

What does 'God first' really mean in the educational context?

A Bible lesson at the start of the day?

A Bible lesson at the start of the week?

Margaret McIntyre's curriculum was the first of its kind, setting out units of study, with 'God is'... as the starting point. This approach has been taken up by some of us and is now available in the form of a document called 'Building Blocks'.

Working with the 'God is' approach and produces miraculous results...miraculous in the sense that both teacher and students really experience the living reality of God and His word through the units studied.

For example, if the theme is 'God is Provider', then He teaches us lessons of faith. If it's 'God is Love', then He teaches what it means to really love others.

From a spiritual point of view, this is awesome. From an educational point of view, it makes sense. Instead of taking a Bible story and bringing out all the hidden spiritual meaning, we are actually presenting a single concept at a time -('God is Protector' for example). If nothing else remains, 'God is Protector' will, because it has penetrated the heart - not just an academic exercise.

The thematic approach allows time for consolidation and reinforcement of the chosen aspect of God's character or nature, as we encounter it several times a day, not just in Bible lessons, but in other subjects too. This allows time for the spiritual principles to grow in the students' hearts, helping them to draw closer to God and demonstrate His character in their lives.

We are putting into practice Deuteronomy 11, which tells us to bind the words of God around our wrists and write them on our foreheads. God wants us to be reminded constantly of His words, His message to us, who He is...His nature, His character. I have always been an enthusiast for making a colourful sign, to show the current theme of study -('God is...'). This not only features on the walls of classrooms, but also becomes embedded in the students' hearts and lives.

Margaret McIntyre's work is based on 27 attributes of God:

GOD IS: Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent. *(Only God can express these attributes)*

GOD IS: Creator, Shepherd, Protector, Preserver, Provider, Father, Healer, Light, Servant *God has these attributes in full measure. God can also express these qualities through the lives of people who allow God to work fully in their lives)*

GOD IS: Love, Joy, Peace, Good/righteous/Holy, Self Control, Grace, Justice, Patience, Mercy, Forgiveness, Resourcefulness, Kindness, Humility, Truth. *(These are fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's children).*

Each attribute is thoroughly researched from a Biblical perspective and applied to topics, linking knowledge of the creation, with God - His word, His character, His nature.