



Raising up sunbeams for Him!™

Dear Parent,

Hello! I would first like to thank you for your interest in Sonbeams, a division of Heaven In Our Homes. I'm so excited about your desire to train your children up in the way of the Lord!

This preschool curriculum teaches your child academics, but its foundation is based on our Foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Son" for Jesus the Son, and sunbeams based on the children's song "I'll Be A Sunbeam For Him".

As you begin 'school' with your child, make this a time of fun - a time of learning together with your child. No stress, no worries, no schedule. You'll quickly see that your child is not only picking up on their colors, letters, and numbers - but is also learning AND learning to love their Creator and Savior!

Don't be misled that learning is just bookwork, but learn as you live life. So many opportunities are available each day in our lives - from cooking, laundry, cleaning, shopping. These offer math, color/ sorting skills, basic learning skills, reading, and so on....

You'll find that Sonbeams doesn't take the approach that many curriculums do - having 'professional' objectives and 'proper' wording. It's not that I am not familiar with this, but because as a former preschool instructor with the State before - I see that it's really not necessary. Believe it or not, your child will still learn!

You as a parent are perfectly capable to teach your child, without years of college training. You don't have to understand the language of the experts. God made YOU the parent, YOU know your child better than anyone else. God will allow YOU to see which areas your child excels in and which need a little more encouragement.

You won't find another curriculum quite like this one, but in my opinion that's a good thing! Your child WILL learn, just like the other children, but you won't have the 'burden' of learning.

This will be a time of fun fellowship together, children learning and parents encouraging their children and developing a unique bond with them.

Should questions or comments arise, please feel free to share them with us via e-mail at: Sonbeams@heaveninourhomes.com. Let's get started!

Blessings,
Candace

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How Sonbeams Works

Sonbeams is designed to be used 5 days a week, approximately 1 to 2 hours each day. This time does NOT have to be all together, in fact, I'd suggest spreading it out a little with play time in between.

Young preschoolers need time to play and be creative, and don't really need to be held to a strict school schedule.

That said, follow your child's cues. My oldest, for instance, never wanted to stop school! Pray that the Lord would grant you insight to know what your child's needs are.

With Sonbeams, the main focus isn't learning the knowledge of the world, but learning of God and His ways. Everything you teach should in some way be linked back to a discussion about the Lord and how He relates to that particular thing.

Each week, you will have 6 categories of learning. Be creative, you don't have to just do what is written here. If another idea comes to your mind, use it! This will make it more 'Yours', too!

I would encourage you do to your school together as a family. It's such a blessing to have the older children working with their younger siblings - to watch as well!

This keeps them from the public school method of forming cliques within their age groups. By working together, the older learn to care for their younger siblings, and the younger learn to respect their older sibling(s). Teamwork and a close bond has been the result at my home!

A side note: as I began teaching my 3 year old, his 18-month-old sister would work along side us. She didn't do the 'work', but quickly picked up on many things.

Weekly Categories

Numbers, Letters, Colors, Scriptures, Crafts, Music

On Mondays, we will introduce the letter, number, color, Bible verse, and song for that week.

Your child will learn each of these, but this just as importantly, they will learn to relate them to the Bible.

Each day, you'll have a new activity to do with most of the 6 categories mentioned above. On the next day, we'll first review the prior day(s), and then move forward to a new activity.

Most weeks will have a number song as well as a letter song. If you're not familiar with children's church songs, I would highly recommended going to the Christian bookstore or look on Ebay for a book of children's songs.

One that I use a great deal is "Sing and Be Happy".

Coming Soon: Each week will have a Scripture verse song. Sonbeams Bible Verse CD currently not available.

Preparing For School

Some of the activities mentioned might call for items you don't have. Be creative! Many of my items I found at thrift stores (an easel/ chalkboard), yard sales (lots of 'school' books for young ones), or my children received for gifts (Magna Doodles, Aqua Doodles).

Instead of traditional presents, my oldest was THRILLED to receive 'school' stuff for his birthday when he turned 3. We gave him a backpack loaded with crayons, paper, markers, glue, scissors, etc...

For some items, I went to the local Dollar Tree. Poster board makes a great calendar, and they usually have teacher's products that you can use to make the 'days' that you'll attach on your calendar. (I'll provide pictures of how I made things.)

That's also where I picked up many workbooks. Books aren't generally recommended for learning this early on, but my children LOVE to do them - so we do. They definitely are NOT necessary.

Soon you'll pick up on a few ways to be creative yourself - using what you already have around your home to learn with! (Let us know about them!)

What I bought to get started:

- Colored baskets from the Dollar Tree to separate each child's books
- Construction paper
- Paint (found in clearance at Wal-Mart - check the ends of the aisles in the craft department)
- Paintbrushes
- Large chalk (doesn't break as easily)
- Easel/ chalkboard at the thrift store
- Desk and chairs (yard sale)
- Large crayons
- Plastic sleeves for pages (makes reusable worksheets)
- Trifold display board
- Glitter (Dollar Tree)
- Heavy posterboard 8.5 x 14 packs from Dollar General

What I use from home:

- Cotton balls
- Pie pans (for paint)
- Old t-shirts (smocks for painting)
- Paper plates
- Old cereal
- Old flour
- Popsicle sticks
- Scrap paper

Daily Routine

Bible/ Prayer Time

Each morning, begin school together in the floor reading a Scripture passage. In our home, this was a chapter in Psalms. Although little ones might not understand, their souls will begin to soak in the Lord's Word.

If you waited until they understood, they'd be teenagers or older before they heard the Word of God! Begin young and they'll grasp quickly as the Spirit speaks to their hearts.

When I began doing this, my 'just turned 3 year old' would stop me every other verse practically asking what it meant. If your child does the same, take the time to stop and share with them.

Feel unprepared for this?? Pre-read the section the night before, and ask the Lord to show you what He's saying in that passage. The Lord will give you the answers for your children!

As you finish reading, invite your family to circle together and begin your school day with prayer.

Board Time

My Board



I traced scrapbook die cuts (the card left AFTER you punch out the die cut) to make the weather cards and letters for the words.

Begin by removing the prior 'day', and placing all the days together.

Each day, ask your child how many days are in a week. As much as you'd like to help them, give them plenty of time to think and answer themselves. If they are right, praise them!! If they are wrong, simply encourage them to "count them with me and let's see how many there are!"

Point to each day as you say the name. Sing the days of the week to the tune of "Merrily We Roll Along", again, pointing to the correct day as you sing them.

Days of the Week Song -

*There are 7 days in a week, in a week, in a week,
There are 7 days in a week, and I can say them all.*

*Sunday, Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday,
Saturday is the last day - and I can say them all!*

Ask your child what day yesterday was, and point to it on the chart.

Ask them what day they think today might be. If they seem unsure, silently point to the 'next' day after yesterday (today), and see if they recognize it by "reading".

If they still are unsure, slowly begin to sound it out - allowing them to finish if they suddenly remember, or you complete it and ask them to say it with you.

BE SURE to never criticize your child for wrong answers!! Instead, gently correct them and explain what is right, and how you can tell what is right.

If you work WITH them, they will love school and succeed. But if they feel they can never get an answer right and will always be scolded or looked down upon, they will lose interest and give up altogether.

Review "yesterday was", "today is", and "tomorrow will be".

Next, move onto the weather for the day. Look out the window and ask your child to "be the weatherman" and tell you what the weather looks like for the day. Keep it simple - sunny, cloudy, windy, storms, and snow.

Colors - Dollar Tree had a cute border last year that had the basic colors. I cut them out separately and stuck them onto colored cardstock of the same color.

Review the color of the week - saying the name, asking your child to point to the color on the board, and then spell it together.

For our color song, we sing the "Colors of the Rainbow" song off of Signing Time (sign language for children). For copyright reasons, I'm not able to share this, but you can either watch Signing Time on public TV (Sat. AM), or order the dvd's on their website - www.signingtime.org.

Letter of the week - say the letter name of the week, point to and trace it with your finger on the board as you sound it out.

Review 'letter' verse of the week on Scripture verse chart. (See below our example below)

Sing 'letter' verse song of the week.

And finally, review number of the week. Pointing to it, and then playing a quick version of "find 2 red things in the room". This allows your child to visually see the number in reality, as well as recognize the color of the week again.

After board time, move over to the calendar...

Calendar Time



Begin by reviewing the current month. To begin with (for 4 or under), I wouldn't worry about the whole year at this point, just focus on each month as they come.

Next, ask them again what day it is - referring back to the board if necessary. Then together find and point it out on the calendar.

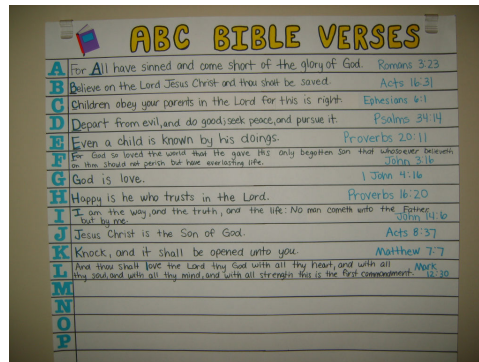
Count all of the days past in the month, pointing and saying each number as you count aloud together. This is important especially if you have younger ones, as they will listen to you and eventually pick up on the numbers themselves.

When you get to the current day (this is still blank on the calendar), ask them what number comes next - which number is 'today'. Prompt them only after they've had time to try themselves.

Allow them to stick up the current day after they know which number it is.

You've now completed your daily routine! This is important to stick to closely each morning - keeping letters, numbers, months, days, etc... fresh on their minds each day!

Scripture Verse Time My Chart



Here I measured out enough spaces for all 26 letters and verses, along with coloring in a little at the top for my children to be attracted to.

For each letter, I used scrapbook stickers - and use marker to write the verse each week with my children.

Each morning, go to the chart and point/ say each letter and verse together that you've learned.

Use either Sonbeams Music CD to sing along with the verses available at www.sonbeams.com, or create your own music!

Thank you for choosing Sonbeams as your preschool guide! I pray that you and your child(ren) will be blessed and drawn closer to the Lord.

As you use the program, please be aware of copyrights. Copies can be printed and used for your own personal use only.

Candace