



# Education Links

Inspiring, motivating, guiding Unity Churches to enhance and expand their ministries with children, teens & families

[www.unity.org](http://www.unity.org)

Volume 16, Issue 1

Winter 2009

## So What About *the Bible?*



by Rev. Kathryn Kellogg  
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator

Does Unity even need the Bible? Is it still valid and relevant for today's young people? Why would I want to teach stories that aren't even true? This article is written from the belief that the Bible is an important tool for our spiritual growth and a wonderful repository of stories that speak to our spiritual growth and understanding. As such, our children and teens need to be given the tools to explore its mysteries.

"Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." Do you remember singing this song when you were growing up? If you were raised in traditional Christianity, my guess is that you became very familiar with this oldie-but-goldie. In a few short melodic lines, the theology of the Christian church was laid out for the very young to learn. The song told us that Jesus (God) loved us, we all belonged to Him, and His strength was greater than ours. We knew this because the Bible told us it was true. In traditional Christianity, the Bible was the book with the authority to have the last word on any subject.

At least that is how many of us experienced the Bible. It was a book with the power to define the boundaries in our decision making and to establish what happened to those who stepped outside the lines. It defined who we were—blessed or cursed—and could be used to keep "others" out. For many of us, as we grew up, the book seemed more and more inconsistent, with both sides of any argument able to find a verse to defend their stance. We learned that the stories in many instances were not even historically true. By the time we became adults, we either loved the book for what it was or had abandoned it.

In Unity we find ourselves at a place where some Unity churches have left the Bible for more secular texts. There are many reasons for relegating it to a shelf. Some people have experienced feeling "beat up" by the Bible or have been treated badly because of their gender, race, age, or self-expression. Some believe that the violence in the Old Testament and a vengeful God does not represent the God they know, that the stories don't make sense or have no worth because they aren't true. In these instances, the Bible stories seem difficult to reconcile with what we teach.

There are also Unity churches that use the Bible as their textbook for living. They use the stories as a basis for their lessons and have found value in studying it more deeply. Many of these churches can be found in the "Bible Belt" where Bible-literacy is a way of being in the larger community. However, location does not define where the Bible is part of the curriculum and where it is not. It depends on what we believe.

### What We Believe

So what does Unity believe about the Bible? The Unity Identity Statement, created by hundreds of Unity ministers, licensed teachers and church members, states that "Unity co-founders, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, studied the Bible as history and allegory, and interpreted it as a metaphysical representation of humankind's evolutionary journey toward

*continued on page 17*

*continued from page 1*

spiritual awakening. In addition, Unity recognizes that the Bible is a complex collection of writings compiled over many centuries. We honor the writings as reflecting the understanding and inspiration of the writers at the time they were written. The Bible continues to be a valuable spiritual resource for us.”

In other words, the Bible is the history of a people as they perceived it. Any one who has ever gone to a family reunion knows that family stories change over time and things are interpreted according to who is telling the story. So it is in the Bible. The Hebrew people wrote their history according to their understanding of how God interacted with them within their particular culture and time.

Read allegorically, the Bible is full of stories where the narrative is the vehicle for greater abstract ideas portrayed by the story’s characters, situations, and locations. The richness of the story is active in the narrative but not the narrative itself.

However, what Unity is really known for is its unique approach to interpreting the Bible metaphysically. We look at the Bible as the story of our own spiritual journey, humankind’s growing awareness of our divine nature. (For more about the power of story and myth, read Jane Simmon’s article in this issue.) When we approach the Bible metaphysically and consider how the stories are playing out in our lives, then the wonder and mystery of its truth comes alive.

So why does the greater Unity movement believe that the Bible still has relevance for us today as “an important spiritual resource”? What is its importance for Unity young people?

### **Faith Development**

Every philosophy, denomination, nation, or family has its foundational stories—those stories that inform the members (and others) about who they are, how they came to be, and what is theirs to do. The stories ground the teaching, giving the people a tie to the past and a purpose for the future. The Bible grounds the Christian faith. Unity is culturally Christian. Our teachings have their roots in the words and works of Jesus and we can find our spiritual journey in the progression of the soul from the creation story to the letters of faith in the New Testament. Trying to impart a faith system to young people without our founding stories is like “building a house on the sand.” We need to share the stories where our teachings come from ... where the directive to love our

neighbors as ourselves is found (Jesus’ great commandments), why we encourage an attitude of gratitude (Jesus blessing the bread), why we believe we can heal ourselves (woman touching his garment), why we practice the power of prayer and silence, and where compassion for the sick, hungry, and downtrodden leads us to spiritual social action. These stories are also reflected in the Old Testament.

### **Brain Development**

The brain seeks to attach meaning to our experiences so that we might better understand what occurred and, in understanding, restore a feeling of safety. The brain also thrives on the feeling of belonging. Our cultural stories support both of those goals. They help us interpret our experiences and make sense out of the senseless. They can provide a template for handling the tough times in our lives. Sharing a cultural heritage gives us a feeling of belonging to something that is bigger than self and able to withstand the tests of time. Isn’t that the very nature of believing in God?

### **Powerful Stories for Living in a World of Duality**

Lastly, I believe that the Bible provides our young people tools for living in this world of duality. Life on earth is messy and filled with imperfect people. So is the Bible, but it also gives us stories of how good triumphs as underdogs overcome great obstacles, and ordinary people demonstrate creative problem-solving. It is filled with acts of kindness and hope for the future. The Bible can provide guidance, comfort, and courage to take right action, hold firm to your truth, and trust in the greater Presence. Bible stories provide examples and reassurance that we can get to the other side of any challenge and that God is in the midst of everything.

There is a reason that the Bible has lasted thousands of years. The power within the stories and the mystery of how God expresses in our lives and world is reflected throughout it. The stories may not be historically true, but they carry the universal truths of our spiritual unfoldment. They are our cultural stories. When we approach the Bible as an adventure in faith, we open ourselves up to the mysteries of the ages. When presented as history, allegory, or a metaphysical look at the soul’s journey, we transform the Bible into the valuable resource it was created to be.

# Universe Made of Stories

by Rev. Jane Simmons, IYOU Coordinator

There is an Aboriginal saying that tells us “when rice does not grow well, the women go into the rice fields and tell it the myth of its origin. Then the rice knows why it is there and it grows.” The question of why we are here, who we are, and how to grow into our true spiritual identity can be explored through our cultural tales and traditions. Found within the universal legends of mythology are deep spiritual truths that transcend culture, race, and religion.

Interestingly, no one knows the origin of cultural myths. They are part of an oral tradition that has existed throughout the mists of ancient times. Even the Grimm brothers merely wrote down the fairy tales that were already part of the cultural scene. I find it fascinating that in every civilization and society you find similar allegories and folklore. Creation stories abound; flood stories show up in different guises; even various Cinderella stories have been carried down from generation to generation from ancient times in different parts of the world. The faces change, the circumstances differ, but the central motif at the core of the story remains the same.

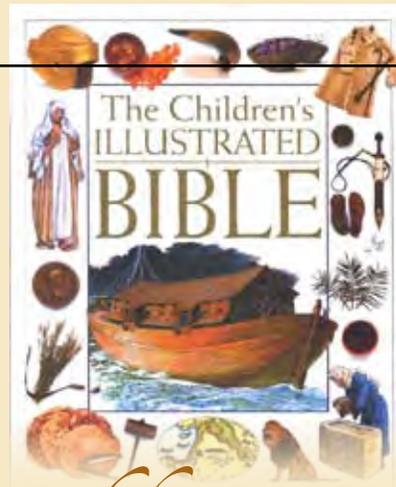
Creation myths contain common creative elements including light, water, a seed, an earth-goddess, the combination of fire and ice, a divine birth, and the hatching of an egg. The flood story usually includes a favored group being forewarned and escaping. Cinderella becomes The Rough-Face Girl in Native traditions, Chinye in African tales, Pear Blossom in Asia, and Settareh in a Middle Eastern story.

Why is this? Disguised within the riddle of universal myths and legends we find the spiritual path hidden deep within the elements of the story. Joseph Campbell beautifully defines myth as “the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human manifestation.” Whether we are reading about the rousing of Sleeping Beauty (our own divine conscious awakening), the curious story of Jonah in the belly of the fish (resisting our inner guidance), or the antics of the Southwest Native trickster Kokopelli (reminding us of the creativity and power of our inner song), encoded within these wonderful tales are archetypal symbols that point to our own soul’s adventurous journey.

This spiritual adventure is what Campbell refers to as “The Hero’s Journey” and we find this tale everywhere we look. Our hero (or heroine) gets a call, goes out to the world, overcomes something that seems insurmountable, and returns home a changed person.

If we look around in our own culture, we see that these motifs live on in modern ways—we find David battling Goliath in movies such as *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*; Sleeping Beauty wakes up to life in *The Wizard of Oz* and *Click*; Daniel emerges from the lion’s den in the *Harry Potter* series and *Independence Day*.

The Hero’s Journey can be found portrayed in the stories within the pages of scripture. One of my instructors in ministerial school used to describe the Bible as “true but not accurate.” When exploring biblical mythology, we find a metaphysical sacred narrative describing the soul’s



## Bible Tip

If you are using *The Children's Illustrated Bible* with your lessons, but want the children to know that there are many stories in the Bible or how to navigate in the Bible, use this suggestion. Whenever you read from *The Children's Illustrated Bible*, hold up a regular Bible and show them in what part of the book you can find the story. Explain that the Bible is a whole collection of stories about people and their relationship with God. Then invite them to find the story using the index in the front. If they can find the name of the book in the index, or open the Bible where the book can be found, you've made a great beginning.

This is an example of what you might say:

"Our story today is about a man named Solomon. His story is found in the book of 1 Kings in the Old Testament. The Old Testament contains the stories of the Hebrew people before Jesus was born." (Hold up the Bible with the spine up so the children can see how many pages are before 1 Kings and how many are after. This way they can tell where the 1 Kings is located.)

"Since the Old Testament stories are first in the Bible, the book of 1 Kings is found in the first half. Before we read our story can you find 1 Kings in your Bible?" (This could be a treasure hunt using the index or just thumbing through the first third of the Bible.)

If we set a story in the adult Bible every time we read from *The Children's Illustrated Bible*, the students would soon get a sense of where the stories are located and, hopefully, become at ease with the book.

evolution from the sleeping Adam to the awakened Christ. Each story contains within it the elements that we can find within ourselves, on the journey of physical existence in the inner search for Self. Charles Fillmore teaches that male and female characters in these stories refer to our intellect and feeling nature.

Noah and the flood, David and Goliath, Daniel and the Lion's Den—the underlying message is the same—we can overcome the world through the power of Spirit. Within each heart is the safety of the ark that can help us float peacefully through those storms and floods that appear to destroy our world. Even though these events might appear gigantic like Goliath and unbeatable, the power of love in David is the answer. Daniel and his friends teach us that walking through the fire is possible through the power of God.

I think that Hans Christian Andersen said it best when he wrote that our "lives are fairy tales written by the fingers of God." Remembering that all of these characters live within us, we can awaken our own inner Sleeping Beauty with the kiss of the Divine; we can face the Goliaths that loom in our life, by using the overcoming power of love in those difficult circumstances, and we can face and walk through fiery situations with faith, strength, and courage, knowing that God is within us.

Mythology—is truth with a capital "T."

# Interpreting the Bible

## *Metaphysically*

*With an understanding of metaphysics, one can read scripture with a new insight—one that relates people and places in the Bible as standing for beliefs and conditions in our own lives.*

by Rev. Paul Hasselbeck, Dean  
Spiritual Education and Enrichment, Unity Village

When faced with a change or challenge, many people use the technique of closing their eyes and randomly opening the Bible, pointing to a scripture, and then reading it to find some guidance. Much comfort can be found in simply relating to the story as it is; other times it might not make any sense at all.

Knowing how to metaphysically interpret a scripture can add more depth to scripture that is already literally understood and perhaps give meaning to those scriptures that, on the surface, do not make sense. There is an extra bonus too! If a person can metaphysically interpret a scripture, then other books, movies and even songs can be metaphysically interpreted. The possibilities are endless.

Take, for example, the African-American spiritual, “Go Down Moses.” That song, based on Exodus 5:1 is rich in meaning, which might not be fully appreciated initially. Here are some of the words:

### **Go Down Moses**

Go Down Moses  
Way down in Egypt land  
Tell ‘ole pharaoh to  
Let my people go!

When Israel was in Egypt land...  
Let my people go!

A person randomly selecting these words by the “open-and-pick” method might not get anything useful from the literal understanding of the words. However, a metaphysical interpretation of these words results in a gold mine of meaning.

One method of Metaphysical Bible Interpretation uses a straightforward seven-step process:

1. Center into the awareness of Oneness (meditation or prayer) putting God first; this puts Christ Nature first.
2. Read the passage.
3. Paraphrase using your own words, if necessary, to create a simple framework and flow to the text. At this point all the minute details are not necessary. These may be added later to fill out the interpretation.
4. Place the nouns and pronouns and the action words into a metaphysical interpretation table (see example at right).
5. Look up the meanings of the words and put them in the table. A useful tool for the names of places and people is the *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, written by Charles Fillmore. Another tool from the Charles Fillmore Reference Library Series, *The Revealing Word*, gives meanings for more common words such as mountain, river, house, for example. These meanings are a starting point much like the meanings one can find for aspects of dreams. Other meanings of the words might occur to you as you go along.
6. Read and/or write down a “clunky” version of the interpretation by simply reading down the interpretation column. Reading the words aloud can be helpful at this point.
7. Refine the interpretation.

In the example of the song, “Go Down Moses,” it really was not necessary to paraphrase the passage as it is pretty simple just as it is. However, a bit more had to be added because some of the information is implied; for example, someone is speaking to Moses. And, who are “my people” in the phrase? Also, since we are familiar with the story, we know that the people are being held captive in Egypt by the Pharaoh.

*continued on page 19*

Noun, Pronoun, Place, Action	Metaphysical Definitions	Reading down the column on the left
[God] (implied)	God Nature Christ Nature Christ Consciousness	Christ Consciousness tells, directs
[said] (implied)	Tells, directs, informs	
Go down		Go down
Moses	The 'thou shalt not' side of the Law (denial) Draw forth Draw out	Denial Draw forth Draw out
Way down in		Way down in
Egypt land	Material consciousness (a state of mind based on the belief in the reality of materiality, or things as they appear) Sense consciousness (a mental state that believes in and acts through the senses)	Material/sense consciousness
Tell		Tell long-term ruling thought of material/sense consciousness
'ole pharaoh	Ruler, executive faculty Long-term ruling thought (of Egypt—material/sense consciousness)	
to let	To release	To let, to release, Christ ideas, Spiritual thoughts, true ideas about Being Go.
my people [the people of Israel]	Christ Ideas Spiritual thoughts The thoughts of reality or the true ideas about Being that have to be brought out in every part of man's consciousness	
go.		

Employing a graph in which key words from scripture are listed (left column) and then given a metaphysical definition (middle column), one can understand these passages with new insight (right column).

*continued from page 6*

To get the “clunky” version, simply read the far right column out loud from top to bottom. Next, try to make some sense of it from your own level of consciousness and understanding. And, this is important: This story—all the characters, places and action—is taking place within your own consciousness! This is the exciting part because you are creating the meaning for yourself that makes the most sense for you. In a way, there is an intersection between the literal words, their meanings, and your state of consciousness. There are metaphysical interpretations of many stories that Unity has published. And, there is not a single right interpretation. The only requirement is that you keep to the story line and its components.

Indirectly, this song based on scripture tells us that spiritual thoughts can be held captive by our material/sense consciousness. This happens simply by what we focus on and give our attention. When the song is metaphysically interpreted it can now be understood as a method of how to release Spiritual thoughts that have become entrapped by material/sense consciousness. In a refined version it can mean something like this:

*Use Christ Consciousness to direct the use of denials deep into material/sense consciousness to root out, deny giving power to, an old “ruling” belief that has been holding spiritual thoughts (or true thoughts of Being) captive.*

Let’s look at another very familiar example (below) from Matthew 18:20 from *The New Interpreter’s Study Bible, 2003*: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Many of us have taken much comfort from this scripture that instructs us to gather together in the name of Jesus and, when we do, he will be there. Even more meaning and helpful instruction can be gleaned from this scripture when it is metaphysically interpreted. Again, this one really

does not need to be paraphrased and like the one from the Hebrew Scriptures, we have to add information. We have to add two or three what—people. And, who is speaking “in my name” and “I” referring to? Jesus Christ.

Again, read the right-hand column out loud from top to bottom. Then make some sense out of it to create a refined version. It might be something like this:

*Whenever two or three Christ-like thoughts come together, Christ Nature is there.*

We could refine it even more since we know that Christ Nature is always present; it is just that we have put our attention elsewhere. So, we could say,

*Whenever two or three Christ-like thoughts come together, Christ Nature comes into my awareness.*

This is very useful information! This is a method of getting out of negative thinking, error thinking, and sense consciousness. The moment we are aware, all we have to do is string together two or three Christ-like thoughts (affirmations) to shift awareness from negative thinking to the awareness of Christ Nature.

Metaphysical Bible interpretation is an effective tool to learn about our own states of consciousness and how to apply Spiritual Truths and Laws in order to rise to a higher state of consciousness. In these two examples it is easy to discern how denials and affirmations can be used to raise to a higher level of consciousness.

This article appeared in 2008 Nov/Dec issue of *Unity Magazine* and is reprinted by permission of the author and Unity.

<b>Noun, Pronoun, Place, Action</b>	<b>Metaphysical Definitions</b>	<b>Reading down the column on the left</b>
Whenever	Whenever	Whenever two or more thoughts are gathered in Christ Nature
Two or three [people]	Two or three thoughts	
Are gathered in	Are gathered in	
My name	After Jesus Christ nature	
There shall	There will	There will Christ Nature
I	Jesus Christ	

# Choosing a Bible

by Rev. Kathryn Kellogg  
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator



All Bibles are not created equal. There are different translations, formatting, pictures, and reading levels. Here are some considerations I use when choosing a Bible for the classrooms or to recommend to parents.

The "official" translation used in Unity is the New Revised Standard Version. This Bible is considered the most ecumenical and is widely supported by Protestant and Catholic churches.

The NRSV stands out among the many translations because it is "as literal as possible" in adhering to the ancient texts and only "as free as necessary" to make the meaning clear in graceful, understandable English.

Source:

[www.nccusa.org/newbtu/aboutnrs.html](http://www.nccusa.org/newbtu/aboutnrs.html)

It also has made a conscious effort to move to gender-neutral language when possible. However, this translation is hard to find sometimes. I found my children's Bible through Cokesbury. If you use alternative translations, be sensitive to theological treatment of the content.

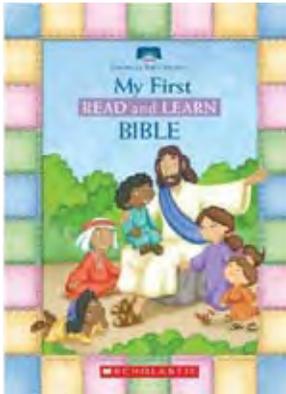
For alternative translations, ask your minister which one he or she would recommend. Many people use the New American Standard (NAS) or New International Version (NIV).

For a story Bible or one that is in today's language, I look to see how they treat the crucifixion. If it is about Jesus being God's only son, a sacrifice for our sins, etc. then I leave that Bible on the shelf. That one story can tell me a lot about the theological purpose of the author. There are other Bibles to choose from that tell the story of the crucifixion in a straightforward way without theological interpretations.

Look at the pictures. Do they support learning about the stories or do they detract? Are they accurate depictions? I personally don't use Bibles with a blond or red-headed Jesus. I look for darker skin tones and pictures that aren't stylized—say with a halo around the head, etc. I also choose not to use cartoon Bibles or Bibles with story children who pop into the Old Testament, etc. I want the story to stand on its own. However, those are *my* preferences. Go with your own guidance on this one.

Make sure that if the Bible is for young readers (third grade or younger) that the print is large. Eye muscles do not mature until approximately eight years of age, so children need more help from large print so their eyes don't tire. Also, some of the "cool" Bibles out there aimed at children have so much happening on a page that it can be over-stimulating to the reader.

Selecting a Bible is a personal choice, but here are some that we recommend:

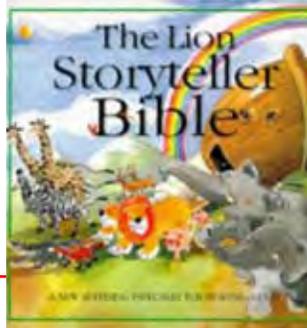


**For young children**

***My First Read and Learn Bible***

Published by Scholastic

This is essentially a board book highlighting the basic stories that are appropriate to this age—creation, Noah, Moses, David, and Jesus. What I love about the way the stories are presented is that the violence has been taken out (except for Goliath being hit in the head, but nothing more).



***The Lion Storyteller Bible*** retold by Bob Hartman

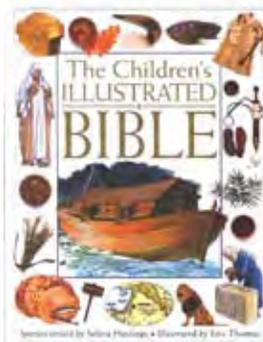
Published by Lion Publishing, 2008

Bob Hartman knows the great power of a story well-told to capture and entertain. In *The Lion Storyteller Bible*, he presents Bible stories from both the Old and New Testaments so they will appeal to the listening ear with repetition, rhythm, and theme threads to tie the stories together. This is a new edition.

**For elementary children**

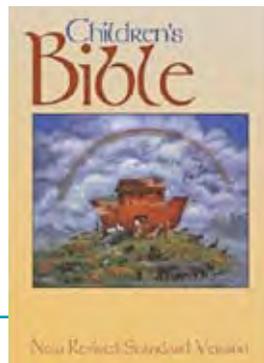
***The Children's Illustrated Bible***

retold by Selina Hastings  
Published by DK Publishing  
We carry this one through the Association (#6925). Stories are only two pages with extra pictures of how something might look today or pictures of the locations mentioned. We use this Bible with our curriculum. My personal favorite for this age.



***Children's Bible New Revised Standard Version***

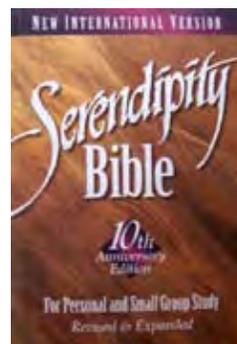
Published by Abindgon ISBN-13: 978-0-687-49416-3  
A straight-telling of the stories with smaller text boxes giving more information about the passage or asking questions on how the passage relates to their lives.. Not always Unity-based questions but not bad. Not highly illustrated and then uses cartoon-based characters.



**For teens**

Use straight translations of NRSV.

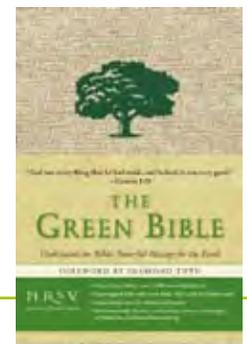
Association curriculum for teens uses the New Century Version as it reads at an eighth-grade level with language that is easily understood.



***The Serendipity Bible New International Version***

This is a study Bible that provides questions to make the story come alive in a teen's life. You will need to look at this before purchasing. The adults need to be able to translate some of this into Unity theology and know what to ignore as not relevant to our teachings.

For those who desire to go green, try The Green Bible NRSV. All passages and verses relating to taking care of creation are printed in green. [www.greenletterbible.com/about](http://www.greenletterbible.com/about)



# Top Ten Bible Stories

In the last issue we asked readers to send in a list of the top ten Bible stories or teachings they believed every Unity child or teen should know. We also asked for the three stories they would rather not teach. What follows is a compilation of the top ten favorites, and comments and concerns about those least desired. See what you think and perhaps you would like to join the conversation. Send your thoughts and ideas to [kid@unity.org](mailto:kid@unity.org).

## Comments about the three Bible stories that you wish you never had to teach.

“Anything involving **killing**, **circumcision**, **violence**, subjugation of women, including Abraham being asked to **sacrifice** Isaac.”

—Kathryn Sprowls, Unity in Fairfax, VA

“Most of the stories from the **Old Testament** due to the violence, killing and **destruction**. It depends on the teachers ... Noah’s Ark is an important Bible story as long as the teachers are able to interpret it metaphysically and not focus on everyone **being killed** except Noah and his family.”

—Steven Krugler, First Unity Church, St. Petersburg, FL

“Stories involving violence or condemnation.”

—Rick Campbell, Unity of Pensacola, FL

“I do not want to teach stories that **exclusively focus** on **baby boys** at **Christmas**. I like the idea of The Christ Spirit in all humanity, but I think baby boys get overdone.”

—Brian Campbell, Unity in Community, Delaware, OH

“Cain and Abel; **Jonah and the Whale**; Noah and the Flood; Easter.”

—Kelly Z, Unity in Community, Delaware, OH

“I will never teach the following to children who do not understand metaphysical interpretation, unless I make it perfectly clear to them that these stories are **myth**, made up by storytellers, and that the God in those stories is not our God, who is always with us and in everything, loving and protecting us. I don't teach **Abraham and Isaac**, Noah and the Ark, the creation, Jesus cursing the fig tree, and many more which portray the **vengeful** Hebrew God of the Old Testament. Since I don't believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible, I never taught the **crucifixion** to children, either.”

—Shirley Barbula, West Central Children’s Consultant

## Top Ten Stories (a compilation)

Creation (perhaps taught with other creation stories)  
 Adam and Eve—The Garden of Eden  
 Noah’s Ark  
 Joseph and the coat of many colors  
 Joseph, king of dreams  
 Moses and the story of the Hebrew people being delivered from bondage  
 Samuel hears God’s call  
 David and Goliath  
 Daniel in the lion’s den  
 Jonah and the whale  
 Nativity (Christmas) story  
 Jesus’ baptism, Matt. 3:16-17  
 Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5-7  
 Jesus calming the storm—peace be still  
 Jesus walks on the water  
 Peter walking on water  
 Jesus’ miracles  
 Feeding of the five thousand  
 Jesus heals leprosy, Luke 17 (or other healing story)  
 Prodigal Son  
 Parable of the Talents  
 Good Samaritan  
 The sower  
 Lesson on giving your best (Cain and Abel, Abraham and Isaac, the widow’s mite, etc.)  
 Holy Week starting with Palm Sunday  
 Jesus praying in Gethsemane  
 Entire story of Jesus’ life and ministry  
 Saul/Paul road to Damascus  
 Whatever is true, whatever is honorable..., Philippians 4:8

“There is no Bible story I wish I did not have to teach. I love them all and think each one has something wonderful to offer. **Actually the more difficult ones are the ones that cause the ‘teacher’ to dig the deepest, therefore providing the most fresh and spiritually connected presentation. My desire is that the culture of our current program continues to make shifts toward a more biblically-centered curriculum.**”

—Richard Burdick’s (Teens) comment on using the Bible

# Intergenerational Unity Bible Study

by Valerie Mansfield  
Youth & Family Ministry Director  
Unity of Louisville, KY

During our October 2004 Youth and Family Quarterly Meeting, several families shared an interest in a Bible Study class for youth. As we brainstormed, it was decided that we would offer an intergenerational class, since the adults have a great interest in learning more about the Bible. We discussed having the class at homes or some other designated site, but decided for risk-management reasons we would offer the class at church. The class was set on Wednesday nights, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. We offer an area for families to bring in brown bag dinners to eat before class.

During the class we study the Bible both literally and metaphysically at the level of a 6-year-old. The curriculum we are using is *Learning About Myself Through the Old Testament*, which we purchased from the Association of



Unity Churches International. We are using the New Revised Standard Version Bible. The curriculum for youth makes the class more interesting for all ages with crafts and games.

We start with introductions; proceed into prayer, then read the Bible chapter that we will discuss for the evening. We discuss the chapter and use *The Revealing Word* and *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* as references. Then we move into creative expression. Sometimes the discussion will continue if we are working on an art experience. The class varies each week with participants—we've had elders from our church attend, youth volunteers, parents and youth.