

# Manna and Mercy: A Curriculum for Elementary Children

*Based on Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe by Daniel Erlander*

**GRADE APPROPRIATENESS:** These lessons are for grades kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grades with the understanding that adaptations, some of which are provided in the Adaptation Sections in each lesson, often are crucial for appropriate teaching to younger children depending on their cognitive development, experiences in both church and school, and in particular their understanding of abstract versus concrete concepts.

These lessons are also excellent supplemental activities for youth groups as they read Erlander's Manna and Mercy. Though some activities are too immature for youth, many are not, and some could be adapted easily.

**NUMBER OF LESSONS:** There are 50 lessons, one for each Sunday other than Christmas and Easter. Those two events are covered but not on those dates. Some lessons need to be presented as a group chronologically because they build conceptually, but many do not so that some can be pulled and used with other curricula. Some lessons can be skipped and some lessons will allow for the order to be changed in order to accommodate church circumstances.

**MATERIALS:** Materials such as game components, floor maps, props for drama, or finger puppets are not provided and need to either be purchased elsewhere or created. Photographs of materials are available upon request at no charge.

## **OVERALL THEMES:**

- God is active in human history and in all creation.
- God loves us by providing (manna) and mending (mercy) unconditionally.
- God's kind of love can be seen throughout the Bible and all creation.

- Jesus teaches about God's kind of love through his life and stories.
- Because of Jesus' words, certain aspects of the Bible come more clearly into focus such as justice, peace, humility, and inclusion.

**Overall scripture basis: Ephesians 1: 9-10**

(NRSV) With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

(Erlander's paraphrase): God has made known to us the mystery of God's will, according to God's pleasure set forth in Christ, as promised for the fullness of time, to unite everything in Christ, everything in heaven, and everything on earth.

A simpler version incorporating manna and mercy concepts:

- The Bible tells the story of God and creation especially us humans.
- The Bible tells what God wants for creation.
- The Bible tells how God loves us and provides for us no matter what we do. This is manna and mercy.
- The Bible tells us how Jesus Christ came to teach us and show us God and what God wants for us.
- What does God want for us? For everything and everyone to be united in Christ.

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE:** Children will develop an overall view of the Bible, its stories, and many crucial concepts in a loving, creative atmosphere that encourages learning and celebrates God's creative love of diversity and God's constant love for us and the world.

**Reminder saying that begins each lesson:**

- God loves us (hand on heart)
- by providing manna (arms out)
- and mending us with mercy (hug self)
- no matter what we do (head back and forth).

### **Manna and Mercy Finger Puppets:**

Two prairie dog characters are in Erlander's Manna and Mercy making humorous commentary. This curriculum uses finger puppets as characters who show up in lessons now and then to ask questions about the humans in the stories and offer an opportunity for review. Their frequency of use in the lessons is dependent upon the ages of the children. The puppets, named Manna and Mercy, do not speak; instead they "whisper" in the ears of the leaders because they are shy and humans are their predators. These prairie dogs are reminders that God's family and God's future includes all of creation.

### **Special Note:**

One benefit of using Erlander's Manna and Mercy as the key resource is that it is accessible. Parents can purchase the book and read it with their children during the week.

### **For further information or to request the full curriculum:**

E-mail Hanna Schock at [hannaschock@bellsouth.net](mailto:hannaschock@bellsouth.net). These documents will be sent electronically **free of charge**. Shipping charges would be required for receipt of hard copies. Consultation with Hanna is available on a contractual basis at the following hourly rates depending on the financial circumstances of the church: \$24 (lower income) \$36 (middle income) \$48 (higher income). These rates allow the fee to be broken up easily into 5 minute increments such as in the case of a 5-minute phone call or 45 minutes to create and mail materials for a game.

## **Manna and Mercy: An Elementary Curriculum**

Week 1	Theme: Manna and Mercy
Week 2	Theme: The Beginning of our Story with God
Week 3	Theme: Humans Decide to become BIG DEALS!
Week 4	Theme: God Responds by Mending
Week 5	Theme: Through Journey God Births Partner People
Week 6	Theme: Covenant Partnership and Promises
Week 7	Theme: Big Deals in Egypt
Week 8	Theme: The Wilderness School Part 1
Week 9	Theme: The Wilderness School Part 2
Week 10	Theme: The Covenant Gift and the BIG TEN Part 1
Week 11	Theme: The Covenant Gift and the BIG TEN Part 2
Week 12	Theme: God's Gift of Sabbath
Week 13	Theme: God's Gift of Worship
Week 14	Theme: Graduation and Settling Down Part 1
Week 15	Theme: Graduation and Settling Down Part 2
Week 16	Theme: Judges and Liberators
Week 17	Theme: People of Memory and Hope
Week 18	Theme: Some People Want a King
Week 19	Theme: God Sends Prophets
Week 20	Theme: Babylon: A New Wilderness School
Week 21	Theme: Home Again
Week 22	Theme: God Wants Shalom for All
Week 23	Theme: The Great Persecution and Hanukkah
Week 24	Theme: New Kinds of Big Deals

Week 25	Manna and Mercy Carnival Part 1
Week 26	Manna and Mercy Carnival Part 2
Week 27	Theme: God's Surprise (Christmas)
Week 28	Theme: A Wild Preacher & Jesus at Wilderness School
Week 29	Theme: Parables & Gospel Accounts Part 1
Week 30	Theme: Parables & Gospel Accounts Part 2
Week 31	Theme: Parables & Gospel Accounts Part 3
Week 32	Theme: The Lord's Prayer
Week 33	Theme: Jesus in Jerusalem Part 1
Week 34	Theme: Jesus in Jerusalem Part 2
Week 35	Theme: Easter Resurrection
Week 36	Theme: Jesus Rises and Appears
Week 37	Theme: The Gospel: Seeing is Believing for Some
Week 38	Theme: A Pentecost Spirit for Mission
Week 39	Theme: Taking Jesus Here, There, & Everywhere
Week 40	Theme: So You Wanna Be a Christian?
Week 41	Theme: The Early Christians: A Peculiar People
Week 42	Theme: Jesus, Not the Emperor, is Lord
Week 43	Theme: Fruits of the Spirit
Week 44	Theme: Segregation in Communion & the Village of the World
Week 45	Theme: Love Binds Believers into the Body of Christ
Week 46	Theme: A Global Community of Faith
Week 47	Theme: John's Symbolic Dreams of Revelation
Week 48	Theme: God's Nourishment, God's Call
Week 49	Theme: God's Dream for Planet Earth

Week 50

Theme: Manna and Mercy Museum