

# FAITHWEAVER

Weaving faith into today's families **NOW**™

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**DIRECTOR  
MANUAL**

The logo for the Group, featuring the word "Group" in a white, italicized serif font, positioned below a cluster of small white dots that form a semi-circular arc.

## Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



### **Relational**

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

### **Experiential**

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

### **Applicable**

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

### **Learner-based**

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

## Group

[group.com/sunday-school](http://group.com/sunday-school)

### **We know you care about kids...**

We do, too!

That's why we attempt to ensure that all crafts, toys, and gizmos meet or exceed national safety standards—and are produced by manufacturers that don't use child labor or abuse their labor force. You can order Group resources knowing that in addition to caring for *your* kids, you're also caring for children elsewhere.

### **Let's keep kids safe!**

We strive to provide products that are mechanically reliable and hold together during normal, intended usage. Items are also checked for flammability, and both paint and surface coatings are checked for heavy metals—including lead.

You can help your children stay safe by seeing that toys and gizmos are used as designed, for the purposes designed, and that any broken pieces are disposed of promptly and properly. We value your feedback. If you become aware of a problem affecting the safety of any of our products, please inform us immediately.

### **FaithWeaver NOW™ Bible Curriculum, Director Manual**

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Visit our website: [group.com/sunday-school](http://group.com/sunday-school)

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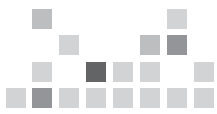
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*To see the full FaithWeaver NOW Scope & Sequence,  
click here*



# The future of Sunday school + family ministry is NOW.



No doubt about it, the world is changing. Families used to go to church every week. Kids used to have longer attention spans. Teachers used to have more time to prepare. And didn't our budgets used to be bigger?

Even the Sunday school Bible curriculum you used just a couple of years ago is already out of date. But there's one thing that's never changed: the need to grow families closer to Jesus.

That's why we created FaithWeaver NOW™, and it's different from anything you've ever seen before!

## **It combines Sunday school with family ministry.** ■■■■

Sure, you've seen Sunday school aimed at families. But FaithWeaver NOW actually hits the target by having everyone in the family learning about the same Scripture each week.

## **It's simpler and easier.** ■■■■

Sometimes change is a wonderful thing. Gone are the days when you needed to spend hours preparing your lessons and hunting for supplies. FaithWeaver NOW will have you and your team ready to go in a snap.

## **It's made for NOW.** ■■■■

Life is complicated and full of distractions. FaithWeaver NOW keeps faith on track through even the most frenzied lifestyles.

## **What makes FaithWeaver NOW the perfect curriculum for TODAY's church?**

- Families learn the same Bible point in age-appropriate ways.
- Kids don't just hear the Word. They experience it.
- Simple and easy lessons fit even the busiest lives.
- Kids see God in their everyday world.
- The Scope & Sequence covers the whole Bible in three years.
- You can customize it however you like, with both print and digital versions.



Plus, FaithWeaver NOW stays up to date. New content, new tools, new mobile apps, and more every year—all to keep the Bible fresh, relevant, and effective.

Create a vibrant family ministry that's new...that's wow...that's NOW. FaithWeaver NOW gives you a fresh strategy for being more successful than ever in bringing families closer to Jesus.

*Thom Schultz Joani Schultz*

Thom and Joani Schultz  
Chairman and Chief Creative Officer  
Group Publishing, Inc.





# Welcome to FaithWeaver NOW™

God has created us each with unique gifts that require different, while equally important, responsibilities. But Scripture makes clear that teaching others about God is a high calling and a tremendous responsibility. Group recognizes that you put great care, thought, and prayer into the decisions you make regarding the education and training of everyone in your Christian education program. We thank you for choosing FaithWeaver NOW™ to assist you in that process and believe you won't be disappointed.



## ■ ■ Questions and Answers About FaithWeaver NOW™

### **What prompted the development of FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum?**

At Group, we're committed to providing for the church effective learning resources that encourage Christian growth in children, youth, and adults. Most people working in the church realize that the home has a far greater influence on Christian growth than the church does. And churches and parents want to see more learning take place in the home, but few parents feel equipped to make it happen.

We developed FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum to help today's families weave faith into life. Everyone in the family—no matter how one defines *family*—studies the same Bible passage on a given Sunday. That gives families common ground for discussion about the Bible. To encourage that interaction, FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum provides multiple ways to connect the learning that happens at church with daily life at home. Our goal is that your church will see changed lives as a result of families talking about their faith together.

### **How is FaithWeaver NOW a Christian growth system?**

FaithWeaver NOW is more than a Sunday school curriculum, a children's church program, and a set of other resources. It's a coordinated system in which family members learn about the Bible and apply it to their lives through classes at church and interaction at home. It's a system that incorporates Bible learning, Bible application, the worship of God, the building of Christian relationships, and serving God in our lives—all through multiple elements that work together uniting church and home in the process of Christian growth.

### **What benefits does FaithWeaver NOW bring to family members?**

FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum uses many elements that bring exciting benefits to family members:



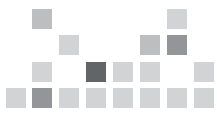


- **Each lesson concentrates on presenting one important Bible Point and applying that point to people's lives.** The Bible Point leads people of all ages to dig into Scripture and discover truth. They then examine that truth to determine its relevance to them. Each lesson ends with a challenge to take steps toward active application of that Bible principle, weaving faith into people's lives.
- **Scripture memorization concentrates on understanding and application.** Each week children can study a Key Verse and continue learning it at home. But they aren't just told the words and asked to spew them back. Instead, the memorization activities ensure that kids know what they're learning and challenge them to apply the learning to their lives.
- **Systematic coverage of the Bible helps learners put the truth of the Bible together.** Many who grow up in the church have scores of compartmentalized Bible stories stacked in their minds. But few are able to put it all together. Within FaithWeaver NOW, family members walk through the Old Testament and New Testament over three years. The lessons zero in on God—and also systematically work through the Bible.
- **The curriculum makes Bible learning fun.** Family members don't have to be sitting silently in rows of chairs to be learning. In fact, we know that the more people are actively involved in the learning process, the more they learn. And when the learning is fun, it does at least two positive things: It gives people a positive emotional attachment to the church, and it makes them want to come back to be part of things and learn more next week!
- **Student books encourage continued learning at home.** Each student book and take-home page contains material that's explored in class, but these items also include ideas for activities and discussion that can easily be used at home to further the learning throughout the week.
- **The FaithWeaver NOW Parent Bible Curriculum equips parents to encourage their kids' faith at home.** We all know that parents have far more time to influence their children's faith than we do. And studies have shown the huge importance of parents talking with children about faith in the home. Using the resources that are part of FaithWeaver NOW, any parent or caregiver can make a huge contribution to a child's Christian growth by leading activities and discussions that help connect what's learned at church with daily life.

#### **What benefits does FaithWeaver NOW bring to teachers?**

- **FaithWeaver NOW makes preparation less difficult.** Designed with today's busy teachers in mind, FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum makes preparation as simple as possible. The Bible Background section gives teachers enough information to be comfortable with the passage being covered, and the layout of the Teacher Guides makes progressing through the lesson a breeze.
- **FaithWeaver NOW increases teachers' comfort level.** Learner-centered





activities allow the teacher to be a facilitator as people experience and dig into the Bible passage each week. Lessons that zero in on important Bible passages and stay true to the messages found in them give teachers confidence that what they're teaching is accurate, substantial, and relevant.

- **FaithWeaver NOW helps teachers make a difference in learners' lives.** FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum was developed with authentic learning in mind. Every activity has a purpose in encouraging faith. Children and adults alike experience the Bible and apply the principles in ways they won't soon forget. And teachers will be thrilled to see the difference in their students as the learning takes hold in their lives.

**What benefits does FaithWeaver NOW bring to your church?**

- **FaithWeaver NOW gives your church confidence.** Your church can feel confident that children, youth, and adults are receiving the Bible training and challenge that we all need.
- **FaithWeaver NOW brings people back to church.** Learners systematically explore the teachings of the Bible, and at the same time they enjoy coming to church and seeing God work in their lives.
- **FaithWeaver NOW takes people deeper into the Word.** Experiencing the Scripture and discussing thought-provoking questions challenges participants to see the Bible in a new way and connect the Bible to their lives.
- **FaithWeaver NOW equips parents.** Parents are given resources to equip them to further their family's learning in the home during the week.
- **FaithWeaver NOW strengthens your church.** All who come to church receive a spiritual boost when they see the difference the Bible is making in the lives of your people.

**What are the doctrinal beliefs behind FaithWeaver NOW?**

FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum serves a wide variety of churches and concentrates on the essentials of the Christian faith. The following is Group Publishing's concise doctrinal statement:

*We believe the Bible is the inspired, authoritative Word of God. We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, in his virgin birth, in his sinless life, in his death on the cross, in his bodily resurrection, in his ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in his personal return. We believe people receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Jesus.*

**What ministry philosophy is behind FaithWeaver NOW?**

Our goal in the development of FaithWeaver NOW is to see changed lives as we help people know, love, and follow Jesus. We do that by concentrating on the essentials





of the Christian faith and helping people understand and apply the Bible's principles. When we cover elements of the faith on which people disagree, we give the teacher the opportunity to present your church's position.

### **What educational principles are behind the development of FaithWeaver NOW?**

Teaching the Bible doesn't mean much if it isn't making an impact in people's lives. So we've done years of research to determine what makes effective learning take place. We've discovered that when people are physically and emotionally involved in the learning process, they learn and retain more.

We've also discovered that Jesus used those same principles as he involved his disciples in learning experiences and interactive discussions. And he also used teaching methods that people with different learning styles could relate to. So we developed FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum around those principles.

### **How does FaithWeaver NOW fit together?**

FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum is part of the FaithWeaver NOW Christian growth system. This system is composed of three major elements and supporting materials. The major elements are FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum; KidsOwn Worship Children's Church; and FaithWeaver Friends, a midweek program. This also includes the free FamilyConnect email for today's families. Any one of the following elements can be used without the others. However, using all of them together will help your church's families learn and grow in faith both at church and at home in a way no single item can.

- **FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum.** Designed for use in Sunday school, this portion of the system concentrates on education. Infants through adults cover the same Bible passage, learning about it and applying it at appropriate levels for all age groupings.
- **KidsOwn Worship Children's Church.** This program is designed for preschool and elementary children, and it includes joint and separate activities for each. The focus of this element is to learn about worship and to practice it together, while connecting with the Scripture passage covered in FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum each week.
- **FaithWeaver Friends.** This FaithWeaver midweek program focuses on relationships and service, giving children opportunities to demonstrate their faith in their lives.
- **FaithWeaver NOW FamilyConnect.** According to the Search Institute, "Four family practices are particularly important for helping young people grow in faith (both in childhood and adolescence): talking about faith with your mother; talking about faith with your father; having family devotions or prayer; and doing family projects to help other people." FaithWeaver NOW FamilyConnect is designed around these family practices and helps you equip today's families to grow in their faith. The free FamilyConnect gives busy families an easy-to-use







idea to start conversations about faith at least once during the week. To learn more about FamilyConnect, go to [group.com/digital](http://group.com/digital).

### **How does FaithWeaver NOW make the same passage of Scripture relevant to all ages from infants to adults?**

Obviously a 2-year-old can't learn or experience the same thing from a Bible passage that a fourth-grader can. And a fourth-grader can't grasp the same thing an adult can. However, every Bible passage exhibits principles that can be covered and grasped at different levels by people of different ages. Take, for example, the account of the prodigal son. Infants and toddlers might simply hear that God loves them. Third- and fourth-graders might explore the joy we can experience in realizing how freely God forgives us. And adults might grapple with how difficult it is sometimes to forgive others, as seen in the example of the older brother in the parable.

The common element among all the age levels is the Bible passage, and as families discuss the applications made within their classes, they'll see just how amazingly relevant it can be to people of all ages. Because each age level approaches the Bible in different ways, no one will be bored when a Bible passage is covered again in his or her new class three years later. Instead, the new look at the passage will help to cement both the old and the new learning.

### **How did you choose which Bible passages to cover?**

We wanted to balance the learning between the Old and New Testaments and chose the following systematic way to do that:

- **New Testament.** Because churches like to zero in on Jesus' birth at Christmastime and his death and resurrection at Easter, we built our winter and spring quarters around those events and the rest of the New Testament. Each year those quarters walk through one of the synoptic Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and draw additional material from John. December focuses on events leading up to and including Jesus' birth. After that, through the rest of the winter and early spring, the lessons lead people through Jesus' life and ministry, leading up to Easter. After Easter through the rest of the spring quarter, the curriculum focuses on events and teachings in the early church.
- **Old Testament.** To effectively help everyone understand the Old Testament as a whole, we walk through it during the summer and fall quarters. Every three years, people will cover the Old Testament, beginning with Genesis in the first fall quarter and ending with other Old Testament passages in the final summer quarter. In the process, family members will be able to connect all the Bible passages into one complete narrative—the narrative of God working among and through imperfect people.





### **Why do my teachers need the Teacher Packs?**

Effective learning requires more than spoken words. People of all ages learn best in widely varying ways. Thus, we seek to provide learning experiences that connect with all learning styles and multiple intelligences. To do so requires items that children can see, hear, feel, examine, manipulate, interact with, contemplate, and discuss. Sometimes teachers need to provide items that can easily be found at home or in the classroom. The Teacher Packs include items that are more difficult to find. Such items aren't optional but are key components to learning. Here are some of the things you'll find:

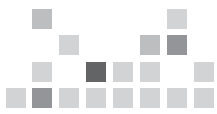
- **Compact disc.** The CD in each Teacher Pack provides music connected to the theme of the lesson, dramatic or other audio segments that are the basis of lesson activities, and Key Verses set to music to help children memorize the verses they're learning.
- **Bible Timeline.** Each elementary Teacher Pack contains a Bible Timeline for the quarter. This timeline helps children see how biblical events are connected and how they relate to other events in Bible history. The timeline builds on the previous quarter, giving a complete overview of Bible history by the end of three years.
- **Posters, charts, and teaching pictures.** Varying from quarter to quarter, these items will help set the tone for the class, provide ways children can interact, or give a visual element to the teaching.
- **Essential teaching aids.** Each quarter's Teacher Pack will contain a different assortment of unique items designed to enhance learning. Most of these items connect with children's senses to bring home the point of the lesson and to help the learning stick.

### **Why is there so much discussion?**

FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum uses interactive learning to help people learn from one another. Children, youth, and adults learn valuable skills when they talk to one another, and often they understand something about God better when they learn from a peer rather than from a teacher. Learning together helps people discover and apply Bible truths for themselves.

### **Won't I have discipline problems if I let kids move around and get involved in activities?**

As you begin to work with kids, it's important to establish standards for appropriate behavior. Make sure children know what your expectations are. However, remember that a classroom doesn't have to be totally quiet for kids to learn. Sometimes when kids are working together, the noise level in a room can rise. But that may be the most valuable learning time.



### **What's the Bible Point all about?**

The Bible Point, which appears throughout a lesson in all age levels, focuses exploration and discovery on what's most important in the lesson. The repetition of the Bible Point throughout the lesson cements learning in people's minds. The Bible Point is the most memorable part of the lesson.

### **How do I know if people are really learning?**

At the end of each lesson, ask people to repeat the Bible Point. See if they have a good answer for one of the important questions in the lesson. Note that not every answer has to be exactly the same. As people dig and discover, what individuals learn may be slightly different—and that's OK as long as it fits with what the Bible says.

### **Why are there so many different things sent home?**

There are so many barriers to family interaction—especially when it comes to talking about the things that matter most. We want to provide the families in your church with every possible opportunity to talk about faith and life. This type of rich discussion will come naturally out of the fact that every family member will study the same weekly Bible passage in FaithWeaver NOW. However, we believe it's important to provide structured opportunities for families to deliberately talk about their faith. The take-home pages of the student books are colorful, fun, and substantial. These and the take-home pages for age levels without student books include activities, questions, and games that children will want to do with their families. And we've made sure that every age level provides kids with opportunities for family interaction. But just in case a child misplaces his or her take-home page, we've created the FamilyConnect that you can email or print out and hand directly to parents. We believe these various opportunities increase the likelihood of families talking, praying, and learning together.





## Promoting the FaithWeaver NOW™ Kickoff

### FaithWeaver NOW Bulletin Board

To kick off your new Sunday school year with FaithWeaver NOW, create a bulletin board to let people know a little about FaithWeaver NOW by completing the following steps:

- Start with a woven look by alternating sheets of two contrasting colors of construction paper as a background. You can use several colors; just keep each color alternating with others in straight rows, as it would look in a woven rug.
- Post the FaithWeaver NOW theme, “Weaving Faith Into Today’s Families,” in big letters.
- Below that theme, use the heading “FaithWeavers,” and post pictures of each of your teachers.
- Print out or photocopy (you have our permission) and enlarge some of the questions and answers from this manual (pp. 5-11), cut them apart, and scatter them around the board to let people see what’s different about FaithWeaver NOW.

### Woven-Faith Tapestry

During a church service, create a live, faith-into-life weaving that symbolizes FaithWeaver NOW. Have about 10 of the taller children stand shoulder to shoulder at the front, facing the congregation. Give each of the 10 children a five-foot piece of crepe paper streamer. As you distribute the streamers, say: **These streamers represent our lives. They may be colorful, but each one stands alone. Let’s look at what FaithWeaver NOW does for our lives.**

Have the children each step on one end of the streamer and hold the other end straight up in the air, keeping the streamer taut. Give different-colored streamers about 20 feet long to about five more children. Have each child weave his or her streamer in and out of the vertical streamers the other children are holding. Have the tallest of the five start first, weaving near the top. As each child weaves a streamer, say the following:

- **With FaithWeaver NOW, all the lessons are woven together as each family member learns about the same Bible passage in different ways.**
- **With FaithWeaver NOW, all parts of our program weave together to encourage balanced faith growth within our children and youth.**
- **With FaithWeaver NOW, families can discuss the same Bible passage and learn more as they weave it into life at home.**





- **With FaithWeaver NOW, parents receive ideas and encouragement for weaving faith into family life—no matter what shape the family takes.**
- **With FaithWeaver NOW, the Christian faith becomes more real to today's families than ever before.**
- **With FaithWeaver NOW, we all grow together into the beautiful tapestry God intended his church to be.**





## Director Tips

### Recruiting Teachers

Spend time prayerfully going through your church directory or membership list, and note people you think might be good teachers. Then plan an event where you can explain what teaching a FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum class involves. Ask potential teachers to commit to coming for just an hour to consider whether God might want them to have a role in children's ministry. (To schedule in-church training from Group, give us a call at 1.800.447.1070.) Also have teachers who have previously taught Sunday school give testimonials about their experiences. Follow up by calling participants the next week to see if they're willing to teach or help out in a class.

### Encouraging a Resistant Teacher

When a teacher resists trying FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum, encourage that teacher to give it an honest try for a month. First, have the teacher ask open-ended questions to evaluate what children have learned from other curriculums in the last month. Then have the teacher use FaithWeaver NOW Bible Curriculum for a month and, at the end of that month, again evaluate what children have learned. Let the teacher know that he or she may use whichever curriculum is most effective.

### Handling Complaints About Noise or Activity

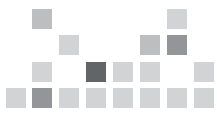
Ask the concerned party to think of a major life lesson he or she learned. Then ask, "Did you learn that lesson while sitting quietly in a chair or by being involved in some sort of experience?" Encourage adults to understand that kids are learning and applying more to their lives through active involvement than they could ever learn sitting quietly at a table.

### Handling Out-of-Control Classes

Try one or more of these suggestions:

- Have the teacher begin class by discussing what it means to be kind to one another. Encourage kids to remind other kids when they're not being kind to the teacher or others.
- Suggest having children's parents attend class on a rotation basis, one each week. Direct the parent to speak softly but firmly to any child who seems out of control.
- When an entire class seems out of control, have the teacher stand quietly in the center of the class and raise his or her hand until everyone notices and quiets down. The peer pressure of the more sensitive kids will eventually settle down even the most rowdy.





- Have the teacher give the rowdiest child a significant responsibility, telling the child that the class is depending on him or her.

### **Encouraging Attendance**

People will be less likely to want to miss class if they've built caring relationships with others. Try these ideas to help build those relationships:

- Encourage teachers to have a sharing and prayer time at the beginning or end of class. Allow people to share concerns they have and to pray about them together.
- Make sure each teacher has a list of addresses for every person in the class. Also be sure each classroom is stocked with a few stamped postcards. Near the end of class, a teacher can have people compose a note to an absent person, sharing what the person missed and encouraging him or her to return. Then have teachers give the cards to you after class so you can mail them the next day.

For more great ideas and helps in recruiting and training teachers, check out Group's Church Volunteer Central, an association that provides busy church leaders the tools they need to make the most of their volunteers. It's like having an additional staff member in your church! See [churchvolunteercentral.com](http://churchvolunteercentral.com).



