

THE ENCOUNTER BIBLE CURRICULUM



I recently visited North Dallas Adventist Academy and was able to observe the fifth grade Bible class in action. They were involved in a biblical drama production from the Encounter Bible Curriculum. The experience impressed upon me the true purpose of the program as we continue to make the Bible the focus of the curriculum.

The primary purpose of the Adventist Encounter Curriculum is for all our students, elementary and secondary, to have a solid, deep, and personal knowledge of the truths of the Bible; to respond to Christ's invitation to live in a lifelong, vibrant relationship with Him; and to be passionate about the salvation of others.

Four distinctive features characterize the approach used in the program:

1. **Theory**—We have abandoned a purely educationally cognitive approach to Scripture and embraced biblical discipleship in response to the Great Commission. We seek to touch the heart as well as the mind. We believe this will establish an important pattern for lifelong spiritual growth and devotion.
2. **Content**—The Encounter Curriculum focuses on the truths of the Bible in all teaching units. All content relates to the Personhood of God—for Scripture testifies of Him. Acknowledging the importance of meaning and context in the learning process, all teaching units have a central biblical narrative focus and are thematically linked to help build students' faith.
3. **Methodology**—One feature of the Encounter Curriculum is the manner in which it pursues, with more rigor than we perhaps have done in the past, what Ellen White exhorted us to do decades ago: "to train thinkers and not more reflectors of other men's thoughts" (Education, p. 17). In light of this, we have moved away from a textbook orientation and provide teaching units and resource materials for teachers that outline a range of learning activities intended to encourage the thinking of each student. The Bible is the main textbook students use.
4. **Assessment**—The Encounter Curriculum's focus on process as well as content means that the nature of assessment looks different in the classroom. The teaching units include both formative and summative assessment, since ongoing, visible, lifelong learning from the Bible is the goal. The aim of assessment tasks is for students to understand and grapple with the topics explored in class and to be able to apply, analyze, and create personal and practical applications as a result of their learning—with the goal of transformation foremost in mind.