

**How to Make
It Work
for YOU**

SONday'SCOOL™



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The Salvation Army, USA Eastern Territory

SONday'SCOOL

A World of Difference

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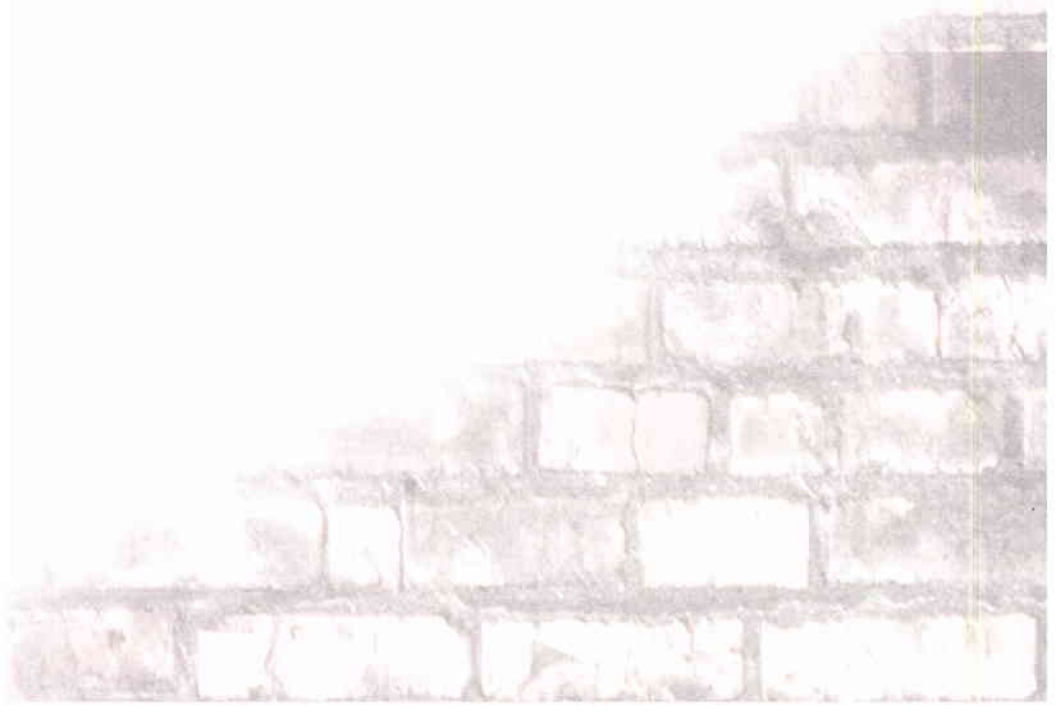
A World of Difference

SONday'SCOOL is Sunday School, but it's not. For one thing, it may not be on Sunday. And it should be as little like school as possible—at least, school in the traditional sense of “Sit down, be quiet, and listen.” SONday'SCOOL is active . . . it's alive . . . it's COOL! A How-To Manual is available for each of the following new SONday'SCOOL models. Contact: 1 (800) YOU-CARE (968-2273) or www.hopeshare.org



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Make Hope Happen!

The mission of **HopeShare** is to intervene in the lives of children at risk, to offer them a safe place where they can learn to feel good about themselves and be good to others, to break the cycle of despair and share the hope of a personal relationship with **Jesus Christ**.

All proceeds and contributions resulting from the sale of this book will go to The Salvation Army's **"HopeChest"** for abused, neglected, and disadvantaged children.

For more information:

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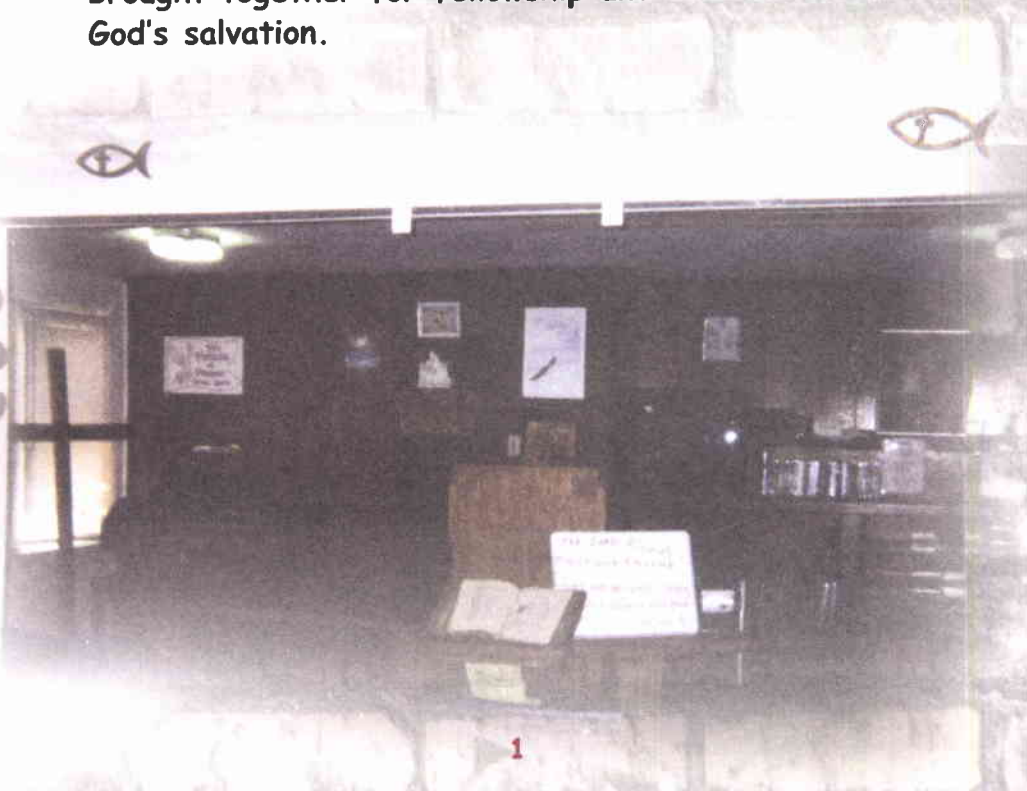
On the Web: **www.hopeshare.org**

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What's It All About?

Ridgway, Pennsylvania is in a rural setting. Homes are scattered across the county. There is no public transportation. There is no cinema, no bowling alley, no skating rink. Children and families are looking for something to do. What better place to conduct a Sunday School program at home?

HOME BASE starts with the children, and is a great way to get families interested in the Gospel message. Ultimately, the ideal plan would be to conduct a number of **HOME BASE** Sunday Schools in the same area. Once a month or so, the families would be brought together for fellowship and celebration of God's salvation.



What's So New About That?

For years, the church has been ministering to people in their homes, where they live. A number of local churches have operated Sunday School programs in the meeting room of a housing project, where many families live and can gather. The idea is simply this: "If the people can't—or won't—come in, the messenger must go out." That's nothing new.

What is new is the idea of setting up Sunday School classes—which might or might not be on Sunday—in a number of homes. Each neighborhood has its own Sunday School class or classes. Routinely, perhaps once a month, the classes come together for assemblies and rallies.

A new church plant can get a foot in the door by starting with **HOME BASE** and eventually moving on to "regular" Sunday School and worship services. Even churches that have been around for a long time are finding home Bible studies and cell groups to be a great means for church growth and discipleship. The same can work for children by starting a **HOME BASE** program.

How Do We Get Started?

In Ridgway, the opportunity was obvious. The timing, of course, was God's.


There was a clear need. A mom in an existing program indicated a desire to know more about the Bible. When **HOME BASE** was suggested, she immediately latched on to the idea and opened her home for a church worker to come and teach. She not only wanted the opportunity for her children, but she desired some spiritual fellowship herself. She and the children were not attending a church anywhere. Within one week of the suggestion, a useable curriculum was found (more on that later) and **HOME BASE** began!

No preparations are needed. You're merely looking for someone who is willing to host a Sunday School. In any neighborhood with children, there are homes where those children gather to play or share a meal. Such a home is a ready-made site for **HOME BASE**.



The home where we meet in Ridgway is not a fancy place. But it's home to the kids who live there, and familiar to neighborhood children. Sometimes when an invitation is offered to children to come to church, refusal is based on the fact that the location is new, and perhaps even some distance from home. A neighborhood home overcomes those challenges immediately. It also overcomes any resistance families might have to the idea of going to church.

What Is It Going to Cost?

 ne person, presumably a volunteer, can conduct **HOME BASE** and train the host parent. Teaching materials are a consideration, but this is probably the most cost-effective program a church could conduct.

The facility used is the host home—whatever space in that home is available. The living room or family room is generally the place that offers the best seating. A kitchen table can be used for the children to write in journals or do craft projects.

We have provided Bibles to the participants, along with a notebook for journaling activities, pencils, and crayons. CDs with Sunday School choruses and a compact disc player are necessary. There may also be a need for a TV/VCR and videos from time to time; of course, most homes are equipped with a TV/VCR.

What Training Is Required?

No training is necessary for the volunteer or staff person, assuming that person has taught Sunday School. The important training is for the parent who hosts **HOME BASE**.

Training begins with having the parent observe the person who is running the program. When it appears that the parent might be ready to teach a lesson, make sure that the content of the lesson is fully understood. Eventually the host parent should be able to teach the lesson and run the program.

Ultimately, the goal is for the host parent to be able to train and mentor another host parent. That's how **HOME BASE** multiplies.

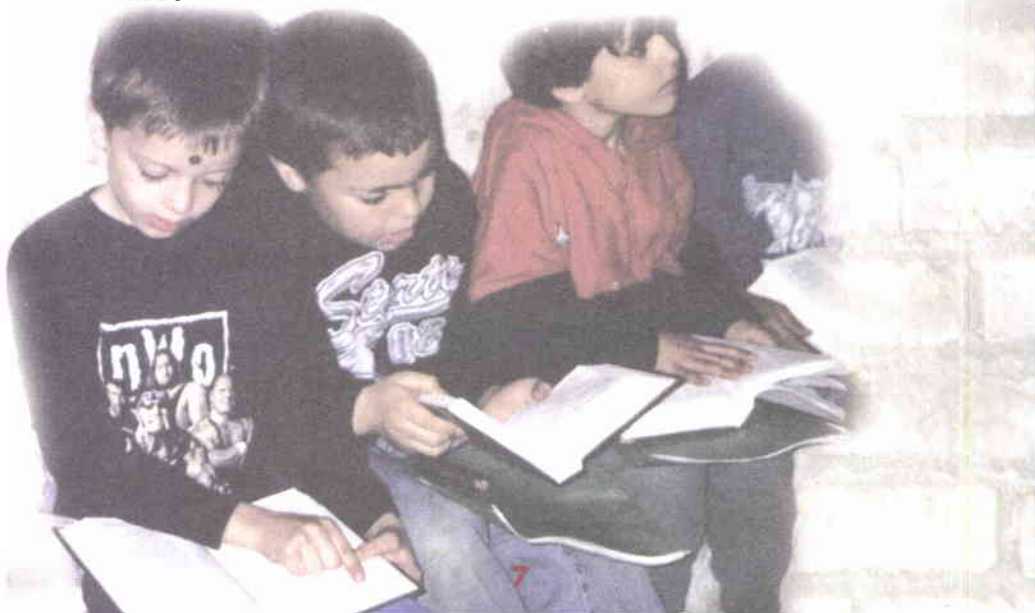
What Does the Schedule Look Like?

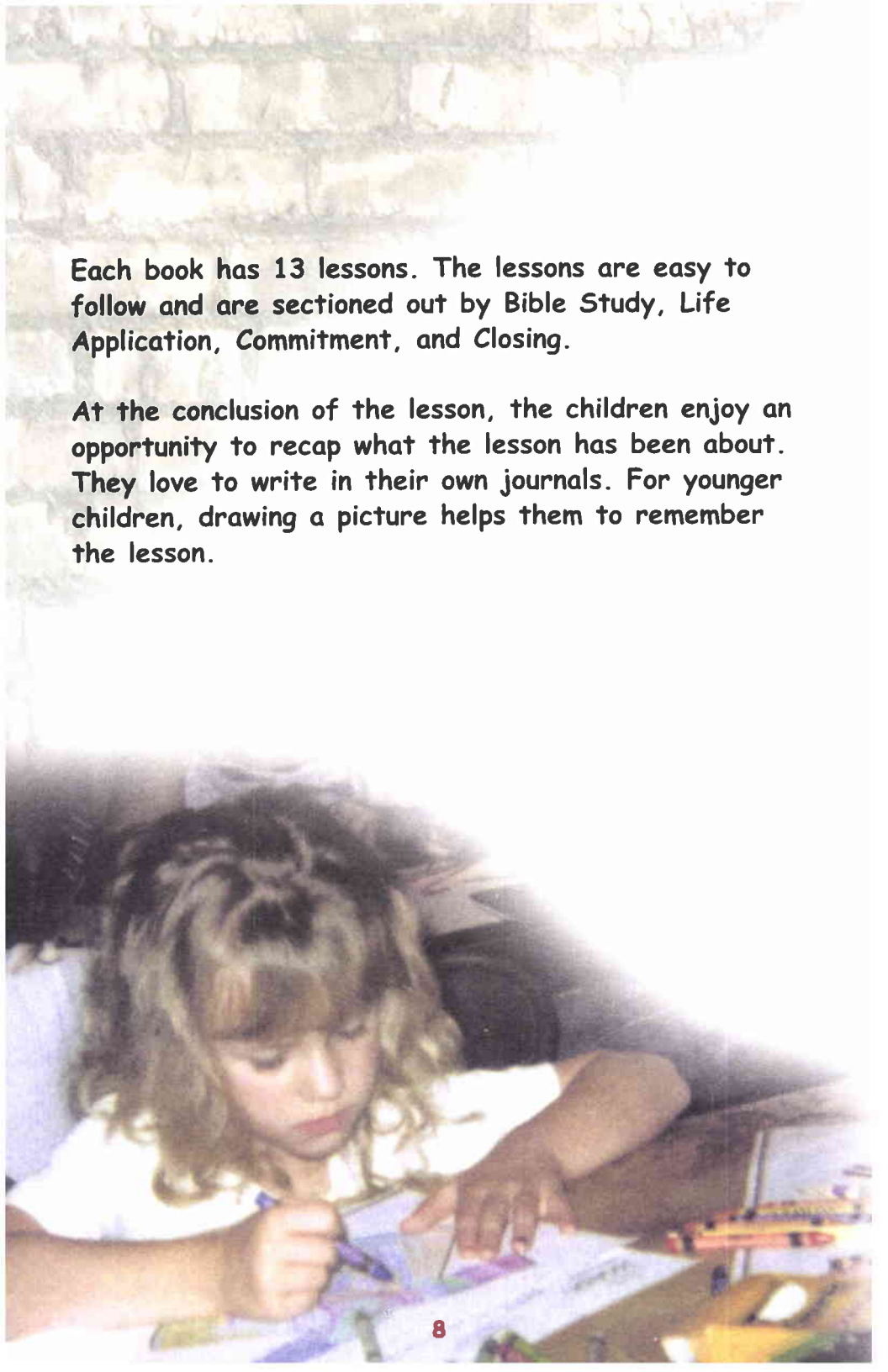
Here's a suggested schedule for **HOME BASE:**

- ♥ Prayer, praise & worship 15 minutes
- ♥ Lesson 45 minutes
- ♥ Wrap-up, recap, and journaling 30 minutes

The children enjoy singing and learning upbeat worship songs. The prayer time provides an opportunity for children to learn to pray.

Currently, we are using Sunday School Specials by Group Publishing. The lessons are geared for smaller Sunday Schools with combined ages. This lets us mix children between the ages of 4 and 12 in the same class.






Each book has 13 lessons. The lessons are easy to follow and are sectioned out by Bible Study, Life Application, Commitment, and Closing.

At the conclusion of the lesson, the children enjoy an opportunity to recap what the lesson has been about. They love to write in their own journals. For younger children, drawing a picture helps them to remember the lesson.

What Have the Results Been So Far?

ur **HOME BASE** kickoff was exciting! We started with nine children, and not one of them owned a Bible. We have had to overcome some obvious interruptions such as dogs, people at the door, even some family crises in the host home. But overall, we are seeing continued enthusiasm and the potential for life-changing results. At the second meeting, we were thrilled when the host mom and all nine children prayed the sinner's prayer seeking salvation.

It has been fascinating to see such hunger for the Word of God! The children and the host mother have been excited about each meeting. When it's time to gather, the children run to the box to get their Bibles and their journals and begin to listen. On one occasion, one of the host's children was sick and was supposed to be upstairs in his room, but he didn't want to miss the program, so he lay on the couch in a blanket so he could listen.

After six months, **HOME BASE** was up and running in five homes, with two mothers on a waiting list to start. There have been many setbacks: domestic problems, serious illness, families moving, some parent-leaders not as dedicated as they need to be. But the Lord continues to move, healing families and bodies, bringing in new leaders, strengthening weak leaders. Best of all, children and parents continue to find Jesus as Savior!




Where Does It Go From Here?

It is the hope of the Ridgway **HOME BASE** program to get each site well established. We want each host parent to be well trained, ready to run the program on her/his own, and prepared to train and mentor another host parent.

Once each home is grounded, we will seek to set up at a new site/host location. The multiple groups will meet together at a central location (preferably the church building) for united assembly programs that will inspire, excite, and create opportunities for church growth.

It is hoped that through **HOME BASE**, participants will ultimately seek and find a church where they can begin to develop a relationship with the Heavenly Father. For host parents who are believers, the potential is there for evangelism right in their own neighborhoods through the **HOME BASE** Sunday School program.

What Are the Pitfalls to Avoid?

 Careful consideration of each host home should be undertaken. The host parent needs to be committed to a designated time, the future possibility of taking over the teaching of lessons, and staying within a limit of 10-12 children participating at one location. There also needs to be a commitment to joining with other **HOME BASE** Sunday Schools for regularly scheduled assemblies.

Host parents need to be carefully supervised on an ongoing basis. It would be easy to train them and set them afloat—but this can cause drifting, especially if a parent is new to the faith. They need continuing help to make sure that they are teaching theologically sound, Bible-based lessons.

Another consideration is the safety of the home and the personnel involved in supervising children. Does the home provide a safe environment for children? There may be safety issues that need to be addressed to prevent liability problems down the road. An adult should never be alone with children in the home, unless it is the host parent.



Make Hope Happen!

