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A Bible Curriculum For the Junior High Department of a
Religious School

by: Barry Martin Altman

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

Referee: Dr. Alvin J. Reines

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Ohio

June, 1973

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This thesis is an attempt to present detailed lesson plans for the junior high school grades of a Jewish religious school. The lesson plans include an analysis of the Book of Genesis from the Creation Story through the patriarch Abraham. Together, these lesson plans represent four units and eight lessons of considerable length.

The lesson plans are both value oriented and scientifically critical in an attempt to present the myths relevant as well as scientifically accurate. Each lesson contains a value which the student can accept and transform into positive action. The values relate to the concerns and feelings of the life style of a junior high school student.

The material contained in these lesson plans are studied in the light of recent archaeological discoveries, as well as comparative Semitic literature. Midrash and other rabbinic sources are also utilized. The material contained in this thesis can be of practical use to teacher and religious school principal alike.

TO: My Wife

My Parents

My Teachers;

Rabbi Herbert Baumgard, and Dr. Alvin Reines

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ways in which a thesis is put together are indeed complex. Many people had a hand in the final product. To acknowledge the help of these self-sacrificing people is hardly a satisfactory way of expressing my gratitude. I am forever indebted to those who expressed encouragement and aided unstintingly in the production of this thesis.

My wife Malka has given me the inspiration and help. Without her, I would have never worked to my potential. She transformed a penned script into a typed version. She had the proverbial patience of an angel, typing, assisting and preparing the bibliography.

I also thank Mrs. Garnette Friedman who transformed my manuscript into a final typescript. Mr. David Stuart, the Administrator of Beth Am, Miami, Florida, was indeed gracious and understanding. Special thanks are in order for the staff of the Hebrew Union College Library.

Rabbi Herbert Baumgard of Temple Beth Am was truly a source of inspiration. He allowed me great latitude as a student-intern, and helped me in more ways than I can enumerate.

Finally, Professor Alvin Reines deserves my gratitude for his invaluable assistance, his trust and his friendship.

INTRODUCTION

It occurred to me several years ago, that the traditional method of religious school education wasn't keeping pace with the discoveries made in the secular realm. The orientation in the past had been for the most part, value centered, but made very little mention of the scientific studies of the Bible. Thus students were asked to accept biblical stories at their face value, without a deeper understanding of their sources.

Dr. Alvin J. Reines of Hebrew Union College, has developed a method of education, whereby the Bible stories can be presented to a student in a relevant and modern way. He was the most important factor in my undertaking this venture.

Our problem in religious school education is the problem of reaching younger children at one level, and having to reteach our students when they approach a mature level of understanding. Thus miracles and supernatural occurrences are taught as "facts", and not analyzed critically when children are young. These students, as they mature, become more sophisticated as they grow older, yet their religious school studies rarely keep abreast of their deeper understanding of the outside world.

These lesson plans are designed to reach the thirteen and fourteen year old student on his own level. The goal is to create an atmosphere of objectivity and inquiry. The objective

is to present material which the student can accept as being consistent with his understanding of the way the world really is. This study does not ask the student to accept any fact at face value, but to gain a deeper background into the scientifically verified study of our Bible.

This venture is also value-oriented. The values taught are those which are relevant to the life style of an eighth or ninth grader. The values reflect in the way a student sees his relationship to others vis-a-vis himself.

The lesson plans are also activity-oriented, so that the student can react positively to the values which are deemed important to him. Decision making and conclusions are basically left up to the student. Reaching these decisions by himself instills a greater depth of understanding.

The eight lesson plan can be divided into two or three class sessions, at the teacher's discretion. By presenting this material on a weekly basis, there will be ample continuity and enough material to cover a major part of the religious school calendar. It is suggested that these lesson plans be presented for at least one hour at each class session. This schedule will provide time for the teacher to present other types of study such as the holidays, prayer, and other important aspects of religious school education.

In the past, many schools have not provided Bible study for students above the fifth grade. Religious schools have

found the students unresponsive to these stories, and facts once taught to them in a manner which is now unacceptable to their greater sophistication. The average teacher has also found it most difficult to teach a course which he himself could not feel comfortable with or totally endorse. This course of study attempts to make relevant and important those areas of religious school study so often neglected. This course can be taught by the average teacher who is willing to explore with an open mind, the various facets contained in this lesson plan outlined. He or she may not be an expert in biblical criticism, nor an adolescent psychologist, but the teacher must be willing to spend time in preparation, becoming familiar with both the lesson plans and the outside resources.

In conclusion, this undertaking was both a challenge and a great source of satisfaction. It lends new dignity to the Bible and adds relevant values to myths and legends often passed off as mere folk tales.

UNIT I LESSON I

- I. TOPIC: WHO WROTE OUR BIBLE?
- II. GOAL: To allow the student an understanding of how biblical stories were compiled and to show the development of these stories via the "Creation Epic."
- To give the student the tools to analyze our text and to arrive at some possible solutions concerning the origin of these stories.
- III. OUTLINE: (teaching methodology for the teacher)
1. Introduction to the presentation (see "motivation" below).
 2. "Direction" includes two exercises in group dynamics together with two thought questions.
 3. "Description" includes the presentation of various "theories" (possibilities) as to origins of myths and legends. The teacher should familiarize himself with the presentation so as not to deviate from the factual material, yet to present the material in an informal manner.
 4. Discussion should follow using the "thought" questions at the end of the lesson plan.
 5. Students will be asked to be responsible for a "Follow Up" assignment proceeding directly from the last "thought question."

IV. MOTIVATION: (Setting the stage)

Begin the first class session by forming a circle on the floor. Show the class a photograph of nomadic tribesman either tending sheep or pitching camp.

Photographs of this nature can be found in almost any Bible Atlas. (At the end of this lesson, suggested books will be listed). Ask each student to concentrate on the photograph and by using their imaginations try to picture themselves in that same situation.

Ask the class to follow you to a secluded grassy area near the classroom where the remainder of the class will take place. Again, students should form a circle on the ground.

V. DIRECTION:

A. Exercise I:

(Note to teacher: It is difficult to delve into the mind of another person and especially into the minds of individuals in a primitive society. The goal of this lesson is to create an atmosphere of wonder and imagination concerning the universe and its beginnings). Ask the class to imagine themselves nomadic shepherds at the mercy of the elements. Set the scene by asking each student to assume the role of a tribesman sitting around a campfire at the end of a long and arduous day of tending the flock.

After the evening meal, someone (the teacher, in this case) asks about the issues he is most curious about; the beginnings of those things most familiar to him-- Earth, Sky, Life and Death. The student is asked to assume for the moment that he or she has no pre-suppositions based upon science or prior religious school education. In order to fulfill this exercise, the student should take any one of the four "beginnings" listed above and recreate a mythic story.

Allow each volunteer to tell a story, keeping in mind all the while that he is assuming the role of a Shepherd in ancient times. Before the class begins the narration explain; The following conditions should influence their mythic understanding of "Beginnings".

1. What kind of country and climate are you living in?
2. How do you keep alive?
3. What kind of birds and animals do you know?
4. What dangers do you have to face?
5. What experiences would start you to wonder and question how things began?

Note to Teacher: Allow each student two to five minutes as well as questions from the rest of the group. Encourage volunteers to speak. The questions that follow should be briefly discussed without teacher direction. After "Description" they will again be discussed in greater detail with teacher

assistance.

QUESTION 1: What's the use of wondering about the way things began? What real difference does it make? Each story told today was somewhat different from the others told, in what ways were they alike? Why?

B. Exercise II:

(Note to the teacher: The goal of this exercise is to show how myths and legends never are retained in exactly the same manner from one generation to the next. How additions, exaggerations and distortions take place and reform the original story.)

The group is asked to play a game that they are all familiar with called "Telephone" in which the teacher whispers a rather complicated sentence into the ear of the student on his immediate left. The sentence is repeated by the student to his classmate on his immediate left until the statement travels from ear to ear around the circle. When the cycle is completed, the last student repeats the sentence exactly as he has heard it and the sentence is compared to the original sentence as stated by the teacher. Again questions are asked and briefly discussed without teacher direction. Later, these questions will be brought up again.

QUESTION 2: What if Exercise I was repeated and the first story told in class was passed on in the "telephone" manner? Has there been in your family a story often repeated at family gatherings? Have the facts changed since you first heard the tale? What will that story sound like to your grandchildren?

VI. DESCRIPTION: THE ROOTS OF MYTHOLOGY

1. When primitive man was not performing the essential life tasks such as leading his flocks, hunting or tilling the soil, or making war, he began to inquire about the world in which he lived. His curiosity was an attempt to explain the mysterious yet universal parts of nature constantly in his sight. The origins of the earth, sun, moon, planets as well as natural forces such as rain, snow, wind and storm were vitally important to him as farmer and shepherd because his life was dependant upon these uncontrollable forces and bodies. He also wanted to know about the mystery of life and death. His relationship to the origins of human development were beyond his kin. Who ruled the universe and by what laws was a staggering thought.

The early history of man was marked by a belief in gods who could intervene in human affairs. The social and cultural experience demanded answers to all - important questions such as the seasonal cycle of the earth and its relationship to the growth and decay of crops. The power over these natural factors, as well as questions of justice, good and evil was attributed to the belief in the supernatural powers of gods.

Myth making and legends were seized upon by those who needed an authority beyond their office to serve their own ends. Kings and government officials, as well as the wealthy and priests eventually became the organizers of a religious system. The priests took over where man's imagination left off. They studied and explored the basic myths, standardizing them for the masses.

VII. THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Each culture in ancient times had its own folklore dealing with "beginnings."

Even today, so-called "primitive peoples" have stories explaining the way things began. Why is it that these societies have much in common in the way their myths are told? How can we explain the fact that ancient peoples in Africa, China, India, America had legends which asked the same kinds of questions and answered them sometimes in much the same way?

ANSWER: Two important answers which the teacher should keep in mind when leading the discussion is (a) cultures often borrow from each other not only technological know how, but also social and religious ideas. (b) the basic curiosity of man was aroused by a universal subject which affected everyone---Nature. The sun, moon, stars were visible yet its beginnings were incomprehensible, to all the ancients. Who among us has not at one time felt awe-struck sitting by the sea or gazing at the stars? Who among us has not wondered at the immensity, power and beauty of nature? How much the more those peoples whose lives were dependant upon the forces of nature.

VIII. FOLLOW UP:

Each student should be assigned one story from BEGINNINGS: EARTH, SKY LIFE, DEATH, by Fahs and Spoerl. (Star King Press, Boston) excluding, "Stories from the Hebrews of Palestine," which will be dealt with later. Students are asked to outline the myth of a particular culture and compare it to the first three chapters of Genesis. (Jewish Publication Society's New Translation.) The comparisons will be discussed during the next class meeting.

RESOURCE BOOKS AS VISUAL AIDS:

1. Life in the Ancient World; By, Bart Winer, Random House, Inc., 1961. Page 77.
2. A Land That I Will Show Thee; By, Eva and Zeev Goldmann and Hed Wimmer, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1968. Pages 18-19.
3. The Faces of Israel; By, Roman Freulich and Joan Abramson, Thomas Yoseloff, Inc., 1972. Page 76.
4. Views of the Biblical World; By, Michael Avi-Yonah, and Abraham Malamat, Ed. International Publishing Co., LTD., 1959. Page 25.

UNIT I LESSON PLAN 2

- I. TOPIC: THE CREATION EPIC IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES
(Genesis 1:1-3:25)
- II. GOAL:
1. To introduce the Creation Story and to introduce the rudiments of textual analysis.
 2. To develop the theory of the different schools of editors and to develop a hypothesis concerning who wrote the Bible.
 3. To develop a "way of looking" at the Bible that is inquisitive and searching.
- III. OUTLINE: (Detailed directions for the teacher)
1. This lesson will be curcial to the later understanding of the texts. Make sure that this material is fully understood before proceeding on. Do not try to finish this lesson in one class period if the material has not been adequately digested.
 2. The involvement of the class will depend upon the skill of the teacher. The "follow-up" assignment given at the last class session will help promote class discussion. The importance of the "follow-up" assignment to the lesson will motivate students to delve deeply into future assignments.

3. Various texts will be read in class - read these carefully and distinctly emphasizing the underlined words in each case.
4. Above all, promote a sense of objectivity and curiosity.

IV. DIRECTION:

1. Explain to the students that the Hebrew Scriptures also has an account of "beginnings", of how things began. This is contained in the first book of the Bible called Genesis. Genesis is a Greek word meaning "coming into being". It implies a concern with births and beginnings which is appropriate for a book which begins with the creation of heaven, earth, animal, plant and man. The "Creation Story" is left unsigned. We don't know who wrote it nor can we really understand what motivated the authors. Let us be like Sherlock Holmes and by objective methodology try to uncover the secrets of an ancient, yet important document. Sherlock Holmes used scientific instruments such as the microscope. He could also depend on witnesses sometimes. We had the aid of chemical analysis at times to solve his cases. Our project is more difficult. We have no eye witnesses as to who wrote our story. We don't have the original story in our possession. We have no fingerprints or other pieces of physical evidence. All we have is the story as it has been recorded, the help of experts and our own inquisitive minds. Let us see if we can unravel the mystery.
2. Read the biblical account of Genesis to the class. At the end of the "Description", thought questions will be presented.

V. DESCRIPTION:

1. Begin by asking the class who wrote Hamlet, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice; since these are all books familiar to the curriculum of most junior high schools, the answer will be William Shakespeare. Tell the class that they can't be positive. Many experts believe a man named Francis Bacon wrote most of the plays attributed to Shakespeare. Many people believe that Shakespeare wrote Macbeth and Henry VIII in collaboration with "silent partners". Almost everyone agrees that Shakespeare took his basic plots from other sources. If there is that much controversy about plays written four hundred years ago, how much more confusion about the authorship of the "Creation Story" in our Bible. Before the narrative is read, ask the class to jot down notes on a scratch pad (have pads and pencils ready). They are to make notes of how our creation story either contradicts or disagrees with the folk epics of other cultures that they read in Fahs and Spoerl's, Beginnings; Earth, Sun, Life, Death.

VI. NARRATIVE: (To be read directly from this sheet)

When God began to create the heaven and the earth-- the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water--God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day.

God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, ~~that~~ it may separate water from water,"...And it was so. God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

God said, "Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear." And it was so... And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so... And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs for the set times--the days and the years; and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to

shine upon the earth."...and to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that this was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and birds that fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky."...And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts of every kind." And it was so.

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth." And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God Blessed them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth." God said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food. And to all the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and

to everything that creeps on earth, in which there is breath of life, (I give) all the green plants for food." And it was so. And God saw all that He had made, and found it very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

VII. THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. a. How can we explain that there are striking similarities between our own creation epic and those of other peoples? Can this bit of information, this fact help us to gather clues as to who wrote our story? Someone will explain how natural it is for all primitive agricultural peoples to have the same curiosity about the beginnings of things they see around them and are dependant upon. (On the back of a three inch by five inch index card labeled "Clue", paraphrase this answer.
- b. Archaeologists from the British Museum were digging at Nineveh, the ancient capital of Babylonia. They came upon the king's library, clay tablets written in cuneiform, the ancient language of the Sumerians, a culture and people the later Babylonians conquered. Scientists in Britain and America translated much of the tablets that had been preserved. Does this ancient story sound familiar? How is it different from our story? What clue can we add to our file knowing that Abraham and his family lived in the land of the Sumerians on the banks of the Euphrates before traveling to Canaan? Someone will reach the conclusion that myths are shared by different peoples, especially those in close proximity to each other. Changes occur as it

is transmitted.

- c. Let us read once again verse twenty-seven of Chapter 1. "And God created man in His image, In the image of God. He created Him; male and female, He created them."

SUMMARY: Now, let us look at Genesis 2:21-22. We find a seemingly contradictory statement; (Teacher note; read these two verses aloud, carefully)

²¹ So the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon the man and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that spot. ²² And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib that He had taken from the man, and He brought her to the man.

How can we explain this contradiction? Why would the author(s) leave this contradiction in our Bible? Does this problem give us any clues as to who authored our story? (Teachers note; write down all clues gathered, and discuss them with the class. Put them away until after the summary).

The clues collected were as astutely gathered by earlier historians as they have been today. Jean Astruc, a Frenchman, also gathered some more clues. He found that different passages of the Bible used different

Hebrew names for God. He found the word "Elohim" used often, and also "Jahveh" (which the Christians mistakenly pronounce "Jehovah.") In one place the author uses "Elohim" in another the author uses "Jahveh", but neither name is interchangeable. Astruc assumed that the Bible was written by more than one person. The various writers, or editors, or groups of editors wove together their stories leaving behind clues, like fingerprints, as to who they were. Editors "J" for "Jahveh" and "E" for "Elohim" helped collect material and wrote down the myths in their own way; that is the way in which they had heard it repeated. Sometimes the facts were a little different, sometimes the vocabulary used was different. Later on many scholars discovered the "D: school of writers; the "D" stands for Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Bible. The "D" school wrote most of Deuteronomy and edited both "J" and "E". A later school "P" were probably priests in Palestine who edited "J", "E: and "P", as well as wrote most of Leviticus. They were concerned with priestly duties. So, we see that our Bible is a series of sections written and later edited by different groups of people throughout ancient times.

CONCLUSIONS: Teachers can summarize the various clues and then present his case to the students: "We have taken upon ourselves an investigation into the authorship of our Bible. We have collected many clues. (teacher note: Each hypothesis should be listed on the blackboard).

1. The "Creation Story" was a very ancient onem parts of which were passed on from father to son as well as from one culture or civiliza- tion to another. Borrowing of myths and legends is common among people.
2. The originators of this epic were human beings who were concerned about the way the world began. The story reflected their culture and environment.
3. The Bible was written by more than one man at various times during the history of the Hebrews.

VIII. FOLLOW UP: Present the homework and motivation this way:

"Now that we know a little about how the "Creation Story: began, we can go on to the next portion of Genesis. The Garden of Eden was established for the first man and woman. Read chapters two and three in Genesis, they are short. The Garden of Eden in many ways expressed the needs and hopes of ancient people. We all have insecurities about the world in which we live. What kinds of needs are expressed in this story, what kinds of fears? Ponce De Leon was sent from Spain to find a "fountain of youth" and De Soto was in search of the "cities of gold". Can you see any similarities between the search for gold or youth and the story of this Garden? Ask your parents to tell you (list) what the term "good old days" means to them. How do they describe "the good old days? What does that term mean to you?"

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UNIT II LESSON PLAN I

- I. TOPIC: INNOCENCE LOST: THE GARDEN OF EDEN
- II. GOAL: To allow the student an understanding of what the Garden of Eden symbolizes and how it reflects a conscious as well as unconscious universal hope. To show that guilt and fear are often irrational products of our mind and to relate this story to experiences the student may have encountered.
- III. OUTLINE: (Teaching methodology for the teacher)
 1. Introduction to the presentation (See "motivation" below).
 2. "Direction" includes two exercises in role playing along with thought questions.
 3. "Description" includes the presentation of the myth concerning "The Garden of Eden" and its application to both the symbolic hope of man and to real situations that the student has experienced.
 4. The "Discussion" will center around the thought that ancient peoples expressed ideas and feelings which are relevant today and why this should be so.
 5. Students will be asked to be responsible for a "follow up" assignment proceeding directly from the last "thought question."

IV. MOTIVATION: (Setting the Stage)

Begin the lesson by having the students read aloud their "follow up" assignments. On a blackboard or a separate sheet of paper list the various ways parents have described the term, "good old days". List parallel to this the various ways the students have described the same term. Invariably the term, "good old days" reflects experiences in the past and seldom the present. Ask the students why most people relate good experiences to the past. What motivates a person to look back upon the past more fondly than the present? Each student should then be given fifteen minutes to choose an historical personality that they would like to assume. The teacher should ask the class to choose a period of history that appeals to their imagination as an exciting and good time to live. These should be collected on three inch by five inch index cards.

V. DIRECTION

- A. (Note to teacher: The epic story of the "Garden of Eden" symbolizes the remote memory of man, an original state of innocence and bliss to which man looks longingly back and which he eventually hopes to regain, if only in his mind. Life itself is a challenge, a matter of coping with all kinds of experiences, both good and bad. The goal of this exercise is to show how humans often see the past as a romantic and comforting fantasy, failing, unconsciously, to see the problems and challenges of all ages. We often distort the facts and produce a memory or historical setting devoid of objective reality. The "Garden" was seen by ancient man as just such a fantasy. A time of innocence and total happiness, of physical and emotional security.) The role playing exercise should be conducted in a semi-circle with the participants asked to choose any one index card collected earlier. The student describes the period of history he or she has chosen and tells the class something of his or her personality (famous or otherwise). He or she then relates why this period was the best of times and why he would be happy there. The class responds in this manner; Each volunteer may question the role-player much the same as a prosecuting

attorney. Each student is limited to one question. Sample questions by the teacher will give the student further clarity.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. (Female role player) - "Do you know that until recently woman was denied basic rights such as education, the vote, etc?"
2. (If the role player chooses a period in ancient history) - "Do you know that medical and scientific advances were not discovered yet and your life expectancy would be drastically reduced?"
3. (If the role player chooses a period in medieval history) - "Do you realize that as a Jew, you would be the victim of vicious anti-semitism in Europe?"

The class will continue with this line of questioning for several minutes until another student is chosen to play a different role. (Note to teacher) Allow enough time for the point to be made that the past often seems to us more romantic than the present

Question 1: Why would someone with a great many problems be more inclined to imagine the past as being "better" than new? What do we mean by the term "letting our imaginations escape"? What books or films or television programs cater to our "escape" imaginations? (Call to mind movies like "Fiddler on the Roof",

"Lost Horizons" and books like A Yankee in King Arthur's Court.

- B. Exercise 2: (Note to teacher); the idea inherent in the "Garden of Eden" epic is that frustration of the unknown and personal difficulties over which one has no control lead to irrational guilt and illegical blame. Thus man wanted to know why "Paradise" was not his. He understood his tough environment as "Paradise Lost".

Why man lost Paradise is based upon feelings of guilt, shame and blame. How often, out of frustration do we blame problems upon ourselves and others when in fact no one person is the cause.) The teacher continues, "How often have we passed the buck when things go wrong? How often do we blame ourselves for situations we have no control over? Some things are difficult to understand so we create answers in our own mind. Let's set up the following scene and decide if the scene is realistic. Would you react differently?"

John is best friends with Bob. They have had a disagreement about something which seemed important to them at the time. They both vow never to talk to each other again. Later that

day John is called by a friend and told that on the way home from school Bob was hit by a car and is in the hospital in serious condition.

(Note to teacher); ask three volunteers to play out the two scenes; the disagreement at school and the later phone call. Ask the participants to fill in the details themselves. After the scene ask "John" how he feels about or toward "Bob". Is it possible to feel guilty about the accident? How? Could the accident have any relationship to the disagreement? In what way is "John" really guilty? Knowing that you aren't the cause of the accident, who else can be at fault?

VI. DESCRIPTION: Man Loses Paradise

The description of the events in this story are very old. We can trace back to references of this story to the literature of the Sumerians (see Unit I Lesson Plan 2) close to four thousand years ago. The "Garden" where life began, according to this myth, was a place of pure beauty, where gods dwelt and knew nothing of old age, sickness or sorrow. The Babylonians wrote of a place, in the "Epic of Gilgamesh" where the gods dwelt in pleasure and the trees bore jewels instead of fruit. "Listen now to how our authors in the book of Genesis described man's first home."

VII. NARRATIVE: (To be read directly from this sheet)

The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame. Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die." And the serpent said to the woman, "You are not going to die. God knows that, as soon as you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, who knows good and bad."

When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some to her husband also, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths. They heard the sound of the Lord God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. The Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." Then He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?" The man said, "The woman You put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done!" The woman replied "The serpent duped me, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you did this, banned shall you be from all cattle and all wild beasts; on your belly shall you crawl and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; they shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel." And to the woman He said, "I

will make most severe in pain shall you bear children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." To Adam He said, "Because you heeded your wife and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it," cursed be the ground because of you; In anguish shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns thistles shall it bring forth for you, and you shall feed on the grains of the field. By the sweat of your brow shall you get bread to eat, until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken: For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins and He clothed them.

And the Lord God said, "Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" So the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

"Adam was banished from a paradise on earth. From then on he was relegated to a tiller of soil by the sweat of his brow." Ancient man saw in this story the explanation of his impossible existence as a farmer, tilling the soil for his livelihood. To us today, being a farmer is not evil or a curse, but a common profession for many people. The ancient nomad in the Arabian Desert viewed this occupation differently. He was a shepherd or camel herder who had freedom of movement and saw his profession as noble. He owed his allegiance to no one. He was lord and master of each oasis he settled in. He viewed the farmer as one who had to break his back in work. The nomad viewed the farmer as a man with no freedom of movement, who was dependant upon Kings and the ravages of nature. Perhaps ancient nomads told this myth to explain the beginnings of a profession they looked down upon. Perhaps the earliest farmers put down their own means of existence by describing how they were once privileged with a life without want and how they must now "sweat" to earn a living. Man wondered why life should be so hard, why survival should be so difficult. He thought that it must have been something he did that caused his awful state of affairs. He must have been guilty of something to suffer punishment.

Man looked back to a time when things were different, or so he thought. All his wishes and hopes (to live a life of no hunger and want, free of fear and evil) were imagined to this myth. So, man could again go back to his paradise, if only in his imagination. He could "escape" the reality of his world and go back in time, via the telling of a story to when all was perfect.

The ancient authors probably answered many questions concerning "beginnings" for those who wanted answers to the questions they saw all around them.

VIII. DISCUSSION: (THOUGHT QUESTIONS)

1. Many cultures through myths try to explain "beginnings" such as, Why the sea is salty or why camels have a hump or why there are mountains. Our story talked about other "beginnings." What were they?

ANSWER: Why the serpent crawls on his belly.

Why childbirth is painful.

Why man is stronger than woman.

Why man must work so hard to live.

2. What were the "good old days" for the authors of Genesis? Why do people imagine "good old days" in every culture?

Were our "good old days" really so good?

ANSWER: We like to escape in our minds to a make believe time. This allows us to forget for awhile our present problems. The "good old days" for primitive man was a time when the farming life wasn't so hard.

3. Often we feel guilty and blame others to assuage our conscience. Let us assume that man explained his loss of paradise via some long standing guilt in the original garden. Who were the guilty ones according to this story? How was the blame shifted? What was man's sin?

How does this relate to the role-playing between John and Bob?

ANSWER: Man blames woman for enticing him to eat the forbidden fruit. He also blames God for having made woman. Woman, in turn, blames the serpent. Let us wait for the "summary" to discuss in detail what man's sin was. In our role-playing, Bob feels guilty for the accident, yet he knows that he wasn't the direct cause. We often experience something bad and have no way to explain it except by blaming ourselves or others. Even when no one is to blame, its easiest to pass the responsibility on to someone.

SUMMARY: "The myth concerning the sin of eating of fruits from various kinds of holy trees is universal. Adam is forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge but allowed to eat of the tree of life. He chooses the former. It is difficult to say what this all means. Suffice it to say now that our myth might have been confused in its retelling (very much in the manner of our telephone game). Perhaps we can try to understand this portion of our story by ourselves."

IX. FOLLOW UP: "Man was now on his own. He had to learn how to deal with both his emotional and physical needs. The emotional needs and problems of ancient man have meaning for us today. Family relationships are often complex. During the next week read Genesis 4:1-16 and think about the message which our authors wished to convey. Also, be sensitive to your own family situations of stress, competition, envy or even anger you might encounter between yourself and members of your immediate family.

UNIT II : LESSON PLAN 2

- A. TOPIC: GAIN AND ABEL; INTRAPERSONAL VIOLENCE
AND AGGRESSION
- II. GOAL: To allow the student to understand that Cain and Abel represent the story of how our authors sought to deal with deep-seeded emotions of envy and even hatred within a family. To show that feelings of competition among brothers is natural and the universal concern of thinkers throughout the ages. Feelings of envy and hate had to be dealt within the most primitive societies to preserve society and regulate behavior. The roots of fraternal enmity will be explored in our story and compared with personal observations. Our authors wished to regulate aggression in society. From this myth, we too can learn how to deal with familial aggression.

III. OUTLINE: (Teaching methodology for the teacher)

1. Introduction to the presentation (see motivation below).
2. "Direction" includes the methods used in psych-drama along with thought questions.
3. "Description" includes the use of thought questions and an analysis of similar myths in other cultures and ages.
4. "Discussion" will center around the common experiences of the group related to familial aggression. The discussion will lead to some understanding of how we can deal with our own aggression as well as societal violence.
5. "Summary".
6. "Follow-up" assignment from the students.

IV. MOTIVATION: (To be read by the teacher in its entirety)

A. Narrative: (Genesis 4:1-16)

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I gained a male child with the help of the Lord." She then bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil. In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the soil; and Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. The Lord paid heed to Abel and his offering, but to Cain and his offering He paid no heed. Cain was much distressed and his face fell. And the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you distressed, and why is your face fallen? Surely, if you do right, there is uplift. But if you do not do right, sin is the demon at the door, whose urge is toward you, yet you can be his master." And Cain said to his brother Abel (Ancient versions, including the Targum, read "Come, let us go out into the field."). And when they were in the field, Cain set upon his brother Abel and killed him. The Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" Then He said, "What have you done? Hark, your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground! Therefore, you shall be

banned from the soil, which opened its mouth wide to receive your brother's blood from your hand. If you till the soil, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. You shall become a ceaseless wanderer on earth." Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is too great to bear! Since You have banished me this day from the soil, and I must avoid Your presence and become a restless wanderer on earth--anyone who meets me thus may kill me!" The Lord said to him, "Therefore, if anyone kills Cain, sevenfold vengeance shall be taken on him." And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest anyone who met him should kill him. And Cain left the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

- B. "The conflicts that arise in a family are as old as human existence. Cain killed Abel in a fit of rage. His jealousy was uncontrolled. The authors of this epic have written of family conflict with a horrible climax: Fratricide, the killing of one's brother. While Cain's reaction to his brother might be extreme, how many of us here today have not at one time felt anger and acted in a hostile way toward our brothers or sisters. We all crave affection, love and attention from our parents. We try in various ways to gain love

and acceptance by doing those things that are pleasing in the eyes of our parents. Cain and Abel both wanted to have their offering accepted by God. God paid heed to Abel's offering and Cain became envious. So Cain was driven by rage and envy to kill his brother."

Question 1: In what ways is it "easier" to be the eldest child? Why is it sometimes "easier" to be younger?

Question 2: Cain and Abel were in competition for approval and acceptance. How do we compete for affection and approval in our families?

V. DIRECTION: Note to Teacher: The art of psycho-drama is often used as a tool for analysis. We shall use psycho-drama in a less intense and non-analytical way. The goal is to allow the student to become sensitive and aware of some of the dynamics of family conflict, especially between siblings. The reversal of roles helps the student to understand not only the manner in which he or she as protagonist reacts to a given conflict, but also allows the student to appreciate and be aware of the response of a father, mother, brother or sister to that situation. It is helpful and often necessary to have a trained facilitator for this exercise. Keep in mind always that group support and encouragement are to be fostered at the end of each psycho-drama. Do not attempt this exercise without the necessary skills needed. There are trained professionals in most cities who can be called upon to lead this session. Explain the goal and procedures to that individual. The "follow-up" assignments are collected. (The ones from the last lesson). The facilitator will then

select a family conflict as perceived and written about by a student. Be careful to preserve anonymity. Outline briefly the given family situation and call for students to play the various roles. Each volunteer is called upon to fill in the details as they play their roles. The volunteer must describe himself in terms of his role and relate to the group how he feels toward each of the other characters in the scene. A scene is set up by the trained professional and is acted out. The facilitator may interject a pointed question when the scene loses its impact, repetition begins or players lose interest. Roles are reversed often and a resolution of the conflict must be attained at the end of each psychodrama. The conflict which is chosen for the role-playing exercise should include any one or more of the following situations as perceived by the student.

1. A younger brother or sister receives more attention or "love". (recognition)
2. An older brother or sister is allowed more freedom, given extra responsibilities or generally is given more credit

for their accomplishments.

3. A lack of trust between parent and child
or a lack of communication.

Note to "facilitator"; your questions at the end of each drama should guide the class in an understanding of why younger children might be receiving more attention than other children. Why it often seems that parents play favorites. Why the needs of children of different ages require different responses from parents. Why it is often very difficult to express our feelings toward our family and why talking and acting out our family conflicts is helpful. The introduction and role-playing will most probably consume all the time allotted to a class session. Unit II Lesson Plan 3 will continue the basic theme.

UNIT II LESSON PLAN 3

I. TOPIC: CAIN AND ABEL; INTRAPERSONAL VIOLENCE
AND AGGRESSION

- II. DESCRIPTION: Note to Teacher: In the last session we tried to allow the student to become more aware of his or her own feelings toward his family and sensitize the student to the feelings of the other family members. Today we will examine the Cain and Abel myth in the light of our own personal feelings.
- "Last week we did some psycho-drama. Perhaps during the past week you were more aware of some of your feelings. Perhaps you even reacted differently in light of our session. Perhaps you learned that family conflict, especially between brothers and sisters is not uniquely your problem. Everyone has to deal with feelings of envy, of competition, of acceptance and love. These feelings are universal and are as old as humanity. Let's read once again, the very ancient myth about a family in conflict. (Read again Genesis 4:1:16 from Unit II Lesson Plan 2).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. What was the jealousy all about that overtook Cain? In

light of our own experiences, what does it mean personally not to have our offering accepted?

Answer: We often try to please our parents by making "an offering" by doing something we know they like. By getting good grades, by being a good athlete, by being popular and joining clubs and youth groups. We wish to receive affection, attention and love in exchange. Cain made a worthy offering yet he felt rejected. Abel, his brother, was accepted through his offering. This was the source of Cain's envy and hatred.

2. Cain felt rejected by God. This upset him greatly. He obviously felt that God's acceptance was important. In our own prayer book we often say the "God our Father" or "Father in Heaven". Might Cain's feeling of rejection be similar to our own when we feel rejected by our parents?

Answer: Indeed we all vie for attention and love from our parents. God, in this story is very much like a parent with two children in competition for His affection.

3. Cain felt that his offering was rejected. He was not alone in his violent rage. The story of "Joseph" contained also in the book of Genesis repeats a message very much like our own. Joseph is treated specially by his father Jacob. His brothers become envious of his father's special love, and plot to kill Joseph. The rivalry of

of brothers, gods, and even professions (cattle raiser versus farmer) are familiar and were popular in Sumerian and Babylonian myth. Why is this theme so popular in myth and legend?

Answer: "All people in every culture, whether primitive or advanced want to be accepted by their friends, or by those they respect or depend on. This is the "universal" nature of myth. Myth speaks to us about human concerns. Some myths express the deepest feelings of man regardless of when that man lived."

III. DISCUSSION:

When we feel rejected we are often times so sensitive about parental love that we often misrepresent the words and actions of our parents. Criticism and concern are often confused with rejection. The praise and recognition of the achievements of a brother and sister are often mistakenly seen as neglect and discrimination by the family member excluded from this group. Can any of you recall times when you felt neglected by your parents? How did you feel when your new baby brother or sister returned from the hospital? (Allow students to freely discuss this matter).

In our Bible, the focus of attention was on Abel. His was the offering that was accepted. Jealousy ensued and the result was sheer tragedy. Cain was envious and his anger was vented on his brother. When asked where his brother was (having killed him) Cain answered, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?" Why was Cain's anger directed at Abel? After all it wasn't Abel's fault that his offering was accepted! What did Cain mean by, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (discuss).

Answer: Although it is not right, it is natural for a person to feel resentment toward who has gained something

you had hoped to gain. Have you ever lost a contest or an election? How did you feel toward the winner? "Am I my brother's keeper is the answer of a better person saying, "I don't care about anyone else, I care about myself and my own feelings. I have been hurt and I am angry."

IV. SUMMARY: Aggression and envy are one thing, violence and murder another. Society cannot exist unless men are restrained from acting violently every time they are deeply hurt and angry. How would it be possible to exist if we reacted violently every time we felt envious of our brother or sister. Cain is reprimanded for his actions for they were certainly wrong. We cannot condone murder. In a way, though, don't we now have a deeper feeling of sympathy with Cain. Perhaps we understand him better now. Cain is banished from his home. Cain has learned something the hard way, through experience. He has acted rashly and become filled with violent rage yet his punishment is not death nor, according to our myth, will anyone be allowed to take vengeance. Cain finally makes a new life for himself and becomes a productive member of society.

- V. FOLLOW UP: The motion picture "East of Eden" can be shown to the class. It is a reworking of the Cain and Abel myth and set in Salinas, California during the second decade of the twentieth century. This film can be rented from local film distributors. An informal discussion utilizing the material in the past two lessons would be helpful at the conclusion of the showing.

UNIT III : LESSON PLAN I

- I. TOPIC: NOAH AND THE FLOOD: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "TRUE".
- II. GOAL: To analyze the "Deluge" epic critically and to determine what we mean by the term, "truth".
 To help the student understand why it is important to analyze the Bible critically yet to understand our study of the Bible as a useful and productive learning experience. The goal is to achieve a positive attitude toward the myths that comprise Genesis via an investigation of one of its epic stories, "The Deluge."
- III. OUTLINE: (Teaching methodology for the teacher)
 1. Introduction to the Presentation Narrative Portions.
 2. Direction includes the presentation of a quiz game using the details of the "Deluge" epic.
 3. Description will center around the various ways we can determine whether our story is "true" using the rudiments of Higher Biblical Criticism and including textual analysis and comparative cosmogony of various cultures.
 4. Discussion will aim at the basic ontological or existential question, "What can myth, and particularly Hebrew myth tell me." "How can I relate to this study." Thought and questions will attempt to evoke the universal appeal and message of the "Deluge."

5. Students will be assigned a "follow up" project proceeding directly from the last thought question.

IV. INTRODUCTION: Ancient cultures felt a genuine need to offer an explanation of "beginnings."
We have already discussed this question in regard to the way our authors viewed the creation of the world. Myths served the purpose of satisfying man's curiosity about the important elements in his world. We will now explain another famous myth and discover whether it is "true" or "not true". Let's keep our minds open as we closely analyze this story concerning a man named Noah and a flood that engulfed the world. (Note to teacher): read the following material carefully and slowly to the class.

V. NARRATIVE:

The Lord saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time. And the Lord regretted that He had made man on earth, and His heart was saddened. The Lord said, "I will blot out from the earth the men whom I created--men together with beasts, creeping things, and birds of the sky; for I regret that I made them."

But Noah found favor with the Lord...Noah was a righteous man; he was blameless in his age; Noah walked with God...

"Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make it an ark with compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch...

For My part, I am about to bring a Flood-of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh under the sky in which there is breath of life; everything on earth shall perish." (Genesis 6:5-17)

Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, with all your household, for you alone have I found righteous before Me in this generation."

And...the waters of the Flood came upon the earth."

All the fountains of the great deep burst apart, And the floodgates of the sky broke open. (Genesis 7:1, 10-11)

At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent out the raven; it went to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth...

He waited another seven days, and again sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came back to him toward evening, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf!

Then Noah knew that the waters had decreased on the earth. He waited still another seven days and sent the dove forth; and it did not return to him any more.

(Genesis 8:6-12)

The Lord smelled the pleasing odor, and the Lord said to Himself: "Never again will I doom the earth because of

man, since the devisings of man's mind are evil from his youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living being, as I have done.

(Genesis 8:21)

And God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "I now establish My covenant with you and your offspring to come, and with every living thing that is with you - birds, cattle and every wild beast as well- all that have come out of the ark, every living thing on earth. I will maintain My covenant with you: never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

(Genesis 9:8-11)

VI. DIRECTION: (Note to Teacher: each student should receive a small score card upon which he will list numbers corresponding to statements.

After each statement is read the student will write whether the statement is (a) true, (b) false, or (c) I don't know but probably true, or (d) I don't know but probably false.)

"In this game there are no right or wrong answers. The only thing required is that you use your common sense and make some educated guesses. Keep in mind those things we have already learned about our Bible and myths. All of the following statements are given as fact in the "Noah" story.

STATEMENT 1: At one time all men on earth were wicked except for Noah. (Genesis 6:5-9)

STATEMENT 2: A flood totally destroyed all of mankind along with all things on earth. (Genesis 6:17)

STATEMENT 3: A flood engulfed the earth after forty days and nights of continuous rain. (Genesis 7:4 10, 11)

STATEMENT 4: Noah built an ark upon which he had two of every type of animal. (Genesis 7:8)

STATEMENT 5: A dove returned to the ark with an olive branch proving to Noah that the flood was subsiding. (Genesis 8:11)

STATEMENT 6: A contract was agreed upon that man will never again be totally destroyed.
(Genesis 8:21, 22)

STATEMENT 7: Noah lived 950 years. (Genesis 9:29)

VII. DESCRIPTION: "Let's begin our discussion today by talking about what we mean by "true." Often times we understand the word "true" by deciding if the facts and statements are scientifically correct. Often we say something is "true" if the events described actually happened. How do we know that we attended religious school last week-end? How do we know that our birthday is one certain date? How do we know that the Declaration of Independance was signed on July 4, 1776? Each of these questions requires different ways of determining the truth. Let's see how we determine what is true."

Question 1: How do we know we attended religious school last weekend?

Answer: Provided we were present, we usually trust our memories, especially if the events under inspection are of recent passing. If we don't trust our memories, perhaps the memory of a classmate or teacher, or perhaps the fact that you were marked present in the teacher's roll book will confirm your presence.

Question 2: How do we know that our birthday was on a particular date?

Answer; In this respect, our memory fails us. We could

not possibly have the capacity to recall the date on which we were born. Our parents remember. Their memory can take them back thirteen or fourteen years because this event was important enough to make a mark in their minds. Your birth certificate helps confirm this fact.

Question 3: How do we know that the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776?

Answer: No one alive today was there in Philadelphia to eye witness the event yet we assume the "truth" of our statement. Not only does the document have a date affixed to it, but all our history books confirm the fact. How can we really be sure? We cannot be absolutely certain as to its date but we are reasonably certain because other eye-witnesses have confirmed it. Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and others have confirmed this date in their own writings. Historians of the time, both in America and England, confirm this date. Old newspapers which exist today told about this important event. We say that the date, July 4, 1776 is "in truth" the date of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

"Let us now examine our statements concerning "The Deluge" in light of our previous questions. Can we be absolutely certain

that any of the statements are "true"? We weren't around then nor do we know of anyone who was there. We have no eyewitnesses.

STATEMENT 1: At one time all men on earth were wicked except Noah.

"Is this statement true or false? (wait for answers and reasons). This seems unlikely because it's hard to imagine every human being evil. Even in Nazi Germany, there were good Germans who refused to submit to Hitler's rule. What makes a man wicked; isn't there some good in every person?"

STATEMENT 2: A flood totally destroyed man along with all things on earth.

"True or False?" Again, we can't be absolutely sure. We weren't there, nor can we ask someone who was. It's interesting that in 1928, an archaeologist named Charles Woolley made a discovery at the site of the city of Ur where our ancient ancestors are said to have come. He was digging beneath the layers of soil and came upon various settlements as he dug. The deeper he dug, the older the settlement. He came upon a very large layer of mud which was deposited there by water. This mud layer, he concluded was the remains of the first settlement of Ur, the victim of a severe flood that covered the city. Also interesting is the fact that almost every ancient culture recalls a tremendous flood that swept the earth. Although the details are different, ancient cultures in Babylonia, Greece, Egypt, Europe, India, Burma, China, Indonesia,

Australia, South, Central and North America have epic tales of a giant flood. In almost every story a man and woman survive to carry on the human race.

Perhaps these facts help us to understand what we mean by "truth" when speaking about our own "Noah" epic".

STATEMENT 3: A flood engulfed the earth after forty days and nights of continuous rain.

"True or False? (Discuss) Could forty days of torrential rain cover the earth completely in water? Is it likely? In your memory, what was the most days of continuous rain you had ever seen? Is this story likely to be true?"

STATEMENT 4: Noah built an ark upon which he collected two of every living thing.

"True or False?" Firstly, can you imagine one boat large enough to hold two of every single animal that exists? Even our most modern zoos do not claim to have in captivity one of each type of animal. Could Noah have done then what seems impossible for us today?

Remember back when we spoke about the authors of our Bible and how schools of authors wrote about the same myth in different ways. In our own story there seems to be a contradiction.

In chapter 6:19,22 Noah collects two of every type of animal.

"And of all that lives, of all flesh, you shall take two of each into the ark to keep alive with you; they shall be male and female. From birds of every kind, cattle of every kind, every kind of creeping thing on earth, two of each shall come to you to stay alive. For your part, take of everything that

is eaten and store it away, to serve as food for you and for them." Noah did so; just as God commanded him, so he did.

"Compare this direction to Genesis 7:1-3." Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for you alone have I found righteous before Me in this generation. Of every clean animal you shall take seven pairs, males and their mates, and of every animal which is not clean, two, a male and its mate, of the birds of the sky also, seven pairs, male and female, to keep seed alive upon all the earth."

"Most scholars agree that these two sections which seem at odds were written by two different schools. The first section uses the name "God", the second uses the name "Yaweh". We have already learned that these are the "signatures" of two schools. The school that uses the term "God" or "Elohim" (Hebrew) is called "E". The school that uses the term Yaweh is called "J" (after the German spelling of Yaweh/Jahweh. What then does this evidence tell us about the "truth" of our story?

STATEMENT 5: A dove returned to the ark with an olive branch proving to Noah that the flood was subsiding.

"True or False"? (Discuss) Perhaps a dove did return to the ark. We cannot know for sure. Compare this story with another epic important to the ancient Babylonians. The Babylonians borrowed this myth from the still more ancient Sumerians. The God Ea warns Utnaphishtim, King of Babylonia to build an ark. He is warned of a flood and he fills the ark with his

worldly goods, his family and "the seed of all living things."

"Six days and nights

The wind blew, the downpour, the tempest, the flood overwhelmed the land,

When the seventh day arrived, the tempest, the flood,

Which had fought like an army, subsided in its onslought.

The sea grew quiet, the storm abated, the flood ceased.

I opened a window, and light fell upon my face.

I looked upon the sea, (all) was silence,

And all mankind had turned to clay.

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On Mount Nisir (or Nimush) the ship landed.

Mount Nisir held the ship fast, and did not let it move.

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When the seventh day arrived,

I sent forth a dove and let her go.

The dove went away and came back to me;

There was no resting-place, and so she returned.

I sent forth a raven and let her go.

The raven went away, and when she saw that the waters had abated,

She ate, she flew about, she cawed, and did not return.

I went forth (everything) to the four winds
and offered a sacrifice.

I poured out a libation on the peak of the mountain. (A. Heidel,
The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels, Chicago, 1946,
pp.81 ff.)

"What does this epic tell us about the "truth" of our story?"

STATEMENT 6: A contract was agreed upon that man will never
again be totally destroyed.

"True or False"? (Discuss) We just don't know. We have
heard that both America and Russia have enough nuclear bombs
to obliterate the earth several times over. What meaning
does this contract have in the face of the possibility of
nuclear war?"

STATEMENT 7: Noah lived Nine-Hundred and Fifty years.

"True or False"? (Discuss) This seems impossible. No man we
know has ever come close to living that long.

"We have already discussed the fact that myth often times is
a method of explaining to ancient man those facts that are
beyond his comprehension. We also went on to say that myths are
borrowed from one culture to another, especially in areas that
are in the same general vicinity. Myths are also distortions
or exaggerations of the truth. We often exaggerate a story to
make a point, to clarify what we want to say. As that story
is passed on from one person to the next, the story often gains
and loses something in each retelling.

Perhaps at one time in history there was a terrible flood. A flood probably did destroy Ur. The disaster made such a strong impression upon the survivors that stories were passed on from father to son. Without any understanding of the natural forces of nature, the people honestly felt that it was something their ancestors did that caused this disaster. Remember the "Garden of Eden" story. Ancient man also felt that they had somehow been the cause of their difficult existence. It was easiest to explain their historic flood by blaming the disaster on the wickedness of a past generation.

(See Unit I, Lesson Plan 2)

The ancient people travelled very little. They were afraid of the unknown and liable to meet with violence from other cultures. They knew nothing about the outside world and couldn't even imagine the earth being larger than their community and those communities immediately surrounding them. Thus when a flood engulfed their community, it seemed to them that the entire earth was flooded. We know now about our world but as little as five hundred years ago men believed that the world was much smaller. It is understandable that ancient people saw the entire world in terms of their own community. The ancient authors understood that the human race continued after the destruction of the earth. How? A worthy individual and his mate were saved, they were the roots of the new "beginnings" when they saved the animal kingdom from extinction. This story began somewhere in the ancient world. It was a popular

myth and an exciting adventure. The story was probably passed on from one culture to another, undergoing changes as it was told and retold. It is no wonder that both the Bible's Noah and the Sumerian's Utnapishtim sent out birds to find out if the flood had subsided. The fact that such far away places as Australia, Central America and Asia have similar "Deluge" epics is hard to explain. Perhaps you might have some possible answers. (See the next lesson plan for some thoughts concerning "The Collective Unconscious.")

Noah lived Nine-Hundred and Fifty years according to our myth. We doubt very much whether any man is capable of biologically living that long. Perhaps that is the way the ancient authors pointed out that a good man like Noah was rewarded with a long life. Perhaps ancient men calculated time differently. The rain lasted forty days and forty nights, perhaps this is a round number indicating a long period of time. The Israelites wandered forty years in the desert and Moses remained on Mount Sinai forty days. Forty seems to be a popular number indicating a long period of time.

VIII. DISCUSSION: (Allow ample time for this discussion)

THOUGHT QUESTION 1: Is our story "true"?

Answer: Parts of our story are based on fact and history although not every fact is accurate or reliable.

THOUGHT QUESTION 2: If we define "true" as being valuable to us and teaching us something about ourselves, how we feel and act, can we say that our Bible is "true"?

Answer: The authors of our Bible were not really concerned about history or facts. They wanted to make a point or teach a lesson. Often times basic "truths" about the way we live are contained in myths. Legends contain very valuable kinds of "truths".

THOUGHT QUESTION 3: The "Noah" story obviously was very important for ancient man. What can this story teach us today?

IX. FOLLOW UP: Think of some examples from history, of men who were "righteous" in the midst of wicked society. Why are they considered heroes? Have you ever tried to buck the crowd, to do something your conscience told you was right when everyone else was against you? What kind of pressure have you felt when you refused to conform to what the crowd was doing? What was the nature of Noah's real heroic action?

UNIT III LESSON PLAN 2

- I. TOPIC: THE TOWER OF BABEL; FALSE VALUES
- II. GOAL: To give the student a background for this myth and to explore its motivation in the ancient world. To introduce the term "midrash" or exposition of the text to the student and to evaluate the uses of midrash as it pertains to their own lifestyle.
- III. OUTLINE: (Teaching methodology)
 - 1. Introduction to the presentation (See motivation below)
 - 2. "Direction" includes an exercise in the art of "exposition". The exposition of the text will be discussed. Each student will try their hand at exploring our text and writing their own relevant "midrash".
 - 3. "Description" includes the presentation of the "Tower of Babel" myth in light of rabbinic thought as well as its application then and now.
 - 4. "Discussion" will center around the inherent values within the "Tower of Babel" myth and the ideas and feelings expressed by our own authors in ancient times through this same story.
 - 5. Students will be asked to be responsible for a "follow up" assignment proceeding directly from the last thought question.

IV. MOTIVATION:

"Last week we spoke about Noah, a man who was blameless in a wicked generation. At one time, all of us have acted in a way we thought was right, even though most of our friends felt the other way. We listened to our conscience even though what we did was unpopular." (Note to teacher; ask any volunteers to retell orally an experience relating to this last question. Students are not limited in this discussion to only retelling events they have written about for their "follow up" assignment)

"A man like Noah probably felt the pressures of public opinion and group conformity much the same as you have. So far we have been able to see our myths as ancient stories expressing the thoughts and feelings of men living in a different age. We have also noticed that these myths tell us something about ourselves. We too can learn a great deal from these myths. The following myth as found in Genesis is very ancient. It is one of the earliest epics and most popular among many ancient cultures."

(Note to teacher; read these few verses slowly and carefully answering questions concerning definitions at the end.)

V. NARRATION: (To be read directly from this sheet)

All the earth had the same language and the words. And as men migrated from the east, they came upon a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them hard." --Brick served them as stone, and bitumen served them as mortar.--And they said, "Come let us build us a city, and a tower with its top in the sky, to make a name for ourselves; else we shall be scattered all over the world." The Lord came down to look at the city and tower which man had built, and the Lord said, "If, as one people with one language for all, this is how they have begun to act, then nothing that they may propose to do will be out of their reach. Let Me, then, go down and confound their speech there, so that they shall not understand one another's speech." Thus the Lord scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel, because there the Lord confounded the speech of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

"The "J" school of authors (see Unit I Lesson Plan 2) included this myth popular in the Near East because they felt that the story was important. What kinds of questions might this story resolve for the ancient peoples? More important than that is what we can learn from this myth.

How is this story really "modern"?

VI. DIRECTION: Allow the class twenty minutes of uninterrupted time when they can review the "Tower of Babel" story. A copy of the text should be provided for each student. They will be asked to expound upon the story by following this outline. Paper and pencils should be available.

1. "Let us make a name for ourselves. How can people get into trouble by trying to make a name for themselves? Write a short modern play or story (either from experience or totally fictitious about making a name for ourselves." (Teacher note; allow for creative expression which is the hallmark of exposition and interpretation. Don't answer any questions which might lead to the interjection of your ideas into the mind of the questioner.)

VII. DESCRIPTION: "Our story today has been analyzed. We can understand the deeper meaning in a special way. In olden times, men would gather and add details to the already existing myth. In this way they made their points very clearly. It wasn't important that the details never really happened. They added details, changed the story and presented the new story in order to teach us something." "Long ago, but much after our Bible was written, Rabbis decided to embellish these myths to add new significance to the story. They wrote and expounded many of the portions of the bible. The rabbis used the term, "midrash" to describe their reworking of the story." Here then is how they explained "The Tower of Babel." "The "midrash" of the rabbis was indeed useful because it made a point that people could understand and learn from. Perhaps your own "midrash" made some of the very same points that our rabbis did in attempting to understand how the "Tower of Babel"

myth relates to us. The rabbis pointed out that the workers who were intent upon finishing their tower were more concerned with the winning of the great name that they forgot about much more important things like caring about human life. They put more value upon the worth of one brick than upon the death of a fellow worker. The reputation of their tower became the most important thing. Certainly, a human life is more valuable than a reputation.

At times we all misplace our values. When we stop and think about it, we can easily decide between the value of different things. Is it better to "put somebody down" but ridiculing him/her in public so a group of friends might have a good laugh or is it better to be sensitive to the feelings of others? It seems easy to choose the more important value when we think about it. Sometimes we act foolishly. We don't weigh the different values when we act rashly. Sometimes we become so concerned with "winning a good name" that we do it

at other people's expense. Our reputation and our popularity sometimes become so important to us that we assume false values. Many times we fail to weigh our actions. The "midrash" teaches us that the men who, according to our story, built the "Tower of Babel" had false values. They valued their fame and reputation above even human life. What are some instances when a person might value his or her "good name" or reputation above the feelings of others? (teachers note; allow time for thought and answers)

DISCUSSION:

THOUGHT QUESTION 1: Suppose a good student, who has always gotten good grades in history, finds that during an exam, he can't answer several questions. In order to preserve his "A" average, he decides to cheat from a neighbor's test paper. How is this related to "Winning a good name"? How has he weighed his values falsely?

Answer: The young man has cheated to maintain his average and thus his "reputation". This is obviously more important to him than the value of honesty. What the real value of getting a good grade you don't really deserve? Who has it really hurt?

THOUGHT QUESTION 2: The final punishment of those builders of the "Tower of Babel" was the confusion of speech and the variations of language so that no one worker could communicate with his helper. What were the authors attempting to explain to the ancient people about "beginnings"?

Answer: The tower of Esagila was indeed a towering landmark. Perhaps later people embellished the story of how it was built.

VIII. FOLLOW UP: "The next unit is about "Abraham" who is often called the first "Hebrew". (read Genesis 17: 1-16)
How do people acquire nicknames? Do you have one. Why were you named with the name you have? Ask your parents if you don't know".

UNIT IV LESSON PLAN 1

- I. TOPIC: ABRAHAM AND THE NAME GAME
- II. GOAL: To give the student an understanding of the ancient use and purpose of names. To recognize the ancient importance of names and name-changing in our Bible. To understand the uses of names in the Bible and the importance given to name-changes in both ancient and relatively modern times. To allow the student to understand the contemporary value of the student to understand the contemporary value of achieving a "good name" which must be earned. A name in our context is the way others perceive you. How one appears to others can change with inner change and growth. Thus can a person strive to change his name today.
- III. OUTLINE: (teaching methodology)
1. Introduction to the presentation (see "motivation" below)
 2. "Description" includes the presentation of material relating to the way in which names and name-changes were seen in ancient times.
 4. "Discussion" will center around the values that the student can understand concerning the importance of attaining a "good name". The relationships between our narrative, its mythological source and our own values will be explored.

5. "Summary" will be concerned with tying our lesson together.
6. "Follow Up" will consist of a written assignment

IV. MOTIVATION: (Note to teacher; this lesson is a continuation of the previous one concerning the "Tower of Babel". Achieving a "name" can be done at the expense of others as we have seen before. This lesson will accentuate the positive values associated with gaining a fine reputation and having one's name respected. Be careful to treat this complex area with patience and forethought. Be familiar with the lesson as well as resource material associated with names and name-changes. Read the Jewish Encyclopedia's articles on Names and Naming first). Ask the students to think about their given names. Do they know who chose it or why it was chosen for them.

Certain folk tales convey the basic premise that there is more to a name than the simple sound by which people were called. Ask a student to retell the folk tale, "Rumpelstilskin". The magical power of the name is obvious in that story. In primitive cultures, some people have secret names which can never be revealed. Strong prohibitions are enforced against anyone who reveals his name. What powers could both the ancient and primitive people today have attached

to a name. Lets examine our text concerning Abraham who is called a patriarch or a progenitor of the Israelites.

He changed his name and thus, according to our Bible, altered history.

V. DIRECTION: "Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further. "As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you. I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. I give the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession. I will be th eir God." "And God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah. I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her." (Genesis 17:3-8; 15, 16)

"In ancient times as well as later through the

middle ages, Man gave great importance to names. It was never by chance that a man was given a certain name. The name and the person were seen as one. To know a man's name was to his true essence or identity. Knowing a name or giving a name meant much more to ancient people than to people today. We have really lost sight of its importance. Let's each of us explore the origins of our own names.

1. Does anyone have a nickname? (use the board to make your point). Nicknames are descriptive; they usually describe an individual or tell us something about that person. "Red" might describe someone's hair color; "Junior" might explain that your father has the same name as you. How might you have gotten your nickname.

(teacher note; the name Abraham in Hebrew means, "Father of a great multitude".

This name also serves as a nickname, telling us something about him).

2. Is anyone named after a relative? It is a Jewish custom to name a child after the name of a relative who has died.

Today, people name their children according

to the first letter of the relative's name. Thus if Grandfather Solomon has passed on, Jewish parents might name their child using the first letter in Solomon's name. Perhaps the child was named Stuart or Sammy or Sean or Sally. Why do you think this is a good custom? Oriental Jews often name a child after a living relative, usually the father. What do you think of that custom?

3. In biblical times there were no last names or "surnames". A person was given a first name and called by that name as well as his father's first name. Thus Isaac, Abraham's son, was called Isaac son of Abraham. In modern times, this became impractical. In 1787, the Austrian government decreed that all Jews accept surnames. Jews searched for last names and found them in the following areas:
 - a. Taking the name of one's father and attaching the suffix son or sohn to it. (Davidsohn, Aaronsohn, etc.)
 - b. Accepting the place of birth as a last name. Berlin, Viener (Vienna), Posner (Posen) are good examples.

- c. Choosing a last name after one's occupation. Miller (one who runs a mill); Schneider (tailor); Cooper (barrel maker); Kaufman (Merchant) are examples.
 - d. Some families had emblems displayed on their house. These were later used as surnames. Rothschild (red shield) and Adler (eagle) are good examples.
 - e. Many names were forced upon people by governments. A Jew might be named after a local duke or lord. Often the equivalent of Smith or Jones in German was picked at random. Names like Schwartz or Greenberg are good examples of the latter.
 - f. The names Cohen (Cohn, Kahn, Kahan, etc.) and Levy (Levi, Leowy, Leow, Levin, Levine, etc) are common Jewish names associated with the divisions of the Israelites in Judah and Israel.
- (teacher note; ask the students if they can trace back the origins of their given name and surname. Discuss the names of those students who can trace back their names. Emphasize that names usually give us information about the person. Names tell us something about your family and yourself.

VI. DESCRIPTION: "Names in ancient times were always thought to have special powers. To know someone's name is to know what that person was all about and to have power over that person. Ancient people believed that the true identity of a person was to be found in the name. Since the real essence of a person was contained in a name, the change of a name symbolized an important change in the life of that person. When a person achieved something of greatness, a name-change was in order. Abraham was known as Abram at first. He was given a new name to fit his new identity - father of the Hebrews. Our myth tells us that Abraham was picked to be the originator of Judaism. This story allowed ancient Hebrews to satisfy their curiosity about "beginnings". When Abraham and Sarah changed their names in our story, they actually influenced and determined the future. This is the importance of names in the ancient world. Names were sometimes simply a reflection of a person's nature. Names could also influence the future of that person. A custom which makes this

point is the custom based on the writings of the rabbis of older times. If a person was very ill, a name-change could avert death. They believed that a change of name could change one's future. For the most part, people objected to this practice and called it "magic".

VII. DISCUSSION: A person is known by his or her action.
 we can be known as a kind, honest, thoughtful
 or decent person by the way we conduct
 ourselves. In this way, our own name can
 be regarded well by others. Our Bible
 speaks of the importance of acquiring
 a "good name".

THOUGHT QUESTION 1: Our Bible says, "As is his name, so is he."
 What does this mean to you?

Answer: "Just as Abraham acquired a "new" name for doing
 something special, so can we be known by others by
 the things we do."

THOUGHT QUESTION 2: "A good name is better than great riches".
 What has this statement to teach us?

Answer: "Our Bible reminds us that we sometimes confuse our
 "values". The men, according to the myth, who built
 the Tower of Babel were searching for a way to make
 them famous. The "midrash" adds that even one brick
 was more important than a human life. Actually,
 being known as a good person by our actions is more
 important than material possessions."

THOUGHT QUESTION 3: "There are some who have left a name behind
 them." "How can someone leave a name behind?"

Answer: When a person dies, the recollection of their good
 deeds and actions live on in the memory of those who

knew that person. We recall fondly those who have died, whether they be friends or relatives, when we mention their names. Often we are named after someone who has died so that, in effect, we are a living memorial to their fine reputation and deeds.

THOUGHT QUESTION 4: A man is called by three names, a midrash says. The first is given to him by his parents. The second is the name which others call him. The third one he must earn for himself. How does this relate to your own name?

Answer: "Our parents name us and see us differently than our friends. They each have a different image of you. As we grow and mature, we have the capacity to change our own image as seen by others.

SUMMARY: (Note to teacher; be sure to emphasize the following points in the summation.)

1. A name was believed to have magical powers because it was believed to represent the essence of the person.
2. A name is important to us because of it helping define or identify a thing or person.
3. The practice of name-changing is very ancient and related to changes in personality or circumstance.

4. Names are very important because they represent us. Names can be given, earned or adopted.
5. Name-giving sometimes expresses the wish to preserve a memory as well as a wish to uphold and carry on a tradition.

FOLLOW UP: Ask each student to try to trace his or her surname. What does the name mean? What about first names? How did the student acquire his or her own first name? middle name? nickname?

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