

What GraceLink Users Are Saying

The following quotes are from conversations, letters, and e-mails collected since January 1999, when the GraceLink materials were first released:



Kindergarten teacher, Delaware

I've found the new curriculum to be ideally suited for my age group (3-6 years). I love the readiness activity suggestions and the sidebar lists of materials. The room decoration ideas are simple, yet the kids love them. I'm not scrambling around for new craft ideas each week to support the theme—which I was doing with the old material, as some activities were not suited to 3-year-olds and pre-readers.

The best news is that my other teachers feel more comfortable leading the class with these materials. People who would not previously teach are now volunteering!

Children's Pastor, New Zealand

One parent told me that they just love the new GraceLink because it is so much more like the other books they read to their child at bedtime (size, colour, presentation). She also said that the parent activities are great and they do each one during the week. This is one really positive way that the GraceLink is building families, and I think it should be well promoted. I put the GraceLink focus on the Parent noticeboard so that everyone know what is happening in the Sabbath School.

Beginner teacher, North Carolina

I love the new program. I find it easier and more exciting to plan my lesson.

Junior Leader, Texas

I just want you to know that I have always enjoyed the curriculum. The artwork is excellent, as are the teaching methods. I have no professional teaching background, but that is unnecessary to use the lessons. I know that you get a lot of mail from critical people, but remember that there are many of us who understand why this curriculum was developed and also that a lot of prayer went into it, too. We are behind you and trust that God is leading out in this matter.

Translator, Yugoslavia

The first translated GraceLink lessons came out here in Yugoslavia just two months ago. So far the reactions are very positive. Everybody just loves the pictures! I haven't yet heard any negative comments. . . . As for those of us who work on preparing the lessons in our language, we think that they are great! I especially like the teachers' material; it's so full of good ideas. The children love the artwork; it's contemporary, colourful and nice.

Children, Finland

- The material is very good because I can understand what the point is.
- It's so nice to discuss things from the Bible with my parents, and it's nice that I can tell others or do something for others too.
- We had such an interesting and fun Bible study today. I want to read the story again.
- This is just for children like me. I like the GraceLink very much.
- I really like the pictures.

Kindergarten leader, Brazil

I'm helping at the Kindergarten class in my church, and I must say that the new curriculum is being very much appreciated by the Kindergarten kids in my church, and in several others as I have heard. Parents and kids are just amazed and excited about their new colorful lessons too. Congratulations for a job very well done!

Grandparent, California

My grandchildren had not been to church in a while; their parents had virtually stopped coming. Since the GraceLink lessons have started, the children enjoy Sabbath School so much that their parents have started bringing them again.

Sabbath School Teachers, Denmark

The children love the colourful illustrations and the easy-to-read stories. It is not so easy to get the parents to help with the daily study, but we have only had it for one quarter, so we will wait and see what happens.

The teachers are happy for the good material and the many activity suggestions. They do not use it all, but they like having the opportunity to choose. We only have 50 minutes for Sabbath school so there is simply not enough time.

Primary teacher, Tennessee

I want you to know I am thoroughly enjoying the GraceLink curriculum (as are the kids). It was with some reluctance I opened the helps for the Sabbath after 9/11. I thought, "What can I possibly do and say this week?" What a wonderful blessing when I saw the memory verse was John 14:1: "Do not let your hearts be troubled..." God truly is all-knowing and all-loving!

Children's Ministries Director and Parent, Iceland

I have been teaching from the Grace Link material for Beginner and Kindergarten and I really like it. As we have had some problems in getting the Sabbath school materials from the two publishing houses in the US I can only talk about the teachers material since that is all we have. But I have looked at the student lessons on the Internet and I think they are really good. I really like the cute pictures in the Beginner lessons.

The children love to be able to experience the lessons. They get a chance to live the stories and they remember them better that way.

I have heard from some other teachers that are teaching Beginner, Primary and *PowerPoints* [Juniors] and they all think the lessons are good, especially the teachers' help.

I see that the children love Sabbath school and they love the way they learn the stories now through this method of teaching.

As a parent I like the idea of reviewing the lesson the week after, and the Do and Say activities are good.

Junior/teen Teacher, via e-mail

For a little over a year now my wife and I have been teaching children in the Junior and Earliteen class at our church. We have greatly appreciated the effort, time, and expense that it takes to create the well-organized *PowerPoints Bible Study Guide*. We have both personally benefited from the teacher enrichment component of the study. And we appreciate many other things about the structure of the lessons--such as the program notes, readiness activities, prayer & praise (recommended songs that are pertinent to the lesson), Bible lesson, etc.

We have especially enjoyed the activities that allow the children to "play." Children are naturally kinetic at this age and need to talk and move as well as listen. The children have come alive while interacting with us and their peers during these lessons.

PowerPoints usually has more than one excellent activity that allows the students to apply the lesson physically as well as mentally. I appreciate this greatly because I know how much time it takes to put something like this together!

My wife and I use *PowerPoints* as a "Bible Study Guide." We pick and choose from the many options presented in the guide to handcraft a study that is Biblically accurate, interesting, and relevant. . .

In conclusion, the materials that we receive from the Church are well thought out, organized, appropriate, and useful in teaching children about a loving Creator who is also a saving God that wants to have a relationship with them.

You and your staff should be recognized for your great service. Imagine being critical of a program that emphasizes Grace! Just as Christ had to deal with the Pharisees and their laws, so too we have to deal with the critical.

Primary Leader, Idaho

When I first looked at the GraceLink materials, I didn't like them, and I didn't think I could possibly follow the program as it's written. But when our Children's Ministries coordinator sat down with me and helped me read through the leader-teacher materials, I understood them a lot better. Now that I know how the curriculum works, I find that I like it and that I can prepare a lesson very quickly.

Leader and Parent, Minnesota

I would like to say a hearty thank you for the new GraceLink Junior Sabbath School lessons. The layout, the artwork, the wording of the lessons and the size of the quarterly are all inviting, inspirational, and kid-friendly.

When I picked up the teacher's guide and read the introduction, I was touched by the level of commitment to sharing God's grace with kids. I was also impressed by the discussion of the various types of learners. That told me that the developers of these lessons were not only professionals, but that they were also following in the footsteps of Jesus by taking an interest in people (kids), reaching them where they are at, not just where someone thinks they should be.

My 11-year-old son now loves to study his lesson, and so do I. Please pass along my words of appreciation to the staff who worked so hard on these lessons. Because of them we are being blessed.

I was raised a Roman Catholic. I feared hell, did penance and prayed my dead ancestors out of purgatory. There was no grace in our religion. I have caught glimpses of God's grace in some of my adult studies, but going through these lessons with the kids is clearly causing a paradigm shift in me. Even if you only reach one person, I am eternally grateful that you went through the effort to produce GraceLink.

I am so privileged to be able to go through this Grace experience with the kids. I needed to become a kid again so that the gap in my spiritual upbringing could be filled. And by reaching me, you are sharing this special message with my four children and husband as well. Thank you.

Parent, on a bulletin board forum

My two young boys have not liked their Sabbath School class for a while. Since we've started attending a church that uses the GraceLink materials for kids, they can hardly wait for Sabbath School. But the best part is that as a result of this new Sabbath School class, they are really excited about the Bible--always studying it now and asking me questions.

Conference Youth leader, Australia

GraceLink is a wonderful step forward in our children's Sabbath School program. I am delighted to think that our church has adopted a new and better way of instructing our children.

I am convinced that the teaching model is sound; it is Biblical and well received. The response from SS teachers and leaders as they use the program in their local churches is so positive. To date we have only received a little negative feedback from people who have are having difficulty in understanding the new approach. When it is explained to them how and why it works, they catch a vision for it and are keen to keep using it.

In our conference, we decided that getting GraceLink right for our children was of such high importance that we made it a priority and have employed a Children's Ministry Leader for this year to ensure that each of our 70+ local churches understand and use GraceLink to the maximum benefit. We are most thankful for the vision of our leaders who saw that this was a critical step in ensuring that we care adequately for our children.

I would encourage every conference to do the same to ensure that their young people are given every opportunity. It would be outrageous to even suggest we go back to the way it used to be done. Our conference supports the new curriculum for Sabbath School and does not wish to go back to the former curriculum.

Beginner leader, WA

Thank you so much for ALL the hard work you have done with the new curriculum. I teach in the beginner class and I love working with the new material. The children in my class love the finger plays and all the ideas for crafts and activities.

I cannot figure out what the big deal is about changing the curriculum. I haven't heard anything but positive response. I pray that all those who are having problems will open their hearts to change. I know you have worked for a very long time to make this change and I just want you to know it is appreciated. May God bless all of those involved in spreading the Gospel in such a fun way.

Primary Leader, Maryland

I really like all the options that are provided for leaders. There's a lot of good stuff there and I wish I had more class time to use it all!

Junior Leader, Georgia

I wanted to share some of the gratitude I have for the resources we receive through our church. I have only led junior-teens for 3 years, but this gives me experience in both old and new lessons.

With the new lessons I have gone from 5-10 students to 20+ students. I couldn't get a volunteer to help for my life. Every time the word *teen* was mentioned I saw fear in their eyes. I now have 8 volunteers which enables me to have separate classes for the age divisions. An absolute must to keep everyone's attention. I believe it is from parents and adults visiting the class and seeing the kids having so much fun while they learn. This breaks down their fear to volunteer.

Also, having such well-organized lessons empowers less creative teachers and helps them to realize this doesn't have to be a week's consuming work. Yet it is just as worthwhile for the kids.

I actually have adults who come to visit from time to time. Many of my volunteers attend even when they are not assigned to teach.

The kids didn't even bring Bibles to class when I first started. Now, they are bringing Bibles and completing the study sheets in preparation for class.

We have gone from a mainly lecture Bible class to an interactive class that reinforces the same message in different formats throughout the week. I just wanted someone to know their sweat, money and prayers are paying off. Thanks for the insight to see the need for this new format and look. I thank you and the Holy Spirit that guided you.

Sabbath School Teachers, Finland

- I like GraceLink. It helps me to teach children what a wonderful God we have.
- The teachers' guides help me understand new things about the Bible.
- Now teaching is easier and more interesting.

- There are many stories and ways to teach about a loving God. I have gotten a better understanding of how important it is to understand God's grace in everyday life.

- Children have become more motivated to learn more about God and what the Bible tells us.

- The students' Bible study guide is really good as a guide in our family worships. It gives us special gifts from the Bible and the children learn the messages from the stories more deeply.

Children's Ministries Director and Parent, Finland

- The way the material portrays God is so nice and the children really get the understanding that the message is from God.

- It is so much easier to get the children to enjoy the lessons and at the same time learn important things about life and the Bible.

- It helps children to apply the lesson to their daily lives. They learn to share God's love with others; that is why the Church and we are here.

- I think the GraceLink curriculum, more than any other curriculum that I have worked with, gives us the tool to reach all the different children with the message of a loving God.

- In Finland we have noticed that teachers are more motivated to teach and they are more oriented towards children's ministry now that the GraceLink curriculum has come.

- Children like their GraceLink Sabbath schools.

- My own children love to read and do their GraceLink Primary lessons every evening. Our family worships have been given a new vitamin injection with this new GraceLink material, and my husband and I have also learned so much.

Primary leader, New Jersey

This new program is so wonderful! Everything is done for you--all you have to do is follow directions. I was praying for some help, and along came this new material that is exciting for me and for the children. My children love it. When the children come to Sabbath School they are excited about what we are going to be doing next.

Junior Leader, Oregon

I like the Bible stories; they are well written and the children like them. I have a small group and they have special needs: HDD, ADHD.

Children's Ministries Director, Cyprus

Our Nicosia Church is using GraceLink and we have only received positive comments.

The children are enthusiastic about Sabbath School attendance, and the parents are very happy with the content and overall presentation.

Our teachers do say that, sometimes, none of the readiness activities can be applied in our circumstances, and they are not yet very skilled in thinking up their own activities, but they are catching on fast.

Many of the criticisms made about GraceLink come from a very narrow mind set. Who says cartoons are always lies? Cartoons are merely a vehicle for expression as is a video. It is like saying that celluloid is sinful. Cartoons can tell the truth or they can convey lies. Jesus did not always stick to the 'truth.' His parables are stories that could or could not have happened. And what about Lazarus in Abraham's bosom! If we believe that to be true we have to throw out our doctrine on the state of the dead!

We have found GraceLink to be a blessing and some parents are already pressing for it to be in Arabic (we don't have the money for that yet!).

May I assure you of my prayers and support for your tireless work in this transition period to GraceLink, which is proving a great blessing in our local church. The parents are very enthusiastic about it and it has brought new dimensions to their family worship times and also to Sabbath school. The teachers comment but do not complain about the extra work—they seem to love it.

Beginner Leader, Iowa

All I can say is WOW! What a cool way of teaching--I am very glad that we are able to provide this in the future. Thank you.

Children's Ministries Director, Great Britain

1. GraceLink gives the loud cry of the Third Angel's Message, which is, according to *Selected Messages*, vol.1, pages 362, 363, "The Revelation of the Righteousness of Christ, the Sin Pardoning Redeemer."

The heart of the gospel message, "God's grace is sufficient for all," is having an impact on the children.

For example, two non-SDA nine-year-olds, who attend church, were taunted by a Jehovah's Witness child at school that God would condemn them. This was shared in the Sabbath School, and the teacher was able to use the Bible story to show God will always accept us if we come to Him. This explained that He never blames us; it is only we who leave Him.

2. Presenting the Bible story before the children go home and do their weekday Bible study has a positive impact because (a) Those few children who used to study their lesson were dominating the class discussion, and consequently, (b) member and non-member children who hardly looked at the lesson now join in more. Also (c) they see the point of studying during the week and feeding back what they have found.

3. The bright and cheerful artwork is attractive to the children. It was not meant to please the adults! The parents are especially impressed with this year's "GraceLink Twins," the Beginner and Kindergarten Bible study guides.

4. The programme is centred on God's Word. The Bible is now the focus, more than the lesson guide is. This encourages the bringing of the Bible to church. The story in their Bible study guide is just for "light reading," giving an alternative, imaginative account.

5. The inclusion of activities, feedback sections, and different approaches to learning has encouraged more children to arrive on time for Sabbath School.

6. The style of the programme has updated the Children's Sabbath School into the 21st century way of teaching, which the children enjoy.

7. The principles of the Scriptures discussed in class are made very practical. Every child goes home knowing how to live as a Christian.

Children's Ministries Director, Trans-European Division

This last year I have been travelling in the Trans-European Division, giving seminars on how to use the new GraceLink material. I have met with hundreds of children's Sabbath School teachers, pastors and parents and the overwhelming response has been so positive. Everyone is delighted with the new material. They find it easy and fun to work with; the children love it, and the parents are so grateful for the fact that there finally is Sabbath school material that appeals to the children. The parents are reporting that the children are now eager to get to Sabbath school and do not want to miss out on anything that is taking place.

I had two of my granddaughters visiting here in England when the first samples of the Beginner and Kindergarten lessons arrived here in October. I brought them home from the office so that my daughter could see them. The oldest one of the two granddaughters, who had just turned four, got hold of the lessons and sat with them for a long time, really studying the pictures. Then she more or less demanded that her mother sit down and read them to her. She was not satisfied until her mother had read both the lesson pamphlets from cover to cover for her. During the following week they were read several times and she seemed not to get enough of them.

I would like to encourage you to continue your enormous task of producing material that finally is appealing to the children, material that can compete with and win over all the colourful materials that the world is producing. But most of all, material that inspires the children to go to the Bible to continue their studies there.

13-year-old, West Virginia

The reason I like GraceLink is because of each of the activities every day. It helps me come closer to God. I also like GraceLink because of the color and pictures. They make reading the story more fun because while you are reading and look at the pictures you can imagine it much better. God bless!!

Primary child, via e-mail

The lesson stories are great. We are doing fun things in Sabbath school.

Children's Ministries Director, Bangladesh

We are working with the GraceLink Curriculum. It's great. We are having nice Sabbath Schools. I have to continue training the people, because the tendency is to continue with the old ways of doing things. But those who have used this curriculum are happy for the results. When I arrived here, the children were just passive students. Now they want to participate in every activity.

Kindergarten Leader, Brazil

I'm helping at the Kindergarten class in my church, and I must say that the new curriculum is being very much appreciated by the Kindergarten kids and several other divisions, I've heard. Parents and kids are just amazed and excited about their new colorful lessons too. Congratulations for a job very well done!

Missionary, Fiji

Last year while working in Lebanon, one of our concerns was getting the children to Sabbath School on time. When we began using the GraceLink readiness suggestions the children were pushing their parents to get to Sabbath School early. In fact we offered to start a half hour early for the eager children, and as English was a second or third language for the Beginner and Kindergarten children, we felt we needed extra time with each child. We were thrilled when after only a few weeks, all the children came early and Sabbath School was so successful that folks invited their non-Adventist friends to come.

Mother of Two, Australia

Just wanted you to know how great the new GraceLink lessons are. My two girls are so excited about reading and doing the lesson each night, and learning their memory verse. The colourful pages and new format of the lessons are absolutely wonderful!!

Junior Leader, North Carolina

I have been a junior Sabbath School leader for about 7 years. I want to thank you for the new *PowerPoint* lesson guides for juniors. In the past I had to go to a local Baptist Bible

bookstore to get material that was adequately interesting to my students. It is nice to see something coming from the denomination that is stimulating, meaty, and keeps the kids' attention.

Primary Leader, Australia

I have found the GraceLink lessons absolutely fantastic. I simply pray and spend a bit of time following the directions in the pamphlet and I am able to present a Sabbath School that the kids love and (I believe) learn from too. We have about four non-churched kids who come. There are usually between 13 and 18 kids each Sabbath.

Children's Ministries Director, Australia

On Sabbath I observed a combined division in a country church. It was very well done and all the children participated. They followed the Primary GraceLink lesson. The leader said that not only the children and the parents benefitted from GraceLink, but she herself found that her previous Bible knowledge had become more relevant as she studied and prepared her programs.

Yesterday I met a Kindy [Kindergarten] leader in the supermarket. She is overjoyed with GraceLink. She attends a very successful community, "small group" church. They have been meeting for a few years now. She said that at the end of last year, her Sabbath School volunteers were feeling burned out and wanting to quit. She persuaded them to hang in and try out GraceLink. They're all very enthusiastic now.

Via e-mail

Our kids are thoroughly enjoying the new curriculum and we are so appreciative of what you and your staff have done. We are very pleased with GraceLink. Thanks!