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The Benefits of Using the Bible as a Historical Reference to Teach History and Literature

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CSUMB LS 400 Capstone

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Abstract

The purpose of this capstone is to examine the benefits of teaching by using the Bible as a reference in both the primary grades in and the public schools. Given the factual evidence about correlations with academic success and Biblical pedagogy, this senior capstone research project brings awareness to educators about the benefits of that the Bible can be a valuable historical reference to teach history and literature to students in the classroom. Through the use of literature review and a case study, the findings revealed that using the Bible to teach history and literature, purely is a great source not only for religious purposes, but also increases academic success considered constitutionally acceptable.

Benefits of Using the Bible as a Historical Reference to Teach History and Literature

Introduction and Background

Our children deserve to be taught in such a way that they can understand and comprehend the best but also have the most accurate reliable sources behind their learning. “The Establishment Clause in the U.S. Constitution... prohibits the government from making any law respecting an establishment of religion, or unduly favoring one religion over another... What is required is *religious neutrality*. Public school teachers must balance between the prohibition against *establishment of religion* and the mandate to respect the *free exercise of religion* (Saylor, et al, 2022, pg. 2).” While this clause remains active, the Bible remains to be the most historically accurate source in ancient history that we have and one of the most renowned literary sources in the world.

It is vital that I examine this source in becoming a multicultural educator who understands religious neutrality while also understanding the facts of this reliable source. Literacy levels were at an all time high when the Bible was used for teaching in the 1640s. Children, as a byproduct, also learn formative identity traits like the “development of [their] own personality, in other words, a mental growth of self-acceptance or self-knowledge is mentioned as aim, as well as investing in social and civic relations... (Sonneberg, et al, 2023, pg. 4).” I hope to develop an increasing awareness of utilizing the Bible as a source purely based on its accuracy in methodology and its effectiveness in pedagogy. American society would greatly benefit from having children whose comprehension is advancing to new levels like we used to. Increased literacy levels lead to a higher rate of students going to college and excelling in school. Comprehension and engagement would be increased dramatically. The Bible does not have to be used in a way that is divisive or exclusionary for children. I will be examining why this specific

source is reputable for schools to consider using, all the while, staying under the constitutional law of the freedom of religion.

My research will incorporate the wide variety of benefits of using the Bible to teach history and literature to upper elementary school students in San Jose. That being said, my primary research question that I propose to answer is: *How does using the Bible as a historical reference to teach history and literature benefit upper elementary students?* To further this inquiry, it will be accompanied with factually background information by answering these secondary questions:

1. *How has the Bible been used as a historical reference to teach history and language for upper elementary school students?* It's important to assess the history of Bible use to assess what a future role it could play in schools. In gaining this knowledge, I provide data which answers the question: *Are there schools located in the San Jose area that have used the Bible in teaching history and literature? If there are, what are they and how do teachers teach it?* After developing this critical context, I hope to address both positive and negative reasons in using the bible by asking:
2. *What does research say about using the Bible to teach History and Literature in America? Are there pros and cons to using the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature?* “Students in all types of private schools (where they use the Bible for teaching) at both grades 4 and 8 had higher average reading scores... than students at the same grade in public schools. Also, higher percentages of students at grades 4 and 8 performed at or above *Proficient* and at or above *Basic* in reading in all private schools combined..., [then] in public schools. The research shows improvement in scores overall. This data also furthers a question I hope to address:

3. *Should the Bible be used as a historical reference in teaching history and literature at the upper elementary school level, not only in private schools, but also in public schools?* I will be sharing teachers' personal experiences and responses from private school teachers on possibly integrating their curriculum in public schools as well. My fifth question deliberates on teacher's perspectives by examining:
4. *Are there benefits for students to learn history and literature using the Bible as a historical source according to teachers?* In order to properly spread awareness of using the Bible as a resource, there needs to be proven benefits and also enough curriculum and resources for teachers to develop their own modality to teach with it. Thus I hope to address my final question:
5. *Are there sufficient resources for teachers should they want to use the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature? If so, what are they?*

Literature Review

In this section, I will be discussing the background of the Bible regarding constitutionality in schools and the value of using it as a historical resource for history and literature. For some introductory knowledge before diving in, the Bible is the number one best selling in the world, but it is not being used in America strictly for educational purposes in secondary public schools. In 1963, the Supreme Court ruled to disallow the reading of scripture as a part of religious ceremony in schools (Hildebrand, et al, 1976, pg. 2). As a result, many public schools completely, and falsely, cut it out. In reality, Biblical literacy actually leads to academic success according to numerous studies of which I will examine further. The term “biblical literacy” means to be able to read and understand the Bible’s basic content. Biblical

literacy doesn't necessarily mean that one has to use it for spiritual practices and religious purposes. In fact, there are numerous benefits to using the Bible to teach Literature and History as it is more historically accurate than any other ancient book (The Institute for Creation Research, et al, n.d., pg. 1). We will discuss constitutionality, as that is important with using this book because many religions do not use the Bible.

Background. Americans throughout history have continued to fight over the place of religion in public schools. Should prayer be allowed in schools? Should the reading of religious texts, such as the Bible, be allowed in schools? Should the pledge of allegiance be removed from schools? Many practices that have some form of religious implication have been strayed away from. After the 1963 ruling and the Supreme court striking down school prayer, teachers have strayed from teaching the Bible purely for literary purposes. "Teaching about religion is both constitutionally permissible and educationally appropriate" (Mitchell, et al, 2019, pg. 3). It is important to note the distinction between teaching about religion and teaching for a person's own religious agenda. The Supreme Court, on several occasions, has also suggested the teaching of the Bible as literature and the role of religion in history in public schools (Mitchell, et al, 2019, pg. 3 and Hildebrand, et al, 1976, pg.4). They even outwardly affirmed their position by stating, "the Bible may constitutionally be used in an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics, comparative religion, or the like" (Simonds, R. L., et al, n.d., pg. 5). In 1647, when the Puritans first began sprouting schools, they founded the education of their children on the Bible and the literacy levels have not been as high since then (The Providence Forum, et al, 2022). In modern day America, biblical literacy is connected to academic success as well which I will explore further.

Value in Literature. In addition to the constitutionality of the Bible being taught, it's important to note that it has influenced and affected, not only American lives, but also western culture more than any other literary work in all of history. So much so that college English professors wish that most incoming students had read it. What is even more shocking is that 81% of English teachers stated that it is important to teach at least some Biblical Literature and only 10% have actually taught a Bible unit. It was reported that “teachers who do venture on this Bible literature path with their students experience satisfaction, joy, and intellectual fullness.” Psalm 23, a passage from the Bible, is very rich with literary devices such as figurative language, symbols, and parallelisms. The Bible is a source for great poetry as well (Hildebrand, et al, 1976, pg. 8). Not to mention that so much literature, in both America and Britain, and speech constantly makes allusions to the Bible so it's crucial that students can grasp those references (Wachlin, et al, 1998, pg. 3). Shakespeare alone alludes to the Bible roughly 1,350 times throughout his plays (Gray, et al, 2004, pg. 1). My consulted sources to date all point to one stark conclusion; the Bible must be used in schools because it is historically rich with literary devices, can assist emotional well-being, and proved to aid in higher literacy rates among elementary students.

Value in History. There are a few sources that all confer that the subject of history could greatly improve by using the Bible as a source. Historically, the Bible is the most accurate source of ancient times. It is archaeologically authentic and historically testable in every way (The Institute for Creation Research, et al, n.d., pg. 1). The Bible is a completely reliable source for factual information about ancient history. Simonds (et al, n.d.) claims, “As one possessing a Masters degree in history, I can tell you that no qualified historian would dispute the simple fact that the Bible...is the ONLY documented ancient history account available to mankind on much

of that long 4,000 year period B.C. (before Christ). The Bible is not only "appropriate," but necessary for students to have a complete historical picture of mankind (pg. 4).” Clearly, the Bible’s high accuracy above every other historical text, shows how important it is that educators include it when teaching history. It is a very cross-cultural text and offers many aspects of history that a multi-cultural scholar and educator would want to teach (Wachlin, et al, 1998, pg. 1). The Bible talks in the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts, about two very different cultures (Jews and Gentiles) who learn to be united even though they have different cultural backgrounds. In fact, Christianity was the first religion to “disregard racial, cultural and national limitations (Guzick, et al, 2023, pg. 1).”

Value in Academic Achievement. The statistics surrounding the use of the Bible in teaching both literature and history are highly conclusive of the benefits of it. To start, 1 in every 4 students in American school systems are raised with a Biblical education. Consequently, they are more well behaved and achieve higher grades (Horwitz, et al, 2022, pg. 5). That means that 25% of the American population who get taught literacy and social studies using the Bible as a source, get better grades than those who lack that curriculum. As a side benefit, they are also more likely to have less behavioral problems. In alignment with this, students have been reported to gain many social-emotional skills (Sonnenberg, et al, 2023, pg. 7). Literacy levels are higher for students in primary schools that use the Bible for history and literature, as seen in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1

Figure 5. Average scale scores and achievement-level results in reading, by type of school, grades 4 and 8: 2003

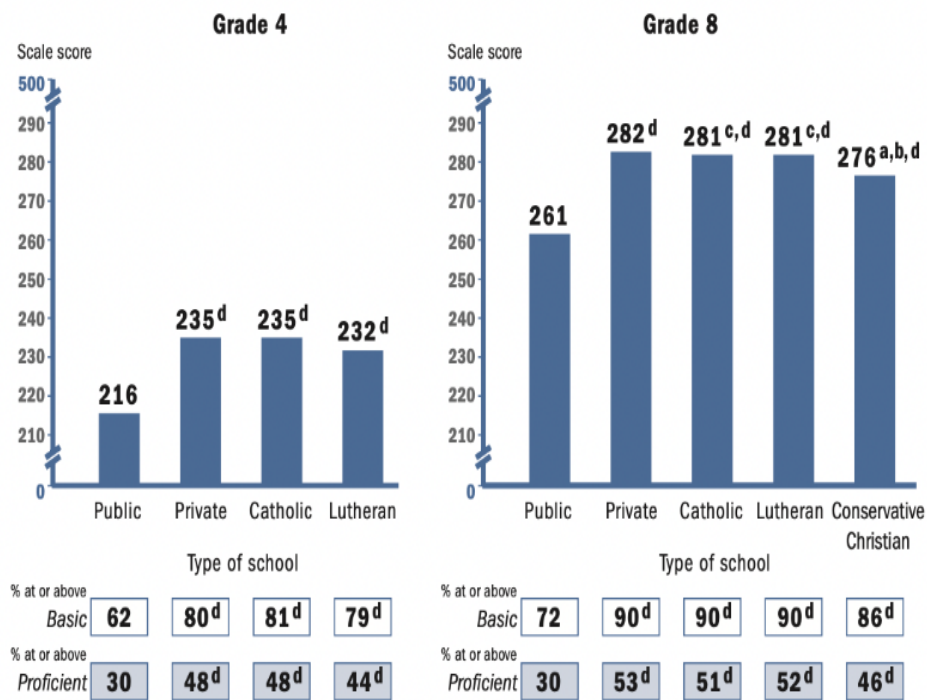
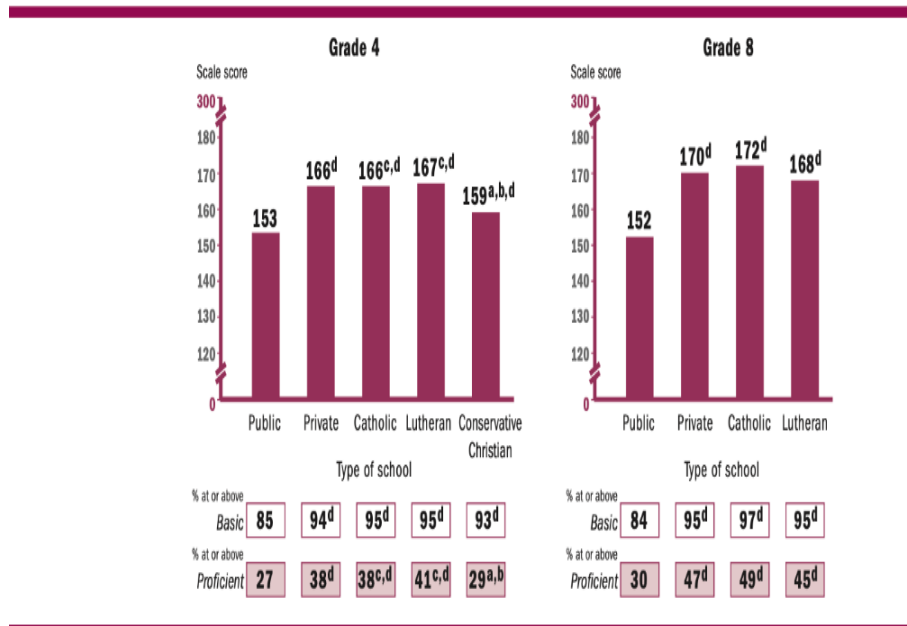


Figure 2

Average scale scores and achievement-level results in writing, by type of school, grades 4 and 8: 2002



Overall, there is a rich history of using the Bible to teach as well as the constitutionality of it and the many debates surrounding it among Americans. The benefits of using the Bible as a source to teach history and literature to primary school students has been examined throughout this paper.

Methods and Procedures

In order to develop critical background knowledge, my research was found throughout Google Scholar and the CSUMB Database, ERIC. These references were crucial in providing my research findings and my study of using the Bible is teaching to better understand it from an academic standpoint. ERIC greatly expanded my thinking on the history of using the Bible in teaching throughout the world and America specifically. Google Scholar allowed me to access

peer-reviewed articles from the last decade on practicums and data for academic success aligned with using the Bible in both literature and history.

These networks in my research journey helped me realize how much of a necessity it was to interview teachers and principals who teach in San Jose to find answers in my location. Subsequently, I communicated with two Christian schools in San Jose who use this method currently.

The first was “Christian School A,” the real name shall remain anonymous for identity security purposes, to help me improve my understanding of the current methods and educator’s feedback. The principal at Christian School A shared the school’s mission to incorporate a Biblical worldview in their academics because of its accuracy and ability to help children relate to stories. I gave the principal the survey to complete to share more information from their experience (See Appendix B ~ Elementary Principal Survey). I also shared the survey with 10 elementary teachers from the school to get their feedback at their own convenience (See Appendix A~ Elementary Teacher Survey).

The second school will be called “Christian School B.” I reached out to Christian School B’s administrative representative and asked if they might be able to send out my survey to all of their Elementary Teachers in order to gain a better understanding of how they teach their students and their perspective on its effectiveness, as well. This was the same survey at Christian School A (See Appendix A~ Elementary Teacher Survey), however, it was sent out to over 10 teachers via email. A few teachers never responded to the survey but a majority did. I also directly contacted their Head of School and asked them to take the survey that I had asked the previous Principal at Christian School A to take (See Appendix B~ Elementary Principal Survey).

Unfortunately, I never received a response back from the Head of School like I did from the Elementary Teachers.

Results, Findings and Discussion

My secondary research questions will allow me to outline and consolidate the data that I have collected by asking educators from Christian School A and Christian School B. I will bring to light these discoveries as well as reflecting on my literature review to clarify them.

1. How has the Bible as a historical reference to teach history and literature benefit elementary students?

The findings of this senior capstone research suggest that using the Bible as a historical reference to teach history and literature greatly benefits elementary students. As reported in the survey data I collected, many teachers see the Bible as having immense benefits in both subjects. Teachers agreed with the research which states the Bible is the oldest, most reliable source to use. The Bible has more recorded manuscripts than the writings of both Plato and Socrates, yet we use their writings all throughout education. It's a great mentor text for teaching structural text features and interpreting figurative language. They state that it gives students a cross-cultural perspective because it's from an ancient time and located in a different continent. As a multicultural scholar, it helps children broaden their understanding and outlook on humanity.

As far as literature goes, they stated that the Bible contains much poetry, genealogies, and philosophical teachings. Overall, all teachers agreed that using the Bible as a reference in their own teaching benefits students in a myriad of ways. A principal interviewed said that the Bible and history validate each other and that much about writing can be learned from studying the Bible. They said that their school teaches this way and they see the good outcomes of it. This is

an important perspective to have because this principal sees and hears from every teacher, student, and parent in the school they oversee and not solely one.

2. 3. Are there schools located in the San Jose area that have used the Bible in teaching history and literature? If so, what are they? And how do teachers teach it? In other words, what are some examples of how you have taught the Bible to teach history or language for elementary school students?

The examples that teachers mentioned are as follows. One teacher teaches capitalization which is grammar but somewhat fits under the broader category of literature. Another teacher states that for oral language skills they have their students recite memory verses every week. Noticing healthy character traits of Bible characters and seeing how they can be applied in our lives today. This helps them learn that literature is relevant to today and we can apply it to our lives and not just for our own head knowledge. Comprehension skills using the Bible as a reference were also noted by a teacher. They focus on thematic parallels in Bible stories and they ask critical thinking questions and make observations about the text. Every teacher who responded gave practical examples like the ones above about how they teach using the Bible in their classroom. It's practical and many teachers are already familiar with it.

3. Do you see any cons to using the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature?

The cons were reported by teachers that were mainly internal problems with the school and its teachers and not with the Bible in teaching itself which was interesting. A teacher mentioned that teachers who do not respect children who are not religious or believe in the Bible, should not be teaching it. They said it's important to teach gently and matter-of-factly instead of with a strong bias against people who do not believe in the Bible for religious purposes. Some

teachers saw no cons. Realistically many of the cons were with teachers not teaching it in a respectful manner. The principal also made a point that the Bible needs context behind it in History and it shouldn't be twisted or taken out of its historical context. The cons reported are valid and important to address when pondering whether public schools should also use the Bible as a reference when teaching. Simply because not every teacher may be able to present the Bible in such a way that it's purely a resource and not a tool to weed out students who are not religious and convert them.

4. Are there benefits for students to learn history and literature using the Bible as a historical source? If so, what are they? How do teachers teach it?

Every teacher and the principal recorded that they do see the benefits for students in their schools. One teacher said that there are so many more benefits that they see in the children outside of just using it for literature and history. They said their students learn life lessons and important character building skills. Reading the Bible is more beneficial than other sources because it teaches students more than just head knowledge, it teaches heart knowledge that they will carry into their daily lives. They think comparing and contrasting skills between the different books in the Bible are great for expanding students' ways of learning and thinking. Morality is intertwined with the history they are learning which is a huge bonus for students who are in important years of forming who they are as people and what their core values are. They realize because of this that they have meaning and purpose in the world.

Children learn important things about their identity and it's very important for them as children who are not fully developed yet (Sonnenberg, et al, 2023, pg. 7). This idea of students' betterment of character would be for the overall betterment of humankind. Everything begins with the next generation and how we train them up. Future educators should be very attuned to

children's need for purpose and finding their personal identity. The Bible has secondary benefits as well as primary benefits academically.

5. Should the Bible be used as a historical reference in teaching history and literature at the upper elementary school level, not only in private schools, but also in public schools?

Unanimously, everyone surveyed said that they support the Bible being used to teach in both public and private schools as long as it is done in the correct way. This means, schools should teach the Bible purely for academic purposes. Schools should teach about religions other than Christianity as well to give children a broader understanding also. There are regulations that would need to be followed in order to teach it fairly and religiously inclusive. Principal A said, “Yes... whether or not a person believes in the God of the Bible, the historical accuracy and cultural teachings cannot be denied” (Principal A., personal communication, November 15, 2023). This is backed by much research of the accuracy and multi-cultural benefits of teaching it as well.

6. Are there sufficient resources for teachers should they want to use the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature? If so, what are they?

Many curriculums can be used for this purpose. With technology, the amount of resources that teachers could use are close to unlimited. A few teachers mentioned Deep Roots, Love and Logic, Little House Learning Co., and Treehouse Schoolhouse. Teachers said there were too many to even cite as sources when asked this question. Books are written by both Christian and non Christian authors to make them more wide-spread. The accuracy is undeniable by both groups. There are sufficient resources for teachers. Many private schools who use these resources are open to sharing.

Problems and Limitations

Some teachers have a hard time teaching their students the Bible for history and literature because of some of the explicit content. As displayed in my research, school systems in Israel who use the Bible as a source, found that teaching the Hebrew language is extremely difficult for children to learn as well as some of the content (Walfish & Brody, 2018). This is important to note, however, American school systems would not be teaching the Hebrew language. Schools in San Jose seemed to have this same problem. A principal reported that some younger students don't understand the context and culture of the material used from the Bible.

Additionally, the survey I sent out to teachers was not responded to in the volume I anticipated. I originally planned to get survey responses from 10 or more teachers and 2 or more principals. The problem was not with the survey that was sent out but with the teachers not having enough time in the school-day to complete the survey in a timely manner. Only one principal responded to the survey which only gave me a small insight into their perspective on the subject and their resources to sustain it. Six teachers and one principal responded to this survey.

Recommendations

First, I would recommend that public school teachers review the research I have provided and begin to ponder if this might be beneficial for their classroom considering the academic levels of the students. When teachers come together and collaborate on their content in different grade levels, it creates a richer learning environment for the students. Secondly, I advocate that teachers collaborate with each other on how they might implement a Bible unit, at least. Thirdly, I encourage teachers and principals to become more informed about the benefits of using the

Bible as a reputable resource in their classrooms for history and literature and review the resources that private Christian schools use.

Conclusion

So, How does using the Bible as a historical reference to teach history and literature benefit upper elementary students? The Bible can be a powerful tool for education with reliability and rich content. Being Supreme Court approved, there is no reason why teachers should not be allowed to teach using content from the Bible, in fact, college professors strongly recommend it in order for students to be successful in college. Literature and speech around the world makes allusions to the Bible constantly, as seen with Shakespeare's plays. Ancient history has no more reputable source than the Bible in the world.

Sources other than the Bible do, in fact, teach literary skills but the advantage of using the Bible is that it has been proven by research to be more comprehensible for students and has been said by teachers to be one of the most cross-cultural texts that you can find. College professors and the Supreme Court of the United States recommend teaching the Bible in schools because of its rich content. There are many other sources that do not provide these same advantages. Literacy levels have decreased since the Bible was taken out of America's school system. Students would benefit greatly from their public school teachers taking the time to teach even just a single unit on the Bible.

The religious aspects of the Bible don't necessarily need to be elaborated on for teachers to use it as a source for social studies, reading, and writing. It's constitutionally acceptable to use without favoring it above other religions. Regardless of this aspect of discussion among Americans, the Bible's ability to teach in such a way that it improves schools' teaching methods is worth noting. Teachers have all the evidence and resources that they need to begin incorporating a Bible unit into their lesson plans. As educators, it is our responsibility to make sure children are receiving the best possible engaging and challenging education for their own betterment, and the Bible is one of the tools that can assist us in doing so.

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Appendix A:

Elementary Teacher Survey

7. How do you think using the Bible as a historical reference to teach history and literature benefit elementary students?
8. What are some examples of how you have taught the Bible to teach history or language for elementary school students?
9. Do you see any cons to using the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature?
10. Do you see the benefits for students to learn history and literature using the Bible as a historical source?
11. Do you support the Bible being used as a historical reference in teaching history and literature at the upper elementary school level, not only in private schools, but also in public schools?
12. Are there sufficient resources for teachers should they want to use the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature? If so, what are they?

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqxO-Pqfm5B98q_oNWNLfg6QliJuldb-Q7Bz17q

[q-9LuXa8A/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqxO-Pqfm5B98q_oNWNLfg6QliJuldb-Q7Bz17q-q-9LuXa8A/viewform)

Appendix B:

Elementary Principal Survey

1. How do you think using the Bible as a historical reference to teach history and literature benefit elementary students?
2. Do you see any cons to using the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature?
3. Do you see the benefits for students to learn history and literature using the Bible as a historical source?
4. Do you support the Bible being used as a historical reference in teaching history and literature at the upper elementary school level, not only in private schools, but also in public schools?
5. Are there sufficient resources for teachers should they want to use the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature? If so, what are they?

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqxO-Pqfm5B98q_oNWNLfg6QliJuIdb-Q7Bz17q-q-9LuXa8A/viewform?usp=sf_link

Appendix C (Appendix A Answers):**Elementary Teacher Survey****1. How do you think using the Bible as a historical reference to teach history and literature benefit elementary students?**

Teacher 1- It helps make the Bible relevant in more areas of study

Teacher 2- I think it has immense benefit, as one of the oldest and most reliable historical documents in existence. It has a multitude of good principles and examples to learn from, especially Psalms and Proverbs.

Teacher 3- The biblical timeline and geographical places mentioned in the Bible give students a foundation of time and place which are in the CCSS.

Teacher 4- Because the Bible is a collection of historical documents, parables, poetry, and exposition, it not only provides another perspective into the world's history, but it's also a great mentor text to use when teaching other literary skills, like interpreting figurative language, understanding and distinguishing between historical context and how teachings could be applied today, and observing structural text features, like paragraph breaks when topics change, headings and subheadings that introduce the next topic, and chapter titles.

Teacher 5- It is an old text that has been compiled into one book. It is also a Middle Eastern/ North African text and culture. This alone teaches students to trust old and ancient literature. It sets them up to research old writers like Homer and Aristotle because they do not fear the age of a recorded text. This will significantly benefit them because they will not judge a book or an author by their birthday but by their recorded words. The Bible is also referenced by both Christian and secular scholars in regard to historical events and culture. It talks about real people and real events that took place thousands of years ago. This gives kids a glimpse into the culture

of another country in a different millennium. It allows them to broaden their understanding of humanity and culture in first-account means. One other important detail that comes to mind is that the Bible is a collection of poetry, prophecy, historical events, genealogies, and philosophical teachings. It contains a grand variety of literary devices to communicate to the reader. This variety is a great source for a Language Arts teacher to use when teaching concepts like poetry and how they connect to great philosophical questions, such as what is good? What is the purpose of humanity?

Teacher 6- Yes, because it gives students a broad view of how history is connected throughout the centuries from the beginning of time and it is based on absolute truth rather than current scientific theory. It also gives us a view into the future and gives hope rather than a feeling of resignation about the degradation of society. I love showing students that the "bad" they are experiencing in their culture is not a new condition, it has existed before and each generation can use the challenges to become conformed to God's image which is the only way to instill good into any society. As a reference for literature it gives students a standard to compare and analyze period social norms with God's perfect social standards. And again, it can be used to compare current norms with past norms and how those norms will lead to destruction or victory for mankind.

2. What are some examples of how you have taught the Bible to teach history or language for elementary school students?

Teacher 1- Capitalization of proper nouns and how you capitalize all the names of God - language example; being able to refer to Biblical events that take place at the same time as other historical events for history

Teacher 2- One example would be from Proverbs 2:6, which says "For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." This verse was used to talk about where knowledge and understanding come from, and how we can continue to grow as we try and learn new things.

Teacher 3- Galatians 6: 7-9 "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Teacher 4- This was used in entrepreneurship to convey that what you do matters; if you put in hard work, you will reap the benefits. We also looked at it from an agrarian/ historical point of view, where in the past, what you reaped was what you planted, and how that is still true today.

Teacher 5- My third grade students use a journal during our Bible lessons. This is the place they write their memory verses, give examples of character traits and how they are applied in their life. We also have weekly memory verse tests where students practice their oral language skills.

Teacher 6- In each unit, we have a focal chapter or section of a book in the Bible that we read together, and then make observations, interpretations, and inferences based on the text. This helps build reading comprehension skills, as well as the ability to write about different written genres. For example, during the first several units in 4th grade, we focus on the book of Acts, which is a historical document that teaches about the cultural, religious, and societal implications and lasting impacts of Jesus's life. It also teaches about how the apostles went on to spread the gospel with others, as well as explains why people were suspicious about Christianity-- because it did not have a long history with historical or philosophical text linked to it, Jewish leadership was worried that it was a false religion. The Bible actually gives students the opportunity to learn

from multiple perspectives and draw conclusions based on the text. Additionally, we make connections to other books in the Bible, like 1 Corinthians 13 and James 1, when we're taught about the way we should love others and how God loves and cares for us. When we make connections between books in the Bible, which are often different genres, we focus on thematic parallels and similarities, as well as using them to fill in any questions we have about either book.

In Kinder, we have not done that. However, I can think of examples of using Psalm 23 or 139 to teach the use of literary devices and context and purpose in a text. I could use 1 Samuel - 2 Kings to teach about the ancient Israeli government (and I could tie that into a current event lesson on the war). I could use Genesis 1 to talk about literal and figurative interpretation in text. I could also use it to teach a philosophical way of life that many people adhere to. I could teach the Gospels to explain the Roman empire and its governing style. That could then tie into WWII and the domineering philosophy behind the Nazi regime. There is so much to learn from because history repeats itself so often. This book helps kids understand that as they learn more about current history.

Sodom and Gomorrah are prime examples for us in the Bay area. The sexual and drug use degradation of those towns is the same as we see today. God will allow sin to lead a whole society into self destruction. On the other hand, God would have saved the whole town if there had been even ten righteous people. Righteous people can have impact even when they are in the vast minority.

3. Do you see any cons to using the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature?

Teacher 1- No

Teacher 2- I think the main cons would be if one used the Bible as the only historical reference, and didn't use other documents to include other points of view.

Teacher 3- The only con I could think of is if teachers do not teach from the Bible in a respectful way. For example, if they're bashing other religions or making students feel bad for not being Christian, then they themselves are not being Christ-like. In order to accurately get the word of God across to non-believers, it's important to do it in a way that would please Jesus-- gently and matter-of-factly sharing the teachings and historical records in the Bible, calmly answering any questions that students have about the Bible or Christianity (1 Peter 3:15), and then letting them come to God when they're ready.

Teacher 4- In a public school, the con would be that those who take the Bible seriously could be offended if the teacher or other students do not respect it. However, in an academic, emotional, and philosophical standpoint, the Bible is a great resource for a primary resource.

Teacher 5- The teacher must be prepared to present to students who have been explicitly taught that the Bible has no authority and be able to respond to their comments and questions in a way that validates their beliefs while not agreeing with them.

Teacher 6- No Response

4. Do you see the benefits for students to learn history and literature using the Bible as a historical source?

Teacher 1- Yes

Teacher 2- Yes, as it is a historically relevant and significant source, and when compared to Plato and Socrates, has more credibility in terms of number of manuscripts.

Teacher 3- Yes, the Bible is the Truth and has all authority.

Teacher 4- In addition to the benefits listed in my previous responses, the Bible also offers important character building information (including the fruits of the spirit, which are expanded on throughout different books of the Bible). Themes, stories, and historical records from the Bible can also be used in comparing and contrasting activities, noticing and understanding differences between the Bible and other books, sources, documents, etc.

Teacher 5- Yes! Like I said before, it will teach them to trust the other ancient texts we have. It will teach them morality intertwined with history. It will teach them a cultural and historical world radically different to their own. It teaches them about a world in which they have meaning and purpose and kids need that desperately.

Teacher 6- The Bible puts everything into perspective from the beginning of time until the inevitable end of the existence of physical earth.

5. Do you support the Bible being used as a historical reference in teaching history and literature at the upper elementary school level, not only in private schools, but also in public schools?

Teacher 1- I personally would agree, but with all laws and regulations in place, maybe only referring to it as a historical book and not the Word of God would be acceptable

Teacher 2- I would support it if it could be taught well/ in context.

Teacher 3- Yes

Teacher 4- Not only is it a source that provides historical context for many thousands of years, but it also spans over many cultures, and shares connections with other religions, like Judaism and Islam. Rather than separating religion from school, we should embrace teaching about different religions. If our aim as educators is to be more culturally responsive and sensitive, we shouldn't exclude religion from culture, since it's a big part of many people's lives. However, as

previously mentioned, it needs to be done in a respectful and gentle way, and teaching from accurate sources.

Teacher 5- Yes

Teacher 6- Only if it is used by believers.

6. Are there sufficient resources for teachers should they want to use the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature? If so, what are they?

Teacher 1- I teach in a Christian school so the Bible is woven throughout the curriculum in all subjects

Teacher 2- I think there are many resources, however I don't believe they are consolidated into one convenient location. I would say the ESV Study Bible would be a good resource for utilizing the Bible as a historical reference, or anything that helps develop further understanding of the context of the events that take place within the Bible.

Teacher 3- We use Deep Roots curriculum and it is wonderful. Our students get Bible instruction 5 days a week.

Teacher 4- There are so many curriculums to reference, like Deep Roots, Little House Learning Co, and Treehouse Schoolhouse. There are also many devotional books and websites that can help teachers get started!

Teacher 5- I'm sure there are, but I am unaware of many. I know I use blueletterbible.com and Lee Stroble's book, but there are hundreds of commentaries and historical cross-sections of the Bible out there.

Teacher 6- Any reliable Christian or Jewish websites. Bible Study.org. , Bible Project videos are phenomenal, Lifeway, Israel Institute of Biblical studies, etc. too many to site

Appendix D (Appendix B Answers):**Elementary Principal Survey****1. How do you think using the Bible as a historical reference to teach history and literature benefit elementary students?**

Principle 1- As a Christian school, having a Biblical worldview is important to us. Using the Bible as a historical reference for subjects can help students to see that the Bible is historically accurate. History and the Bible validate each other. Additionally, the Bible is full of great examples of literary styles. Much about writing can be learned from the many examples in the Bible.

2. Do you see any cons to using the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature?

Principle 1- Potential negative could be younger students not fully understanding the context and culture of the material used from the Bible. Another negative could be that if other references differ in what is taught, students may see the Bible as just another reference book with potential errors and not as the perfect infallible word of God

3. Do you see the benefits for students to learn history and literature using the Bible as a historical source?

Principle 1- Yes, the benefits are not just for helping to show that the Bible is historically accurate but to show that history and literature have been documented for thousands of years in this ancient book.

- 4. Do you support the Bible being used as a historical reference in teaching history and literature at the upper elementary school level, not only in private schools, but also in public schools?**

Principle 1- Yes - because whether or not a person believes in the God of the Bible, the historical accuracy and cultural teachings cannot be denied.

- 5. Are there sufficient resources for teachers should they want to use the Bible as a historical reference when teaching history and literature? If so, what are they?**

Principle 1- With modern technology, the resources are innumerable. It is easy to access study guides, reference books on the Bible, books written by both Christian and non Christian authors supporting the historical accuracy of the Bible, etc.