to get across is what the Bible has said.

Examples of Mary's use of planning.

## 1. Children helping with felts:

The weeks that Mary used felt pictures, she always had the children help her put the pictures on the board.

Mary: Jonah had a lot to learn. He did not understand God, did he? Marky, put on some of the waves. Joey, here you go. Put on some of the waves down there. But they did what Jonah said. They didn't want to throw him over. The sailors weren't bad people. They didn't want to throw Jonah over, but they had to, didn't they?

Child: Yes.

Mary: Can you put Jonah in the water? Turn him around, Honey. I know it's backwards for you. There, Samuel, he's down in the water and he's just giving one cry, "Oh, God, I'm sorry," probably. And so he went down, down, but did God let him drown?

Child: No, he sent whale.  
No

Mary: He sent a big fish. Did the whale go like this (smacking lips)?

Child: No.

Mary: He just went (swallow). He swallowed him down whole, didn't he? They have big tummies, don't they? Put the whale on there.

## 2. Using alternative visual aids:

For the class on April 7 Mary planned to read the story from a picture book while the children looked at the colored pictures in the book.

Mary: Jason, you be nice and quiet, too. Let's hear the story about this little boy who is seven years old, and you can look at the pictures. How many of you have these books? Not too many? They're great pictures so you look at the pictures while I read it to you.

Child: I have that one.



Mary: You do? Well you should read them then when they have stories about our lesson. Don't cry, little Joash. Don't cry. Someday you will be king and wear a crown on your head and sit on a golden throne.

The story continued for six and a half pages of transcript before a child interrupted with a question. On June 23 the story was about Nehemiah superintending the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. Mary's planning was clearly evident.

Mary: I have something I want to give you, and while I'm finishing the story I want you to do a job for me. You know what these are?

Child: Yea.  
Legos.  
I have those at school. I have those at nursery school.

Mary: What do you think I want you to do with these?

Child: Uh, build something?

Mary: I want you to build a wall. Those are yours, okay? While I'm telling you the story can you build a wall? Can you try to build a wall? Let's pretend that these Legos are stones, okay? You make your wall however you want to make it.

Child: Look what I made.

Mary: We came out exactly right; everybody got the same. Okay, you build your wall and listen.

As Mary told the story she used the piles of Legos to illustrate that the wall was fallen down. Then toward the end:

Mary: Ok, who has a finished wall? Very good. This wall is still in the process of being built. So it's different heights. Who else has a wall?

Child: No one, no one has finished.

Mary: Okay, her wall is little, but she's got several pieces put together, doesn't she? Can you put the rest and stack them right up there? Go ahead and put them up there. Very good.

It's not finish yet, but look how big it's getting. How did that happen? Because everybody

worked together. People cooperated.

Child: It's falling down.

Mary: Well, this is just Legos. But that's what can happen if people work together. . . . Look, these guys all worked together. Some of them guarded, some of them built the wall. And you know what? If we work together on a project like this, we can do great things too. . . . And your memory verse today is, "For we are laborers together with God."

Child: For we are laborers together with God.

Mary: That meant thal all those men that worked on this wall worked together with God.

Child: And they want to help.

Mary: And we can work together with God by helping.

Child: My daddy did help out with the dishes.

#### What Counts as Important

In the example above, Mary planned a visual aid that would help the children understand the meaning of the story. One child volunteered an everyday application of the lesson, but Mary did not comment on the child's idea. She had already covered the application she had in mind.

On May 5 the lesson was about Daniel and his three friends. This was one of the stories where Mary felt there was an additional lesson to be learned, besides the one emphasized in the teacher's guide. The four friends chose not to eat the food from the king's table. After telling the story, Mary went through the four food groups with the children and ended with the following exchange:

Mary: Now is it a sin to eat candy, is it a sin to drink soda pop?

Child: No.

Mary: No. Is it the best choice?

Child: No.

Mary: No, it's not. . . . How about the meat? We don't eat the meat. Is it a sin to eat the meat?

Children: (Unison) No.

Mary: No. But is it the best choice?

Children: (Unison) No.

Mary: . . . So, in our story about Daniel and his three friends, we must remember that they not only wanted to do what God wanted them to do by choosing the right foods for their body so that their minds would be healthy and their bodies would be strong, but there is another reason that I think this story is in the Bible. The lesson that I was able to obtain from this was that Daniel and his three friends were willing to go along with the Babylonian people who captured them in all respects, but they did not have to compromise their principles. They dressed like them because they wanted them to, and they thought, "Oh, that's okay. We can dress like them and it's not going to hurt anything." And they went to their schools and learned what they wanted to teach them and they felt like, "That's okay. If we don't like what they want we can just not accept it." And they, uh, oh, what else did they do that was just what the Babylonians wanted them to do? They probably had their hair cut like them.

Anyway, all those things they decided they could do. But when it came to eating their food, there were some regulations God had set down that they had to abide by, and they would not compromise their principles. And I think that's a good lesson for us. We can compromise to the point to show our love for other people and not cause conflict or fights with other people in all those cases until it gets to the point where we have to compromise our principles and our allegiance to God. And that's what we don't want to do. You'll learn in your other stories about Daniel that Daniel never prayed to their idols. He always prayed to God and that was another case where he would not

Child: I pray to God.

Mary: Right. He would not compromise his principles, would he, even in the face of danger. So I think that's a lesson we can learn from this story, as well as that we should always choose the best foods to us to eat.

It would be interesting to know what the children understood of her lesson application. Mary completed the lesson by reading the story over again from the picture book

she has talked about liking. The children did not make a sound while she read.

The Questioning Patterns (The examples of class session discourse below will also illustrate Mary's interaction pattern.)

In her interview, Mary expressed clear distinctions between the teacher's role and the child's role.

Mary: [The fun] kind of child is the kind that has respect for the teacher-child relationship. They are the kind that you can see in their eyes that things are registering and they are listening to you. But at the same time, they are not so anxious to tell you . . . [in contrast to] the child that wants to tell you the story and not have the respect for you as the teacher to ask the questions and then he can respond when he is asked . . . Those are the kinds that you really enjoy teaching, the ones that will listen, will do their lesson, but are not really wanting to take the [teacher's] place.

On April 28 Mary started out the story by expressing the same perception of teacher's role/child's role:

Mary: Now, I know you know this story. You let me tell my part, and then I will ask you some questions. You could probably tell it yourself you know it so well. There was a man named Jonah . . .

After a few paragraphs of introduction, Mary began a typical recitation questioning pattern:

Mary: Billy, did Jonah go do what he was supposed to do?

Child: No.  
No.

Mary: So what did he do?

Child: Went to the \_\_\_\_\_

Mary: Where did he go?

Child: A boat.

Mary: He went into the boat and he hid inside the boat. Now I want you to answer me, can you hide from God?

Child: No.

Mary: Like we have a ceiling above us, and we're in the basement, and there's a sanctuary above us, and then there's a roof on top of that. Can God see through all those things?

Child: Yes.

Mary: Then can you hide from Him?

Child: No.

Mary: You can't hide from God. Why do you think Jonah thought he could hide from God? Why do you think he thought that for?

Child: He was afraid.

Mary: Yeah, he was afraid because he knew he was running away from God and he thought he could maybe get away from it. But he had a lot to learn. He didn't understand God, did he? Jeana, did you want to say something?

Child: Try to think that if you can hide from your friends, you can hide from God.

Mary: That if you could hide from people you could hide from God. He had a lot to learn, didn't he? Okay, so he hid in the bottom of the ship and then the ship began to rock because what happened? Cherry?

Child: A storm.

## APPENDIX K

### Class D Supporting Data

#### Planning

Doreen's interview answer to the questions about how she prepared a lesson went like this: [Warning: It is frequently necessary to read between the lines when listening to or reading Doreen.]

Interviewer: Let's think about a lesson that you had recently. Talk to me about the way you prepared to teach the lesson.

Doreen: Well, the thing is I do not take as much time as maybe I should. Friday night I read my lesson, learn the memory verse. I get the illustration thing all ready for them. So that is what I usually do. I probably need and probably should spend more time with it but I do anything that they offer they want for illustration I use it because they like that. They like part, they always have helps, things that illustration part of the lesson which is good because they like something that they can do as part of it which is very often what I do. And a recent, that one with, for instance, the hatchet when the lost, all right, when the hatchet came off when they were chopping the tree. All right, these two were being helpful, the hatchet, so anyway I had the hatchet with water. Here, illustrate with this hatchet cut the tree down. What happened to the head of the hatchet? The head came off. Where did it go? In the water. Can a hatchet stay on the top? No, it sunk down but who make it come to the top? The children were all happy because they were able to retrieve the axe or the hatchet head because they had borrowed it. So in other words, that's what part illustration I think I always do that.

Interviewer: So did you take water?

Doreen: No. You know the felts? So there is a blue corner so there was water there so the hatchet goes down into that water. So I had the scene, the scene is usually with trees and a mountain and that. So I had that water with a hatchet, a big

hatchet cut down a tree.

Interviewer: So you make quite a bit of use of the teaching aids?

Doreen: Yes, I do. And I do that. I use the teaching aids or helps, you know.

Interviewer: Are there times when you just don't have time to prepare and you go to teach?

Doreen: Now, sometimes, see my program is I work, I come home and maybe like Thursday night I probably should do because Friday I am always making something. Now I am going to make a loaf here. By the time I get through and I am ready for the lesson I really am sometimes quite tired. I really probably should do before you get to the point when you are . . . So in other words, preparing your lesson is when you're not tired. Do it when you're really [The response ended here.]

#### Inaccuracies.

Doreen appeared to be frequently confused about rather major details of the stories. A few of the more startling examples are given here.

On April 7 when the story was about the sound of chariots and horses that scared the Syrian army away, Doreen taught that chariots actually "roared in there and the people were so scared, they were so scared, that they ran away."

On April 28 the following exchange took place.

Doreen: The next question, how long was Jonah in the belly of the fish?

Child: Three.  
Three days.

Doreen: Three weeks.

Child: Oh.

On June 16 Doreen told the children that the Persian army came [to Jerusalem] and carried a lot of people away to Babylon. One of the captives was Esther!

Not once during the quarter did a child question the misinformation.

Examples of Doreen's use of planning.

During the interview Doreen talked about using felt pictures. The field notes record that she frequently sat at her little table during the opening program to get the felt pictures together. Apparently that never happened during these weeks, because there is no reference to felts in the tape recorded class sessions.

Eight of the ten weeks Doreen was present she tried to use some cut-outs from the set the Sabbath school ordered from a private company.

On May 26 she was using a picture of the fiery furnace with a door glued over it so the children could look inside to see who was in the furnace. A child interrupted her:

Child: Who colored that, teacher?  
Who colored that?

Doreen: Huh?

Child: Who colored that?

Doreen: Well, Doreen did and she's doing it in a hurry. She's always hurrying, and she colored it. The coloring is not very good. But anyway.

Child: You should have put more colors on it.

Doreen: It probably will need some more, because you know what? You need to color each one individually.

It is not clear what she meant by the last sentence, because there was no evidence that each child received the picture. It is not mentioned again.

On June 9 the class session became with reference to a visual aid:

Doreen: Look it; I made a crown today.

Child: Ooh.

Doreen: Isn't that neat?

Child: Can you make us one?

Doreen: Well, you know what? Children, I was planning on that, making all that, but I made something else you could take home. I was going to make crowns, but I said, "Doreen, you're not going to be able to make it all because you have to have it so it'll have something in back of it, see? Then I



made it. I didn't make it big enough, and I finally made it big so we could put it on our?

Child: Heads.

Doreen: So I've really, maybe, set me tell you. I'll take it home and I'll make it and we'll have it next week, 'cause we're gonna talk about this beautiful person.

Toward the end of the lesson the subject of crowns came up again:

Doreen: We'll keep the crown for next week because I'm going to make one and then we'll get \_\_\_\_.

Child: A whole bunch.

On June 16 the crowns were still not made, but maybe Doreen had photocopied the pattern on yellow paper, and planned for the children to make their own during class. Right at the end of the lesson this was mentioned:

Doreen: I tell you what. You can take it home and you can cut it out and that will be something to do.

Child: How come you didn't color these ones?

Doreen: Well, because it's already yellow. What do you think of crowns being what? Gold.

Child: Gold.

Doreen: This should have been gold, this should have been colored.

What Counts as Important [These examples will be sufficient to also illustrate the questioning and interaction patterns.]

Doreen's interview shows the importance to her of children responding and being interested:

Doreen: I always enjoy a class that the children come steady. A class that the children are there steady and I enjoy a class that I get response from, that they seem to be interested. That's what I really try to obtain that they take interest in the class, and I try to do something so that they have interest in the class. I have done various things at times, you know. And so I, like now, all the children, I've done it for a

long time, have the seals and this seems to be a real popular thing and they love the seals. . . . After you have a new group you have to kind of work at it and hopefully they'll respond or they'll take interest. But when the children are just starting out and coming to church or Sabbath school, then you have to see, develop, you have to try to develop an interest in them wanting to come. Of course, it is their parents, but if they really feel that they have an interest they want to come because Sabbath school is interesting.

On April 21 Doreen was forthright in expressing her desire for response from the children.

Doreen: All right, can you answer? Miranda, I expect you to answer. So, that's what was a special thing. Now, we're going to talk about, remember the, what was the king and queen? They believed in what, worshiping what?

Child: Idols.  
Idols.

Doreen: Jesus?

Children: (Unison) Idols.

Doreen: Jesus? Did they worship Jesus? Oh, yes, okay. They worshipped idols, and, all right, were there idols in the temple?

Child: Yes.

Doreen: Did they keep the temple the way Jesus wanted them to keep it?

Children: Yes  
(Unison) Yes.  
(Unison) No.  
Yes.  
No.

Doreen: All right, this is the part where we need this. So now there was this temple with all this like this that they that they weren't taking care of Jesus' temple. Now, here comes, now we're going to tell about the \_\_\_\_\_. Here comes a king, I mean a boy a what? What was he?

Child: He was eight.  
Teacher?

Doreen: He was?

Child: Joash.  
Teacher?  
His name was Joash.

Doreen: Ah, I hear answers, I hear answers.

Doreen sounded pleased to receive answers from the children. Before, during, and after this sequence, the same child said, "Teacher?" fourteen times without any response from Doreen.

Stickers or seals routinely drove the responses and the class. On May 26 as soon as the children finished saying the memory verse, this sequence began:

Doreen: All right, okay, we \_\_\_\_\_. Oh, look at these pretty ones [stickers]. Look. They're blossoms. Jessica, where are you going? Why are you dropping your card?

Child: No, it dropped.

Doreen: Did you get your, uh, where's your, you didn't get one?

Child: You have three already on yours?

Doreen: There it is right there.

Child: I have four.

Doreen: Well, Jill, let me tell you what we do. Cards all back in there?

Child: I need to hold mine back.

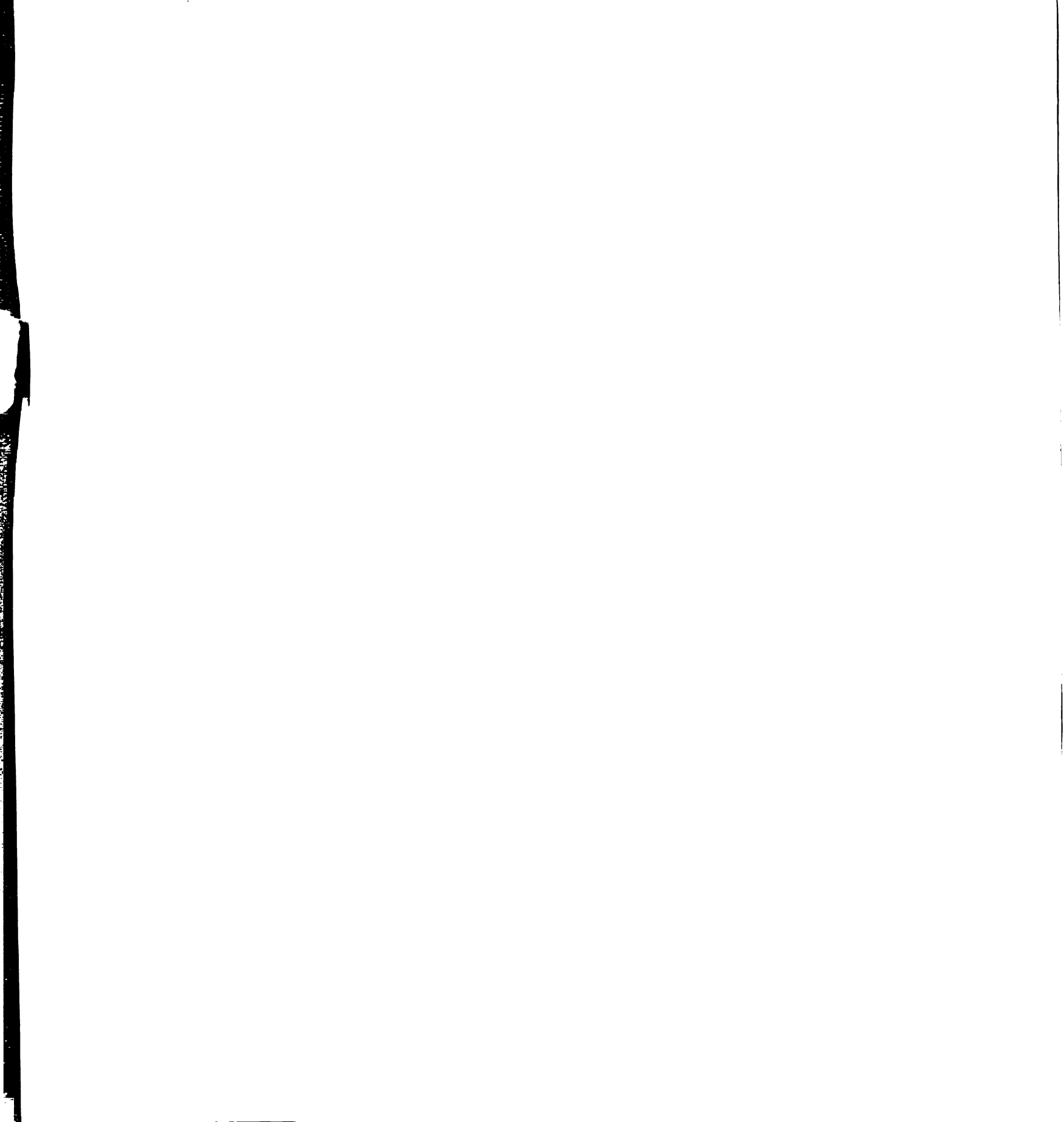
Doreen: Okay, you hold it or give it back or hold it, all right.

Child: Planting flowers, planting flowers.

Doreen: Okay, Jill, you don't need to pound it. Jessica. Shhh. If you know the answer, we'll give one of these seals. All right, last week there was something very, very special that happened. Who knows, remembers?

Child: Mother's Day.

Doreen: No, I mean we talked about the lesson. What was it that happened that was outstanding? Something



very outstanding.

Child: Three men were thrown in the furnace.

Doreen: There you go. They were put and these boys' names were what?

Children: (Unison) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Doreen: Right.

Child: And Daniel.

Doreen: And they were put \_\_\_\_

Child: And Jesus.

Doreen: In the fiery furnace.

Child: Jesus was in there.

Doreen: Okay, and when they came out, okay, you each get one, when they came out they were burned.

Child: They were not burned. They didn't smell like fire. I get two of them.

Doreen: Ah, they came out \_\_\_\_

Child: They didn't smell like fire, they were not burned.

Doreen: Oh, that was what I was waiting for.

Child: Because God was in there with them.

Doreen: Oh, was in there. Where was God? Where is God? Where was God?

Child: Can I have a heart sticker?

Doreen: Look because I'm going to have to get some.

Child: There's some in here.

## APPENDIX L

### Class E Supporting Data

#### Planning

Mrs. Weaver's interview stressed the importance of lesson preparation:

Mrs. Weaver: [If you don't prepare] I'm sure you will leave out something that is very important, something that some child might have needed that particular week. I think preparation is very important. . . . Friday night is usually the time when I use to prepare [the lesson].

#### Inaccuracies.

Mrs. Weaver gave less misinformation than any teacher but Mary with Class C. Once she agreed with a child's minor piece of misinformation. Once she misspoke and was corrected by a child. One inaccuracy she gave showed a deficiency in her chronological understanding of the Bible story; she said that King Cyrus was the king who chose Esther to be queen.

#### An example of Mrs. Weaver's use of planning.

Mrs. Weaver ran a friendly but business-like class. She had to be prepared in order to make everything happen like clockwork. April 7 she was ready to go from the first word, and she announced each transition in the class work.

Mrs. Weaver: Okay. Close your eyes. We're ready. Dear Jesus, . . .

At the end of the prayer she announced the next section:

Mrs. Weaver: We are ready for our lesson now.

Child: Why did they move this table?

Mrs. Weaver: Because it is nicer around here. Okay? Are we ready? Who wants to tell me what the subject of our lesson is?

After making short work of the child's interruption, she interacted briefly with the children on the day's subject, then announced another transition:

Mrs. Weaver: Okay, let's concentrate on doing our memory verse for the next few minutes.  
"I delight . . ."

After rapidly moving through both repetition and meaning of the memory verse, Mrs. Weaver introduced the hook she planned to use to focus the children's attention on the lesson story.

Mrs. Weaver: Okay. Now, how many people, boys and girls, how many of you have ever been locked away? Say you've had to stay inside for two days as you were ill. Have you had to stay inside for two days?

With dispatch the children briefly share their experiences. Then it was time for the Bible story:

Mrs. Weaver: Okay. Long ago. Remember we said we need to respect someone when they are speaking? You need to learn that. Now, long, long ago a little boy named Joash couldn't go outside. What was his name?

Child: Joash.  
Joash!

Throughout the nine transcript pages of the story, Mrs. Weaver was consistently interacting with the children. There was not one long paragraph where she was telling the story by herself. One last section of the lesson still remains to be covered:

Mrs. Weaver: Okay. I'm going to ask you all a question. Listen very carefully. Do I have some good listeners here?

Children: (Unison) Yes.

Mrs. Weaver: Okay. Shhh. How can you work for Jesus? I need to see your hands. How can you work for Jesus?

She went systematically from child to child giving hints if needed until each one came up with an application. With a final repetition of the memory verse in unison class was over. Every week her class was well organized with the same basic structure shown above. The hook was sometimes a hands-on activity. The application was sometimes a hands-on

activity. Children were not likely to become bored. Only one thing could disrupt Mrs. Weaver's plan. It will be introduced below.

What Counts as Important. (The class session discourse below will also illustrate Mrs. Weaver's questioning patterns which were typical classroom recitation unless a child forced a change.)

Mrs. Weaver emphasized one idea as most important:

Interviewer: What is most important in the Sabbath school experience for the children?

Mrs. Weaver: That there are warm, caring people who care. I think when they understand that about them, I think that is most important. Knowing that there is someone who cares apart from mommy and daddy.

Interviewer: Why would you say that that is the most important?

Mrs. Weaver: Because if they have to, if they are leaving home--maybe a very loving environment--and they are going to be in a situation where they feel threatened, that might be a negative experience for them that might turn them off from coming to Sabbath school.

Interviewer: What do you think is the value of the lesson time?

Mrs. Weaver: I think the kids experiencing the value of what was taught, the moral of the story, for example. Why was the story, the reason behind the writing of the story. I think that is most important because there is a lesson to learn, or at least there should be a lesson to be learned in everything.

Interviewer: So what do you think that they gain there, that they learn, that they didn't know when they came?

Mrs. Weaver: I think they learn that God has a plan for each of us and He looks on us as individuals regardless of who we are. He loves each one of us, and they need to realize that. No matter what our feelings are, He still cares.



Good manners were also an important aspect of Mrs. Weaver's class. Apparently they could be the same as the moral to the Bible stories. On April 7 the following discourse took place:

Mrs. Weaver: [The memory verse] says something else at the end. It says, "Yea thy law is within my heart." What do we mean when we say we delight to do God's will? Who knows what it means? Okay, you are going to tell us.

Child: Obey His rules.

Mrs. Weaver: Right, obey God's law and doing what He wants us to do. That is doing God's will. Do you think God wants us to be impolite?

Child: No.

Mrs. Weaver: Do you think God wants us to be rude?

Child: No!

Mrs. Weaver: No. He wants us to do what?

Child: Be good.

Mrs. Weaver: Good people. He wants us to be polite. He wants us to respect other people, right?

Child: Yes.

Mrs. Weaver: He wants us to pay attention when someone is speaking so you can hear what they are saying. That is what God wants us to do.

Later in the same lesson good manners determined who got to help put up felt pictures:

Mrs. Weaver: So they got some people together. They called the people of Israel together to the temple. Come on, I need some boys and girls to help put the people up.

Child: Yes.

Mrs. Weaver: Some nice quiet people. Okay, Cindi, you are nice and quiet. So you want to put people up? They got some people together and called them to the temple . . .

### Interaction Patterns

Generally everyone stayed on task and Mrs. Weaver's plans for the class kept on schedule. Only one disrupting element intervened: A child who wanted to contribute more than pat answers.

On May 19 for the lesson hook, the class made idols of modeling clay and talked about the futility of praying to them. Then came the transition to the Bible story:

Mrs. Weaver: Does that remind you of something you studied this week?

Children: (Unison) Yes.

The Child: Yea, but in Revelation seminar, I remember something. It was in Daniel 7.

Mrs. Weaver: Uh, huh. What happened?

The Child: Uh, King Nebu . . . Nebuchadnezzar. Uh, King Nebucha, King, oh, what's his name! made that big statue . . . King Nebuchadnezzar.

Mrs. Weaver: King Nebuchadnezzar.

The Child: And then all of the music played . . .

Mrs. Weaver: People should bow down?

The Child: Yea, and the three boys didn't bow down. I heard that in Daniel 7.

Mrs. Weaver: So this statue reminds you of that story? Well, you know something? You're exactly right. That's what we studied this week. That's what we should have studied this week if we studied our lesson. How many people studied this week?

. . . Okay, well, this week if you studied your lesson you learned about the king who made a what?

Child: The image.

Mrs. Weaver: A golden image.

The Child: And a decision.

Mrs. Weaver: I'm going to put something on the table . . .

The Child: He decided to make a golden image.

Mrs. Weaver: . . . Everyone was there. And they were there to do what? To worship the image.

The Child: Even Daniel?

Mrs. Weaver: Even Daniel because he was living in that country. The king wanted every single person to be there. And you know something?

The Child: What?

Mrs. Weaver: Well, this story didn't actually mention Daniel. It didn't say anything about Daniel.

The Child: It only had Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Mrs. Weaver: Yes. I don't know why Daniel's name was left out. Maybe he was on a mission for the king, he had gone away to another country, maybe. We don't know why.

The Child: Because the king loved Daniel.

Mrs. Weaver: He loved him, but no mention was made of Daniel being there. But anyway, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were there. And you know something?

The Child: I know what you're going to say.

Mrs. Weaver: On that day, in the middle of that big field . . .

The Child: They didn't bow down.

Mrs. Weaver: In the middle of that field . . . guards on the outside and . . .

The Child: They stood up and they refused to bow.

Mrs. Weaver: There was the king and the great image. Everybody did what?

The Child: Why would anybody want to bow down?

Mrs. Weaver: Everybody did what? Bowed down.

The Child: Not those three.

Mrs. Weaver: Except those three. . . . They did not bow down.

The Child: They gave them three chances. [Actually two]

Mrs. Weaver: Right, so the king said, "Maybe they didn't hear. Let's play the music once more and make the announcement." And did they do that? . . .

The Child: Off to the fiery furnace. They threw in three boys. There were four boys. And one was Jesus.

Mrs. Weaver: So the king said, "okay, okay. You don't want to bow down to my image? Well, I am going to make you sorry." And you know what he did?

The Child: He put them in the fiery furnace. They threw them in there. All of the soldiers he brought near got burned and died, but they were in the fire, and they didn't die.

Mrs. Weaver: He said, "Grab those men and throw them into my furnace."

The Child: In the minute those soldiers got near, they died. And the three boys just kept on walking. They weren't afraid. They just kept walking.

The story continued with one child pushing on through the plot while Mrs. Weaver tried to relate the story despite the fact that the child had already told what she was telling.

When Mrs. Weaver was corrected by a child she politely accepted the child's information, although she didn't seem completely convinced. Neither she or any of the other teachers ever went to the Bible with the children to check which information would fit the details given there.

April 28 the story was about Jonah:

Mrs. Weaver: And when Jonah ran to the seaside he saw a boat. He got in the boat--he sneaked in--and went to the bottom of the boat. And what do you think he did?

Child: Slept.

Mrs. Weaver: That's what he did, he slept. He went to the bottom of the boat to sleep.

Child: He paid twelve pieces of gold.

Mrs. Weaver: He paid? Oh, that means that he, uh, he went legally than. Ross said that he paid and got on the boat. But you know something? If you go on a boat and they don't know you are there, you are a stowaway. So maybe Jonah wasn't a stowaway. Anyway, he went on that boat. We don't know how he got on, but he got on and he did what? He was so tired he went to sleep.

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## APPENDIX M

### Family Interactions and Practices Mentioned by Parents

ses to the question, "How do you help your child  
prepare for Sabbath school?"

reading the lesson in the quarterly/having family  
worship  
teaching child the memory verse  
reading the lesson from a Bible Story book  
reading the lesson from the Bible  
quizzing child on the lesson story  
encouraging child to draw a picture of the lesson  
using the lesson quarterly suggestions  
letting child do the lesson coloring picture or  
puzzle  
y having the child tell the lesson story  
y discussing with the child the lesson story  
y making the lesson/memory verse meaningful to the  
child

Responses to the question. "What other kinds of  
activities does your family/child participate in  
during the week that contributes to religious  
education?"

- Listen to Bible story tapes
- Watch Bible videos
- Play Bible games
- Have special Sabbath toys and books
- Help the child figure out tithe
- Involve the child in helping other people/community  
service
- Provide the child many chances to talk
- Have the child lead family worship
- Encourage the child to question/expound on Bible  
subjects
- Grandparents contribute to religious education
- Frequently reread the child's favorite Bible stories
- Talk to the child about his/her personal relationship  
with God
- Model and encourage prayer
- Role play Bible stories
- Study the Bible lesson in the day school classroom  
also

III. Responses to the invitation, "Tell me about other times you have discussions or do things together with your child."

- Make many opportunities for discussions with child
- Help child with homework
- Help child use computer
- Read/tell stories to each other
- Encourage thinking ideas
- Encourage the child to take personal responsibility
- Participate in nature study and looking for object lessons
- Have child contribute to developing program material
- Have child help with research
- Take child to the zoo, museum, etc.
- Help child get articles published



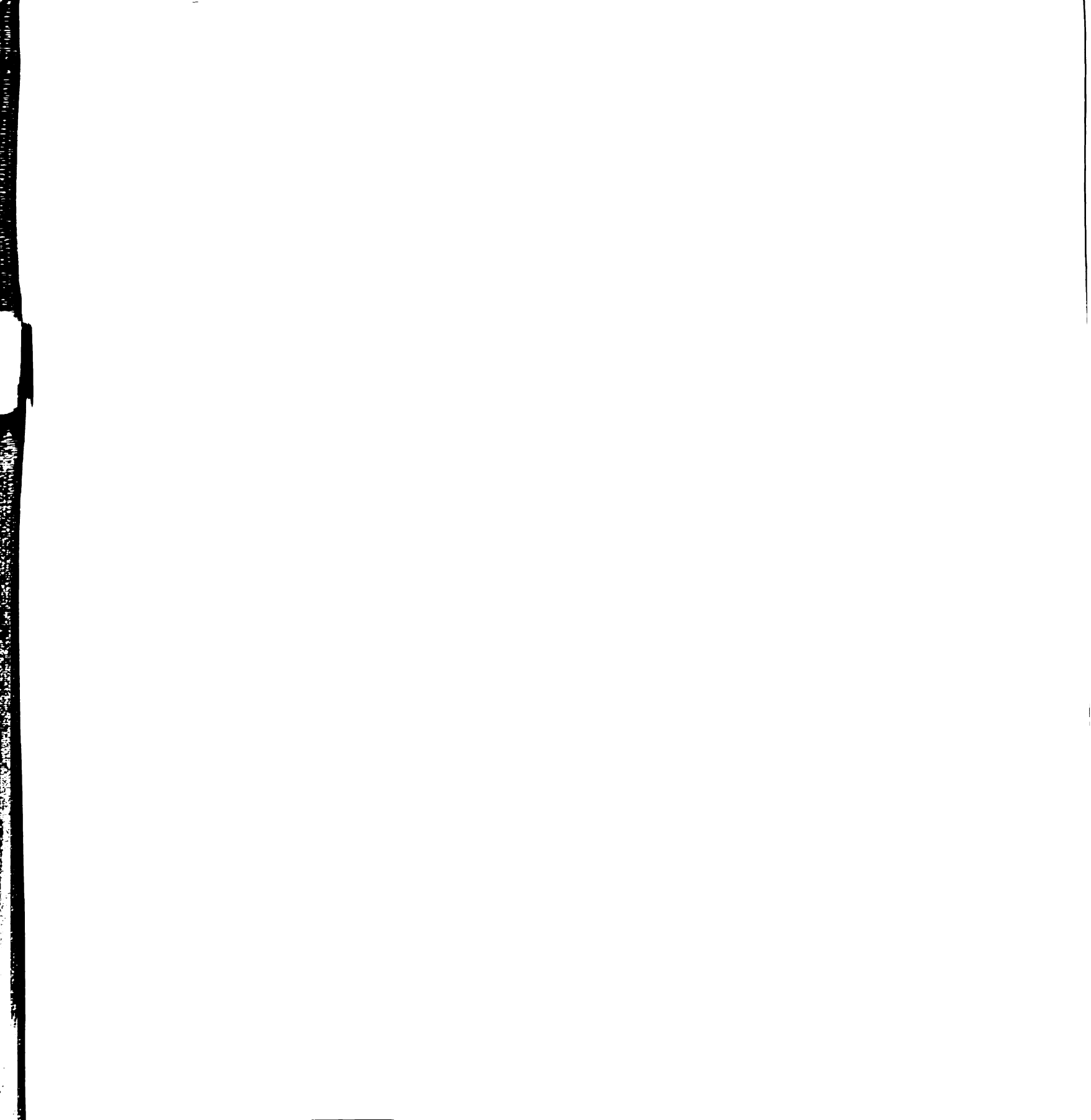
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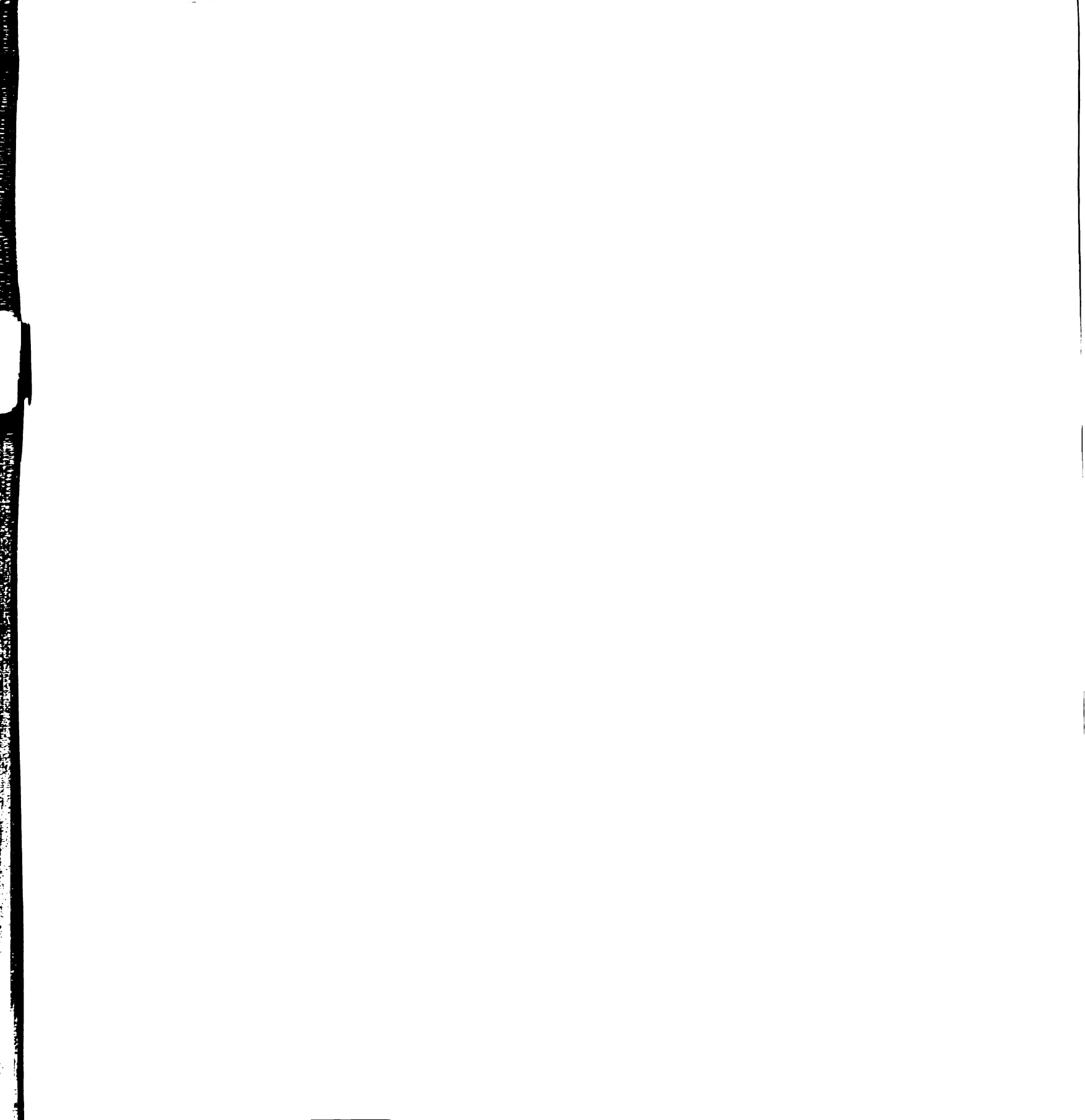
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