

 TAPESTRY *of* GRACE™

Primer

HANDBOOK



Tapestry Primer Handbook

Written by Michael Somerville

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Acknowledgements

We often describe the homeschooling years and the pursuit of lifelong learning as a journey. On a personal level, the process of developing *Tapestry Primer* has taken me on my own journey as I have rediscovered and relearned for myself. Connections have been reestablished, concepts have been reinforced, and challenges have resurfaced. Along the way, I have received a tremendous amount of help from a number of people, and I want to publically thank them.

Throughout this process, I have come to see so much more clearly God's role as the author of history and His ongoing work to uphold and direct each one of our steps. The loving, personal role of Father, Son, and Spirit has become more clear and precious to me as I have surveyed the story again from the beginning until now. Thank you, Father, for your wisdom, power, and love.

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Dad, thank you for the way that you have always sought to capture our attention with the grandeur and majesty of God's story, using your considerable gifts as a storyteller. It has been a pleasure to adapt your writings for the *Guidebook*, compiling them into a concise, engaging summary of the story so far. I'm glad that others will be able to benefit from them as I have.

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WELCOME, FELLOW PARENTS!

Tapestry Primer was written by members of the Somerville family for parents of younger children who are new to homeschooling. The primary author is Michael Somerville who, with his wife, Jessica, is raising three girls to the glory of God. As Nora (their eldest) turned five, Jessica (who had been homeschooled, but also enjoyed going to small Christian schools) had to examine why and how she would take up the challenge of homeschooling, especially since she had two active, smaller daughters to care for as well. To be honest, she wasn't quite sure that it was necessary, or worth the price of added time and energy that she clearly saw was needed (but doubted if she had to give)!

Michael, however, was fully convinced that his family should homeschool. One reason was that his own experience had been so positive. Growing up in the home of Scott and Marcia Somerville, he had been one of the first (and best) reasons that Marcia started down the road of writing the *Tapestry of Grace* curriculum.

Marcia wrote *Tapestry of Grace* in response to a crisis that occurred as the eldest two of her six children (Nathan and Michael) entered high school. She herself had enjoyed a prep-school-quality high school education and wanted the same for her children, but was having trouble managing multi-level teaching with curricula that were designed for age-segregated, traditional classrooms. Michael was one of the first two students that Marcia taught using the approach that became *Tapestry of Grace*, and he absolutely loved the philosophy and results of it.

Broadly speaking, *Tapestry of Grace* is a K-through-Mom program of study that integrates most of what your family learns using unit studies that follow human history as God has authored it. The whole family explores the same story at once, together. It's amazing how well this worked for Marcia's family, and then—over the last fifteen years—for thousands of others.

When his oldest daughter turned five, however, Michael realized firsthand how, for some moms (including his own wife, Jessica), it can be daunting to consider using *Tapestry of Grace* when they are still trying to come up to speed themselves. If *Tapestry of Grace* is a super-highway that moves us along the journey of lifelong learning, Michael and Jessica felt that they needed an “on-ramp.” Together, they created *Tapestry Primer* to help Jessica develop her teaching skills as they sought to introduce their first-grader and preschooler to the joys of learning. As we decided to publish the program that they had written, it was really a whole-family project, with Michael's sister, Christy Somerville (who has been a *Tapestry* author and teacher for years), contributing her time, skills,

INTRODUCTION

and insights as an editor so that we could bring *Tapestry Primer* to you. David Somerville designed the covers and layout for *Tapestry Primer*. While using what became the *Primer's* approach, Jessica discovered that integrated teaching was a joy. It took less effort than she had feared, and she found that she enjoyed learning right along with her kids, even as she grew in confidence as a homeschooling parent.

If you are also juggling a growing family with young kids and are just starting to homeschool, *Tapestry Primer* was produced for you! At a gentle pace, you can survey the basic story that *Tapestry of Grace* explores in-depth. *Primer* will introduce you to *Tapestry's* effective and enticing core approaches to teaching humanities topics. We also hope that Marcia's companion book, *Love the Journey*, will help you to explore and establish your own individual philosophy of education.

Like you, we are soberly aware that God has entrusted us with the call to raise children who love the Lord with all their hearts, all their minds, all their souls, and all their strength, and who love their neighbors as themselves. It's an enormous undertaking, isn't it? Thankfully, God has provided His word, His Spirit, and the Body of Christ to help us. We hope and pray that God will use this program as one of the tools to help you to fulfill your high calling as parents.

In assessing *Tapestry Primer* or *Tapestry of Grace*, we encourage you to consider how your whole family can enjoy the process of learning God's story together. For adults, the integrated Unit Study approach can prove addictive! The more we learn, the more we see how things fit. The more connections we see, the more we realize how much we had missed as children, using the traditional school's approach of dividing learning into "subjects."

Our adult brains aren't making as many new connections as our children's are! As fascinating as learning can be to us, our young children benefit from an integrated, story-driven learning approach in a whole different way. Their brains are growing along with their bodies and they learn in a variety of ways as they mature. Stories uniquely engage the whole brain.

Tapestry of Grace embraces the child development process by covering topics at different learning levels so that all family members can study together, but at their own levels. Many homeschoolers have latched on to classical terminology for the major stages of learning—they talk about the grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric stages. These three terms may be new to you, and you may find them helpful. Terms are tools, and these terms help us see patterns and adjust our teaching goals to the changing brains of our growing children.

GRAMMAR

Little children are experts at picking up the "grammar" of things—by which we mean concrete and specific things like words, facts, and stories. They learn languages better than anybody. Your preschooler likely has turned the pages of the family's storybooks that you've read aloud while reciting them word for word. They can't read yet, but they sure can remember what has been read to them! *Tapestry Primer* helps you tell your kids a wonderful story, full of fun facts and places to explore! As our kids are learning basic skills—to read, write, spell, and add—we also want to engage their imaginations with the great stories of what God has been doing throughout recorded history! There's almost no limit to how many facts little children can absorb. Their brains are sponges—but one reason they have such an amazing ability to memorize is that they don't try to organize. That's for later, when the "dialectic" phase kicks in.

DIALECTIC

In this phase, the brain shifts gears: kids go from taking in anything you tell them to arguing with anything you say. This transition takes place at different ages for different children, but it generally comes with puberty.

The “dialectic” stage is certainly marked by debate. These are the years when your kids start saying, “You just told me to do so-and-so, but yesterday you said I should do such-and-such!” Their growing minds are looking for consistency—unfortunately, a lot more than the average parent has to offer. This can tempt students to become argumentative, literalistic, legalistic, and otherwise annoying! We want to harness that budding brainpower to the glory of God! On the positive side, the dialectic years are the “Ohhhh!” years. That’s when kids start getting the connections between things. “Ohhh! Did you know Michelangelo was sculpting in Italy while Columbus was sailing to America?”

Did you know that? Chances are good you didn’t—because our textbooks divide things up into “subjects.” The Renaissance is one “subject”; the exploration of the New World is a different “subject”; so traditional schools separate them out. If you want to understand how people thought in the past, you don’t want to separate them out like that. We want our kids to experience history as much like it unfolded as possible by showing them as many connections as we can, and this is the stage of learning where they are most interested in such connections!

RHETORIC

Most kids move on to the “rhetoric” level after they’ve finished puberty. Often, but by no means always, this is by the start of high school. If grammar kids memorize and dialectic students connect the dots, then rhetoric students “analyze and synthesize.” They break down complex problems, create their own solutions, and ask the big questions: *Who am I? What really matters? Does God really care about me?*

A central purpose of *Tapestry of Grace* is to lay the foundation for the rhetoric years. We want you to be able to teach your children to learn to love the Lord their God with all their hearts, all their souls, all their minds, and all their strength. All their years of memorizing and connecting are intended to bring them to the point where they can see for themselves that this God who governs all of time and space also knows every sparrow that falls. He fashioned each of our sons and daughters in their mother’s womb and numbers every hair upon their heads.

If you now have children at multiple stages of the learning process, you may want to choose *Tapestry of Grace*, which was designed for families like yours, in order to simplify and unify your preparation as a teacher. Just enjoy it and take your time with the material. But, if your kids, like Michael and Jessica’s, are still learning their grammar in the first year or two of school, you may find *Tapestry Primer* to be the better fit.

Either way, we hope that our family’s efforts help you to love the homeschool journey as much as we have!

MARCIA AND MICHAEL

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Tapestry Primer introduces your family to the joys of lifelong learning. Created by other young parents, *Tapestry Primer* helps you learn to teach the key stories of history to early readers in a multi-modal (engaging visual, auditory, and kinetic modes of learning), interdisciplinary (unifying multiple “subjects” around one topic) experience.

Tapestry Primer is a vehicle that carries young families through the first year or two of learning. While we do some things very well, we don’t try to do everything. There are many great programs that teach the basic skills of learning—reading, spelling, writing, and math. We encourage you to find ones that fit your family for these disciplines.

Tapestry Primer helps you teach your student to apply the basic skills of learning to unlock God’s story that shapes each of our lives, and in which we all play a part. We help you weave together great stories, fun facts, geographical context, and delightful activities into an integrated experience, taught from a God-centered view of history.

We start at the beginning of recorded history. Walk the paths of the patriarchs, live in ancient Egypt, and watch God prepare the way for Jesus as Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans conquer the world, build roads, and establish peace. As Rome falls and the Church rises, search for stability in a dangerous world. Witness people recover timeless truths and discover new worlds. Watch the birth of a nation and follow the paths of patriots and pioneers through American history. Struggle to create one nation, under God, even as many forget God and pursue their own wisdom.

It’s not all academics! By using *Tapestry Primer* as a teaching parent, we hope you will grow in ways that will serve you throughout your schooling years. We include Marcia Somerville’s *Love the Journey*, which was written for parents in your stage of life. This will help you think through your goals for education in your family and help you establish your educational philosophy, approach to teaching, and daily practices. We hope you have fun as you discover the joys of teaching and learning this great story.

TAPESTRY PRIMER OVERVIEW

How will we cover the whole story of history over the next year? Remember, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” *Tapestry Primer* lays out the journey through human history as a series of steps through time that define the overall arc of History.

At each step, you and your student will:

- Read books and learn facts about life in the past (history)
- Learn great stories and meet interesting characters (literature)
- Memorize words and people that we meet in the stories (memory)
- Study the places where history happened (geography)
- Make it real by creating your own artifacts, costumes, and crafts (activities)

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Story-driven unit studies make the journey more enjoyable for you and your student. Rather than chopping up your school day into short, disconnected subjects that are each telling a different story a different way, the *Tapestry Primer* mini-units integrate the core studies of History, Literature, Geography, Bible, and Arts into a holistic learning experience.

The wonderful thing about great stories is that you can tell them time after time and they get better and better. Here are several different ways people use *Primer*:

1. Complete *Primer* in one year, doing one topic each week.
2. Complete *Primer* in two years, doing one topic every two weeks.
3. Circle around and do *Primer* in one year again, as a full repeat, since the content can easily be taught at a 1st or 2nd grade level.

Repeating can be good, as stories repeated are often better understood, remembered, and enjoyed for their depth of detail and meaning.

Tapestry Primer includes twelve mini-units for you and your student to enjoy. While each can be explored on its own, we recommend that you go in sequence. Since each unit goes quickly, you'll want to look down the road to see which unit is coming next and to make sure you have all of the resources you'll need before you get there.

OUR MINI-UNITS ARE:

- Mini-Unit 1—Eden to Egypt: We'll study how God created and chose His people.
- Mini-Unit 2—Tabernacle and Temple: We'll see a Holy God live among a sinful people.
- Mini-Unit 3—Daniel's Revelation: We'll learn God's plan for the rise and fall of empires.
- Mini-Unit 4—Christ and the Church: We'll see how God brought Jesus at the right time.
- Mini-Unit 5—The Broken Road: We'll seek God for meaning as we fall into feudalism.
- Mini-Unit 6—Recovery and Discovery: We'll watch what happens when God's Word is found.
- Mini-Unit 7—A New World: We'll search for treasure, adventure, and freedom.
- Mini-Unit 8—One Nation: We'll struggle for unity as one nation, under God.
- Mini-Unit 9—Growing Pains: We'll follow the westward growth of the young nation.
- Mini-Unit 10—A House Divided: We'll see how differences result in Civil War.
- Mini-Unit 11—Engines of Empires: We'll learn how technology changed the world.
- Mini-Unit 12—A Smaller World: We'll learn how closely we are connected.

On the next page, we provide you with a more detailed roadmap for the journey, showing the scope and sequence that we follow.

A ROADMAP FOR THE JOURNEY: *TAPESTRY PRIMER* SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Tapestry Primer provides assignments for 36 topics. Each of the twelve mini-units includes three topics. The mini-unit is expected to be completed over three weeks, with one topic per week. Most families will schedule some weeks of vacation.

MINI-UNIT	TOPIC
1 EDEN TO EGYPT	From the Beginning to Babel
	A Chosen People
	Egypt: Gift of the Nile
2 TABERNACLE TO TEMPLE	Burning Bush to Tabernacle
	The Promised Land
	The Heart of the King
3 DANIEL'S REVELATION	Babylon: The Head of Gold
	Persia: The Torso of Silver
	Greece: The Belly of Bronze
4 CHRIST AND THE CHURCH	Alexander the Great: Preparation for Proclamation
	Imperial Rome: Backdrop to the Atonement
	The Zenith of Imperial Rome: Backdrop to the Early Church
5 THE BROKEN ROAD	Collapse Into Chaos
	The Making of Medieval Europe: Charlemagne
	Popes and Princes
6 RECOVERY AND DISCOVERY	Recovering Trade, Lands, and Knowledge
	Explorers, Inventors, and Reformers
	Roses and Reformation
7 A NEW WORLD	Early New World Colonies
	Waves of Colonists
	Colonsists & Native Americans
8 ONE NATION	French and Indian War
	Gathering Clouds
	Give Me Liberty!
9 GROWING PAINS	Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase
	The Oregon Trail
	Industrial Revolution
10 A HOUSE DIVIDED	The Civil War (Part 1): Lincoln and the Start of the Civil War
	The Civil War (Part 2): Decisive Year of the Civil War
	The Civil War (Part 3): Closing Years of the Civil War
11 ENGINES OF EMPIRES	Reconstruction and Expansion
	Industry and Immigration
	Airplanes and Automobiles
12 A SMALLER WORLD	Wired Worlds at War
	One Small Step for Man
	At Our Fingertips and In His Hands

Tapestry Primer encourages flexibility. Schedule one topic per week to complete in one year, take two weeks for each topic to cover history in two years, or repeat the year at a deeper level of learning.

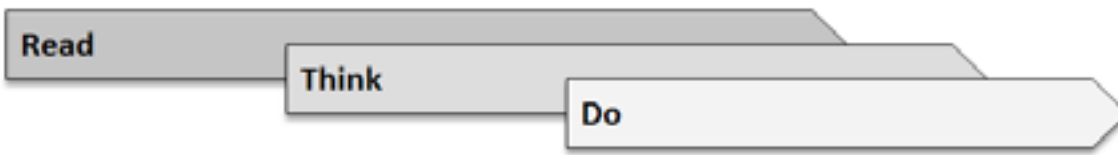
BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

IT'S ALL ABOUT FINDING A RHYTHM

Life is lived in rhythms. Daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, we all have patterns that we fall into naturally. These patterns of living provide structure for our days without sacrificing flexibility or locking us into excessive rigidity.

We want to help you find a rhythm for your homeschool. We have found that with young students (and with their even younger siblings, if you have them), we need to make sure that we leave some room around the edges of our schedule for unexpected events.

Each person is different. Some prefer a very well-defined schedule, and some like to play things by ear and take them as they come. Rhythm strikes a balance between the two, providing your student with a predictable pattern that he can begin to follow and anticipate. We recommend this basic rhythm for your week:



Read: Plan to read the assigned resource books of each Topic aloud with your student. Enjoy the story! With some resources, you might want to encourage your youngster to practice reading aloud. Reading will stretch throughout the week, but you may want to plan to do most of your reading earlier in the week to set up the story. The history and literature threads that we offer provide assignments for this.

Think: Ask questions about the stories and practice retelling them; memorize facts about the people, places, and things in the story; and see where events happened on a map. The literature, memory, and geography threads provide assignments.

Do: Make the story real and tangible by creating crafts, preparing costumes, cooking meals, and entering into the story that you are studying. The activities threads and the student's *Activity Book* provide suggestions to help get you started. Be creative!

It's up to you to decide whether you make time for these subjects every day, or focus on different topic each day. If you were to use *Tapestry Primer* heavily for four days a week for about an hour a day, your week might look like this:

Emphasis	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Read	1 hour	½ hour	¼ hour	¼ hour		PLAN ¾ hour
Think		½ hour	½ hour	¼ hour		
Do	¼ hour	¼ hour	¼ hour	½ hour	¼ hour	

Note that you can break up the hour into smaller segments of time if that serves your youngster better.

LET'S DEFINE A FEW TERMS

We've already used some "eduspeak" words like "interdisciplinary" and "multi-modal" as we've been introducing *Tapestry Primer*. If you've been reading up on homeschooling, you probably already have some idea of what these mean.

To avoid confusion and promote conversation, here are some of the features of *Tapestry Primer* that we think are important, expressed in educational terms.

Whole-Family Involvement – *Tapestry Primer* introduces families to the fun of studying the same story together. The program involves parents, who are revisiting the entire sweep of history, school-aged students, who are starting to explore the stories of history, and younger siblings who are enjoying some activities with their older siblings. Everyone has the opportunity to learn the same story at their own level.

Immersive Story-Driven Approach – *Tapestry Primer* focuses on great stories, using them to introduce your student to the sweep of history. We encourage you to enter into the daily life of the cultures that you study, gaining an appreciation for history at a child-friendly level. Children always ask their parents to tell them a story, and *Tapestry Primer* helps you become a great storyteller, providing you with age-appropriate resources to understand and retell the great stories of history for your family and a *Guidebook* that helps you to make connections and interpret those stories.

Mini-Unit Studies of Interdisciplinary Subjects (History, Literature, Geography, Arts & Crafts) – *Tapestry Primer* integrates and unites core subjects by studying each moment in history through the lens of each "subject." The disciplines of history, geography, reading, writing, and arts & crafts are all employed each week to help students fully engage with each topic by reading, thinking, and doing. Each subject informs the others, giving students a richly textured perspective. Students come to understand the characters, the context, the conflict, and the conclusion of the stories they are studying.

Multi-Modal Learning (Visual, Auditory, Tactile) – *Tapestry Primer* blends multiple modalities of learning in order to appeal to young learners. Students listen-to-learn as their parent reads aloud while they look on. Students speak-to-learn through memory modules. Students do-to-learn by completing arts and crafts that reinforce key lessons. All modes of learning blend together during field trips. Since *Tapestry Primer* is meant for the youngest students, they will also learn-to-read (phonics), learn-to-listen (vocabulary), and learn-to-write (handwriting).

Love the Journey – Designed to be an integral part of this program, Marcia Somerville has written a book that assembles much of what she learned over the last thirty years of both teaching her own six children through all twelve years of grade school, and then becoming a mentor to thousands of women as a speaker, writer, and friend. We assign chapters that seem relevant to the stage of the journey as the year progresses. As a result, we jump around in the book. You are welcome to read our suggested assignments, read through it at your own pace, and read it multiple times! Marcia hopes that this book helps you discover your own educational point of view and develop healthy homeschooling practices based on clear principles that you yourself develop.

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

LOOKING MORE CLOSELY AT A MINI-UNIT

Every mini-unit has the same overall structure. Understanding the structure of a mini-unit will help you easily navigate the curriculum and find the information you need when you need it.

Let's familiarize ourselves with what we will find in each "mini unit." There are four "books" that we provide for *Tapestry Primer*. These are the *Guidebook*, the *Handbook*, the student's *Activity Book*, and *Love the Journey*. Let's look at what we'll find in each one.

- ❑ *Tapestry Primer Handbook* gives detailed directions.
 - ❑ List of Ingredients: The books, resources, and supplies¹ for the whole mini-unit
 - ❑ Pedagogy Principles and Practices: Focus areas for teacher development
 - ❑ Three Topics, each including:
 - ❑ Threads & Objectives: Summarized learning goals
 - ❑ To-Do List (Assignments): Page-by-page assignments for scheduling
- ❑ *Tapestry Primer Guidebook* is written to you, the teacher.
 - ❑ Mini-Unit Overview: Overall mini-unit teacher's notes
 - ❑ Topic Overview: Topic-by-topic teacher's notes
- ❑ *Tapestry Primer Activity Book* is designed to be used by your student. It consists of coloring and activity pages that are relevant to the mini-units and topics.
- ❑ *Love the Journey – Homeschooling: Principles to Practices* offers perspectives and wisdom to encourage and develop you as a teacher.

SPEAKING OF TEACHER'S NOTES...

During these early years, we feel that teachers should focus most on instilling a joy of learning, on developing our students' basic skills (such as phonics, math facts, and penmanship), and finally, on introducing our students to the fact that there is a story happening all around them!

We call our teachers' notes a *Guidebook* because we hope that it will help you become more familiar with the major "points of interest" along the route we will take through history. For many of us, it's been a few years since we learned this material. Like an audio tour, our *Guidebook* is designed to help you remember and understand the greater context of the history that your child is learning. Additionally, since you and your child are learning from real books written by a variety of authors and viewpoints, the *Guidebook* give us a chance to remind you of a God-centered perspective on the events of history.

For each of our twelve mini-units, the *Guidebook* provides four sections: there is one mini-unit overview and there are three topic overviews.

- ❑ Mini-Unit Overview: 2-3 pages that summarize the story for the whole mini-unit and set up the topics and themes that you'll study.
- ❑ Topic Overviews (one per topic): 3–10 pages that provide more detail on the topic. The length of these sections will vary, but they are not exhaustive (or exhausting).

¹ We have not included ordinary household items in our lists. Supplies for individual projects are separated by gray lines.

WHAT ARE THE “THREADS” WE’RE GOING TO TEACH?

We’re teaching one story through many overlapping lenses (or modalities) by following a “Read,” “Think,” “Do” rhythm. Our different threads will each emphasize a different aspect of the main story. This picture shows how different subjects overlap and emphasize different modalities.



Your Threads for each week are (*subjects taught with other curricula are in italics*):

- Learn to Read (*Your favorite Phonics program*)
- Learn to Listen (*Your favorite Spelling program*)
- Learn to Do (*Your favorite Math program*)
- Listen to Learn: History and Literature
- Speak to Learn: Literature and Memory
- Do to Learn: Geography
- Do to Learn: Activities

Along the way, we also want you to learn. The “Pedagogy, Principles, and Practices” section will suggest specific chapters in *Love the Journey* to inform and encourage you along the way.

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

DO I HAVE TO DO ALL OF THE ASSIGNMENTS?

We believe that one reason why homeschooling works so well is because it aligns with a highly flexible tutorial approach to education. As you learn to teach your children effectively, you'll be watching to see where they struggle and where they soar.

For the first few weeks, we have designed the program to get you started quickly, minimizing the choices you have to make. We suggest that you work to accomplish each assignment as written. This provides accountability and focus at the beginning of the year when both enthusiasm and confusion may be running high.

As you settle into your program, we expect that you'll start to take the reins and make more of the decisions about the assignments that will work best for your student. We encourage you to make sure that you choose both challenging and enjoyable assignments to provide a well-balanced educational diet for your student. Developing this discernment and discipline will serve you throughout your educational career.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HISTORY AND LITERATURE?

History and Literature are both "Listen to Learn" subjects. Both of them involve reading books aloud. Especially in the first six mini-units, you will see that many of the stories listed under "Literature" are stories taken from history. For instance, we ask you to read the life story of Alfred the Great as Literature. Why would we do that?

We do it for two reasons. First of all, we believe that stories about real people are interesting *as stories*, with good characters and exciting events. They also help students to understand more about other times. They allow us to double up on story-driven learning! If you decide to continue with the *Tapestry* program, you will find that there are many more stories for you and your student to discover together.

WHAT DOES "SPEAK TO LEARN" LOOK LIKE IN PRIMER LITERATURE?

We have explained why we read stories aloud from History as Literature. We also want to help you learn to talk about stories. We offer a list of Literature terms, questions, and activities that you can use with any story. We believe that at this young age it is more important to build enjoyment in stories, and a good imagination, than to try to make little people understand special literary analysis terms like "hero" or "imagery." However, we do hope that these simple questions and activities will build a young child's observation and articulation skills. These are the first building blocks of later literary analysis.

You can find our one-page Literature Questions and Activities list at the end of this introduction section (p. 20). We do suggest specific questions and sometimes activities from this list in the "Threads and Objectives" pages for each week's topic, but feel free to use anything from the list for any story or poem that you read throughout the year! (You are also welcome to photocopy or even laminate the Literature Questions and Activities list on p. 20, for ease of use.)

Note that our Literature questions and activities are just a place to start. We think that these are good and plenty if you don't feel inclined to make up your own, but at the same time we hope you feel free to make up others that might be extra fun for your particular child, if you want to! We don't want you to think that you have to stick to only the questions and activities designed by "the experts."

WHERE DO I GET MAPS?

History is played out on the stage of God's creation. That stage is what we study as we learn about geography. We do some basic studies of continents, rivers, and other landforms, but most of our emphasis is on understanding where people lived and how their lives and the events of history were shaped by the land.

We recommend a very good historical atlas that dovetails beautifully with many of the topics throughout *Primer*. Additionally, the history books that we reference often have good maps, either as insets or as full pages. Where possible, we note for you the locations of these maps in the source materials.

If you have access to the Internet, you can always do your own basic research to find additional maps. Some families may enjoy using Google Earth™ to get a bird's-eye view of the geography.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY STUDENT IS LEARNING?

Ask your student whether he can retell the stories that he has learned!

The Topic Overviews that we provide help you understand the big picture. You or your spouse can ask your child to tell about the story at the dinner table. These should be chances for him to share the new stories that he is learning, not be an examination. We expect that your child will want to share what he's most excited about. If you get him started and let him know you're really interested in what he has to say, you've already made a difference.

Literature Questions and Activities

GOOD THINGS TO TEACH ABOUT STORIES

- Kinds of People Who Make Stories:
 - Author: The person who made up the story and wrote it down in these words
 - Illustrator: The person who draws the pictures that you see in the book
- Kinds of Stories:
 - True Stories (non-fiction): Stories about things that really happened
 - Made-Up Stories (fiction): Stories about things that didn't really happen
- Things You Find On and In Story Books:
 - Title: The words on the front that tell you about the book
 - Character: Somebody in the story, like a person, animal, or thing who talks (or otherwise communicates)

GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT STORIES

- Who is in this story? Can you describe this character?
 - What does he look like? What colors are his clothes (or body, for animals), hair, and eyes?
 - Is he old or young?
 - Is there anything special or unusual about him?
 - Is he like, or very different from, anybody else in the story?
 - Is there anything that he really likes or wants, or really doesn't like or doesn't want?
 - Is there anybody he really likes or really doesn't like?
 - Is there anybody who scares him or is trying to hurt him?
 - Is there anybody or anything that he protects or loves?
- What is the story about?
- What happens in the beginning, middle, and end of this story?
- When did this story happen? (Is it long ago? Do the things in the story happen during the day or at night time, or some of each?)
- Where did this story happen? (Was it in the country, or in the city, or some of both? Did it happen in a field, or by the sea, or in a desert?)

GOOD ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH STORIES

- Ask your student to tell you the story in his own words.

NOTE: When you are starting to teach narration, it is often best to ask the simple "beginning, middle, and end" questions. As you go through the year, try to help him improve his narration with more details about characters and events. The best way to do this is often by asking more questions about whatever he tells you, such as: "You said 'then some stuff happened, and then he was at the sea.' Do you remember anything that happened in the middle before he got to the sea?"
- Ask your student to describe a character from the story.

NOTE: Like the narration exercise, the point here is to help your student accurately articulate what the story has told him about a character, but in his own words. Hopefully he will notice and include more and more details in his descriptions as you progress, but at first it will probably work best to prompt him with questions, such as, "You said he was a rabbit. Is he an obedient rabbit or a naughty rabbit?"
- Ask your student to act out part of the story with you or with another student (or a younger sibling!). Your student might also enjoy pantomiming what is going on in the story as you read it aloud.
- Draw a picture of a character or thing or event from the story.

GOOD ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH POEMS

- Memorize them! Children are usually able to do this quite young and enjoy reciting to daddy at night.
- Count out sound patterns by clapping, like this: **hick-or-y dick-or-y dock!** The **mouse** ran **up** the **clock!**
- If the poem is also a story (as many of them are), the questions and activities above will also apply.

1: From the Beginning to Babel

Threads & Objectives

THREAD	OBJECTIVE
LEARN TO READ	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Phonics program.
LEARN TO LISTEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Spelling program.
LEARN TO DO	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Math program.
HISTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss why it's important to study history. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about Mesopotamia.
LITERATURE <i>See p. 20 for the full list of Literature questions and activities that we reference here.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read aloud to learn or review stories from the first eleven chapters of Genesis. <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss whether the characters in the stories (Adam and Eve, Noah, builders of the Tower of Babel) obeyed or disobeyed God. <input type="checkbox"/> In this and all stories from the Bible and from history, explain to your student that these characters were real people and that the events in their stories really happened, as opposed to characters and stories that are made up.
MEMORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn the names of key people, places, and things in the stories.
GEOGRAPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about the general structure of the Earth that God created. <input type="checkbox"/> Start learning the seven continents and four oceans of the world.
ARTS & ACTIVITIES	<input type="checkbox"/> Use various activities and crafts to help you observe details and gain new insights into the stories of Creation and the Flood.

1: From the Beginning to Babel

Assignments

THREAD	ASSIGNMENT
LEARN TO READ	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Phonics program.
LEARN TO LISTEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Spelling program.
LEARN TO DO	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Math program.
HISTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Read about early towns in the Fertile Crescent in callouts in <i>The Kingfisher Atlas of World History (Atlas)</i> p. 12-13.
LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> Read “God makes the world” in the <i>Illustrated Family Bible Stories (IFBS)</i> , p. 14-15 (taken from Genesis 1-2). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Sin spoils the garden” in IFBS, p. 16 (Genesis 2-3). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Noah builds the great ark” in IFBS, p. 18 (Genesis 6-8). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “A rainbow of promises” in IFBS, p. 19 (Genesis 8-9). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Babbling Tongues” in IFBS, p. 20 (Genesis 11).
MEMORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn these memory words: the Heavens and the Earth • ark • rainbow • ziggurat • <input type="checkbox"/> Learn the people in the story: Adam and Eve • Noah • Shem, Ham, and Japheth •
GEOGRAPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach the continents and oceans of the world from <i>Atlas</i> , p. 8-9. <input type="checkbox"/> Find and label the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers on a map in IFBS, p. 23.
ARTS & ACTIVITIES	<input type="checkbox"/> Make a Creation Book. (See <i>Primer</i> links on the Tapestry website .) <input type="checkbox"/> Do more practice writing memory words. <input type="checkbox"/> Optional/Weekend with Dad: Measure Noah’s Ark. Genesis 6:15 gives the dimensions: “The length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height, 30 cubits.” The ark was to be 450’ long (which works out to 1.5 football fields), 75’ wide, and 45’ high with three decks. The ideal spot to work all this out with your kids is on a high school football field. Give each child a string 18 inches long (your standard cubit) and start measuring off 300 cubits. When you’ve marked off the entire ark, remind the kids that it had three decks. If you can’t find a field, you can measure out 300 cubits down your sidewalk.

NOTE: There is text pertaining to an old Earth worldview on p. 8 of Atlas.

2: A Chosen People

Threads & Objectives

THREAD	OBJECTIVE
LEARN TO READ	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Phonics program.
LEARN TO LISTEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Spelling program.
LEARN TO DO	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Math program.
HISTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about Ur of the Chaldeans. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about the patriarchs.
LITERATURE <i>See p. 20 for the full list of Literature questions and activities that we reference here.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how the stories of the patriarchs are partly about the way God worked through Abraham’s offspring to create for Himself a nation that He would use in His redemptive plan. <input type="checkbox"/> God is the most important character in the true story of the Bible (and of history!). Help your student to begin to see some of God’s character traits. For instance, God made (and kept) promises to Abraham and established a covenant. Discuss how God renewed His promise with the other patriarchs (Isaac and Jacob). Also discuss how God uses the events in our lives to shape us and to forward His eternal plans: sovereignty, purposefulness, and a desire to redeem are also His character traits. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice how God told the patriarchs to take each step of their journey. Discuss how God’s provision for His people is part of what this story is about. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask your student to describe each of the patriarchs as a character in a story. Discuss how God changed some of their names (Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel) to show His calling. Does your student’s name have a meaning? <input type="checkbox"/> Help your student to notice both the patriarchs’ faults and also the ways in which they chose to trust God. Talk about how the characters in this story made choices to trust and obey, or not. Perhaps discuss your student’s own choices.
MEMORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn the names of key people, places, and things in the stories.
GEOGRAPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> Look at a Bible atlas to see places mentioned in this week’s readings in Genesis. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent.
ARTS & ACTIVITIES	<input type="checkbox"/> Activities suggested for this week will help biblical studies to come alive! Try to make room for at least one project this week.

2: A Chosen People

Assignments

THREAD	ASSIGNMENT
LEARN TO READ	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Phonics program.
LEARN TO LISTEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Spelling program.
LEARN TO DO	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Math program.
HISTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Read about Mesopotamia and Ur, where Abraham was from, in the callouts in <i>The Kingfisher Atlas of World History (Atlas)</i> , p. 14-15. <input type="checkbox"/> Read “God’s chosen people” in IFBS, p. 22-23.
LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> Read “God calls Abraham” in IFBS, p. 21 (taken from Genesis 12-13). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Longing for a son” and “Ishmael is born to a servant” in IFBS, p. 24-25 (Genesis 15-16). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Isaac’s birth brings great joy” and “Sacrifice your son” in IFBS, p. 28-29 (Genesis 18-22). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “A beautiful bride for Isaac” in IFBS, p. 30 (Genesis 24). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Jacob takes Esau’s blessing” in IFBS, p. 31 (Genesis 25-27). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Jacob works long and hard” in IFBS, p. 32 (Genesis 28-29). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Welcome home, brother” in IFBS, p. 33 (Genesis 32-33).
MEMORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn these memory words: tent • well • flock • sacrifice • <input type="checkbox"/> Learn the people in the story: Abraham and Sarah • Isaac and Rebekah • Jacob and Esau •
GEOGRAPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about the overall geography of Mesopotamia in <i>Atlas</i> , p. 14-15. <input type="checkbox"/> Find the places from Abraham’s journeys on a map in a Bible atlas or in IFBS, p. 23. <input type="checkbox"/> Find the places from Jacob’s journeys on a map in the back of an adult Bible.
ARTS & ACTIVITIES	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose a craft from <i>Old Testament Days</i> , p. 15-18, 23-28, or 35-38. Try to pick at least one to complete. <input type="checkbox"/> Optional/Weekend with Dad: Set up a tent and spend an afternoon or night in it.

3: Egypt: Gift of the Nile

Threads & Objectives

THREAD	OBJECTIVE
LEARN TO READ	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Phonics program.
LEARN TO LISTEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Spelling program.
LEARN TO DO	<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish the goals of your Math program.
HISTORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about the ways the Nile was important to early Egyptian life, and why Egypt has been called “the gift of the Nile.” <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce your student to “classes” of people, explaining that not all Egyptians lived at the same social and economic levels. <input type="checkbox"/> Connect this week’s history readings about daily life in ancient Egypt to what Joseph experienced in the house of Potiphar and later as the governor of Egypt. Help your student think of this as the world in which Moses grew up. <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss everyday aspects of Egyptian life as much as possible.
LITERATURE <i>See p. 20 for the full list of Literature questions and activities that we reference here.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk about how the story of Joseph shows a change in places, from Canaan to Egypt, and from a nobleman’s house to prison to the house of Pharaoh. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask your student to describe Joseph as a character and help him to notice details that change about Joseph, such as how he was free, then became a slave, and then became a powerful person. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk about how Joseph sees God’s hand in everything that happens to him and is able to point to God’s work for good even in the hard things. God’s goodness and ongoing plan is a big part of what this story is about. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk about the changing places and character circumstances in Moses’ life. He moves from the home of Hebrew slaves to the palace of Pharaoh, and from an identity as a slave child to an identity as an adopted child of Pharaoh’s sister. <input type="checkbox"/> Help your student to make the connection, as he is also reading about Moses this week, that ancient Egypt, which he is studying in History, was the culture in which Moses grew up. The activities that your student read about were the ones Moses would have enjoyed, or been used to, until he became a man.
MEMORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn the names of key people, places, and things in the stories.
GEOGRAPHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review the continents and oceans of the world. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn the peculiar aspects of the Nile River: its direction of flow (north, which is “up” on most maps) and its yearly flood pattern. <input type="checkbox"/> Look at maps of ancient Egypt.
ARTS & ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Choose a hands-on project that will help you “experience” life along the Nile. <input type="checkbox"/> Make a salt map of an imaginary country.

3: Egypt: Gift of the Nile

Assignments

THREAD	ASSIGNMENT
LEARN TO READ	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Phonics program.
LEARN TO LISTEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Spelling program.
LEARN TO DO	<input type="checkbox"/> Assigned by your Math program.
HISTORY <i>NOTE: There is text about Egyptian gods on p. 10 and a picture of a shrine on p. 25 of The Ancient Egyptians. Please preview if this is a concern.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read about ancient Egyptian history in the introduction to <i>The Ancient Egyptians</i> (AE), p. 4-5. <input type="checkbox"/> Read about the Nile and farming life in ancient Egypt in AE, p. 6-9. <input type="checkbox"/> Read about the Pharaoh, government, scribes, and writing in ancient Egypt in AE, p. 10-13. <input type="checkbox"/> Read about trade in AE, p. 14-15. <input type="checkbox"/> Read about everyday life, houses, and life for children in AE, p. 22-27.
LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> Read “Joseph’s dreams” and “Joseph sold as a slave” in <i>Illustrated Family Bible Stories</i> (IFBS), p. 34-35 (taken from Genesis 37). <input type="checkbox"/> If comfortable reading about Potiphar’s wife, read “Thrown into prison” in IFBS, p. 36 (Genesis 39). Skip this story or retell it in your own words if you aren’t comfortable with the text. <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Tell me what my dreams mean” in IFBS, p. 37 (Genesis 40-41). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “Joseph put in charge” and “Joseph feeds his family” in IFBS, p. 38-39 (Genesis 41-45). <input type="checkbox"/> Read “A baby in the reeds” in IFBS, p. 40 (Exodus 1-2).
MEMORY	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn these memory words: Nile River • pharaoh’s palace • harvest • crocodile • <input type="checkbox"/> Learn the people in the story: Jacob’s sons • Joseph • Pharaoh • Moses • Miriam •
GEOGRAPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the continents and oceans of the world in <i>Atlas</i> , p. 8-9. <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on the Sahara and the Nile in <i>The Kingfisher Atlas of World History</i> (<i>Atlas</i>), p. 16-17. Learn the peculiar aspects of the Nile River: its direction of flow (north, which is “up” on most maps) and yearly flood patterns. <input type="checkbox"/> Look at the map of ancient Egypt in <i>Atlas</i> , p. 16-17.
ARTS & ACTIVITIES	<input type="checkbox"/> From <i>Old Testament Days</i> : Make a paddle doll (p. 52-53). <input type="checkbox"/> Optional/Weekend with Dad: Make a salt dough map of an imaginary country.