

Early Bird

Instructor Manual



Adapted, with permission, from the General Conference Instructor Manual by the Australian Union Conference.

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Welcome

Thank you for being a part of our newly released Adventurer Curriculum. We have remastered, re-engineered, and at times started over to make sure that this new curriculum is fun, uplifting, appropriate for each age level, and most importantly, Jesus-centred. We wanted to build a curriculum that can be done with a small group, large group, family and children, Children's ministry group, even Bible School group!

We have used several criteria in building this curricula. We worked with Adventist educators and youth leaders to make sure we had the best resources available for our Adventurers. First, we have used Bloom's taxonomy, a broad ranging methodology especially appropriate for 7 year olds and up, that help us ask the children to do things that they are truly developmentally capable of doing. For example, we ask Little Lambs to listen to a story, while we ask 8 and 9 year olds to read age-appropriate stories.

In addition, we have used a multi-modal learning philosophy, meaning that we realise that Adventurers learn in different ways. Thus, we have requirements that appeal to children who learn best through listening, playing, drawing, singing, organising, moving, and so-on. We also filtered our requirements through developmental filters. Spiritual stages of development (originally developed by Dr. James W. Fowler), have been well explained and demonstrated in Youth Ministry by Adventist Youth Innovator Steve Case of Involve Youth.

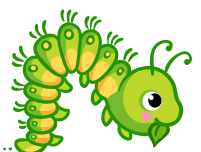
Adventurers

Each lesson is meant to be mostly hands-on. That means most of the time you will be actively doing something to learn about the topic. Sometimes, you will have to take notes, or tick a box (to remember what you did), but most of the time you will be jumping, running, crafting, drawing, exercising, singing, praying, or reading something!

In many cases, your adult caregivers, whether they be parents, grandparents, guardians, or favourite neighbour, can help you accomplish the "jobs". Help them feel involved and be sure to always say thank you!

Parents

We value the time you have invested in Adventurers. Many of you are doubling as leaders for Adventurers. We thank you. We have created a curricula that is safe yet adventurous, varied, but specific in its Christ-centred goal. We hope the children will bring home new found truths they can put into action about "My Self, My God, My Family, and My World".



Please have your Adventurer share their experiences with you by showing you the pages they worked through (and the games/stories they learned along the way). Know that a lot of it is experiential so they won't write a lot. They will instead experience a great deal.

Leaders

In this Instructor Manual you will find a variety of 'big picture' helps to guide you as you create a safe environment for your group of Adventurers. Developmental stages, working with special needs children in your unit, and much more is included here. We have tried to think of things that can be done with few resources, limited spaces, and limited budget. However, your club is different from any other, so please feel free to adapt the ideas to meet the needs of your group.

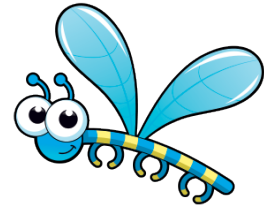
There are a total of six years worth of curriculum, each one age appropriate. The first, Little Lamb is for 4 year olds, the second, Early Bird, for 5 year olds, Busy Bee, for 6 year olds, Sunbeam, for 7 year olds, Builder, for 8 year olds, and Helping Hands, for 9 year olds. Many kids will turn from one age to the next while working on the curriculum, but should work to complete it before starting the next class. Patches (called Awards) and pins are available for order through the Adventist Book Centre (ABC) <https://adventistbookcentre.com.au/>.



Thanks for joining us in the journey!

Andrés J. Peralta
Associate Youth Director

Adventurer Club History



The history of Adventurers started back in 1917 when the Primary Reading Course was introduced. This certificate eventually became part of the class requirements. In 1924 the Sunbeam class was taught in a second-grade classroom and a pin was awarded for completing the requirements. The awarding of the Busy Bee pin first appeared in 1928 as part of the commencement exercises at school, and by 1929 the term "Investiture Service" was used to describe the event where they awarded certificates and pins. The Busy Bee Pledge and Law also first appeared in 1929.

The names used for this age group have varied over time and location and included Preparatory classes, Pre-Juniors, Pre-Friends, Pre-JMV, Pre-AJY, Pre-Pathfinders, Achievement classes, and Adventurers.

By 1933, this group was known as "Preparatory Members". The two predominant classes taught on the West Coast of the United States were Busy Bee and Helping Hands, while to the East they were known as Sunbeam and Builder. All of these classes used the same Pledge and Law, with only slight differences in the other requirements.

By 1938 the term "Progressive Class Work" was used when referring to all the classes from Busy Bee up to Master Comrade.

In 1940 the General Conference outlined two Missionary Volunteer Progressive Classes that were below the Friend class. They were Sunbeam and Builder. They had simple celluloid pins, and where neckerchiefs were desired, tan was used for the Sunbeams and jade green for the Builders.

Because of so many other names being used for these classes, both in the U.S. and overseas, such as "Upstreamer," "Junior Light Bearers," "Sunshine Club," and "Golden Rule," the MV committee voted on June 10, 1946 that the Pre-Junior classes be named Busy Bee, Sunbeam, Builder and Helping Hands.

In 1953 there was first seen a pre-Pathfinder Adventurers group, and by 1954 Adventurer camps started up in different conferences for boys and girls age 9 and later on for both 8 and 9-year-olds.

The name Adventurers was used again in 1963 for a pre-Pathfinder group, this time at the Pioneer Memorial Church at Andrews University.



In 1974 in the Washington Conference, for the previous 5 years a group called Beavers for the 6 to 9-year-old kids was going on. They had their own uniforms, consisting of yellow shirts or blouses and brown trousers or skirts.

By 1976 the Youth Leaders' Handbook mentioned the newly revised pre-JMV Classes, and by 1979 in the NAD, "pupils in grades one to four are designated as Adventurers".

The General Conference Committee minutes of 1985 mentions the Adventurer Class Requirements. The SDA Church Manual of 1986 again says, "Pupils in grades one to four are designated as Adventurers" and by 1989 the General Conference Committee voted to approve organising the Adventurer Club as part of the Pathfinder program and voted in the official Adventurer Emblem.

In 1990 several Conferences tried out a pilot program of the new Adventurer Club materials from the GC which included their own navy blue and white uniforms, their own award patches (triangle in shape) and their own club structure. The following year Norman Middag introduced the new Adventurer Club program to those who attended the Children's Ministries Convention held at Cohutta Springs, GA.

In 1999 the GC Annual Council recommended that a new section, Adventurer Club, be added to the Church Manual.



Introduction to Early Bird

“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”.

Matthew 19:14 (NIV)

This passage is often illustrated with a group of angelic children sitting attentively at Jesus’ feet. And perhaps this was the first picture that popped into your mind when you agreed to lead your church’s Early Bird level. However, now that you’ve had time to think about it, the picture may have quickly changed to a group of active five Year Olds running around the room while you stand helplessly in their midst. Hopefully, the reality will be somewhere in between these two pictures!

This guide was developed to assist parents and Early Bird leaders who want to work with children as they develop physically and spiritually. The Early Bird level can be used as part of the Adventurer Club in your church or by a group of parents who want to use a curriculum to assist them in teaching their children skills and values.

Early Bird activities should be fun and kid-centred. Remember that children of this age look to adults to set the pace of the meetings and model how they should respond to situations. So . . . take a deep breath, say a prayer, and keep your sense of humour. Your adventures with Early Birds are about to begin!



Early Bird Checklist



To be invested, Early Birds must complete the Basic Requirements and a minimum of **ONE** requirement from each of the 4 other sections.



Basic Requirements

1. Recite the Adventurer Law ☐
2. Complete the Story Listening II Award ☐
3. Complete the Birds Award ☐

My God (Choose at least one)

1. God's Plan to Save Me
 - a. Colour a story chart or lap-book about the people in the Bible who prayed: Samuel, Daniel, Jonah and David ☐
 - b. Learn how to pray independently ☐
2. God's Message to Me
 - a. Complete the Bible Friends Award ☐
3. God's Power in My Life
 - a. Have a regular family worship time in your home. Keep a record ☐
 - b. Ask someone you know why they pray ☐
 - c. Complete the God's World Award ☐

My Self (Choose at least one)

1. I am Special
 - a. Complete the Left & Right Award ☐
2. I can Make Wise Choices
 - a. Complete the Manners Fun Award ☐
3. I can Care for My Body
 - a. Complete the Know Your Body Award ☐

My Family (Choose at least one)

1. I have a Family
 - a. Say the fifth commandment: "Honour your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12) ☐
2. Families Care for Each Other
 - a. Complete the Helping at Home Award ☐
3. My Family Helps Me Care for Myself
 - a. Complete the Fire Safety Award ☐

My World (Choose at least one)

1. The World of Friends
 - a. Complete the My Community Friends Award ☐
2. The World of Other People
 - a. Complete the Playing with Friends Award ☐
3. The World of Nature
 - a. Complete the Scavenger Hunt Award ☐



SECTION 1

Early Bird Level

This section contains an overview of the Early Bird level. You'll get an idea of where Early Birds fit into Adventurer Club Ministries and the goals and requirements of the Early Bird Level.

Adventurer Logo

Adventurer Pledge/Law

Adventurer Song

Early Bird Goals

Early Bird Curriculum

Adventurer Awards

Adventurer Logo



Adventurer Pledge and Law

Adventurer Pledge

Because Jesus loves me,
I can always do my best.

Adventurer Law

Jesus can help me to:

- Be obedient
- Be pure
- Be true
- Be kind
- Be respectful
- Be attentive
- Be helpful
- Be cheerful
- Be thoughtful
- Be reverent



Adventurer Song



Adventurer Song

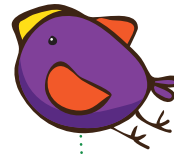
We are Adventurers
At home, at school, at play
We are Adventurers
We're learning every day
To be honest, kind and true
To be like Jesus through and through
We are Adventurers!

Early Bird Goals

- 01** Demonstrate God's love for children.
- 02** Promote the values expressed in the Adventurer Pledge and Law.
- 03** Create an environment where all children can contribute.
- 04** Encourage children to have fun.



Early Bird Curriculum



One of your responsibilities as leader is to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual development of each child. The Early Bird level requirements were created to assist you with this responsibility. The requirements are organised into five areas:

- 1** Early Bird Program Basic Requirements
- 2** My God
- 3** My Self
- 4** My Family
- 5** My World

Each child will complete most of the program requirements as part of the Early Bird meetings. At the end of the Early Bird year, each child completing the necessary requirements will receive the Early Bird pin.

It is very important for leaders to understand that not all Early Birds will be at the same developmental level or have the same physical abilities, so you'll need to be flexible in how the children complete these requirements. It is up to you to interpret how the children fulfil these requirements. For example, not all children will be able to tie their shoes. Instead, they might be able to velcro their shoes or put on their shoes. Flexibility and creativity are the keys to ensuring the success of each Early Bird. As always, these activities should be fun for you and the children.



Adventurer Awards

Early Bird patches are called Awards. There are lots of Awards and each one is designed to encourage your Early Bird to explore, learn and play. Once a Early Bird has completed all the required activities for an individual Award he or she can receive that patch.

Many Awards are completed as part of the Early Bird curriculum but your club will probably set aside time just for awards. In small clubs, Awards might be taught in rotation so that Little Lambs, Early Birds and Busy Bees earn some of the same Awards during the meeting. In other clubs, large staff help each other stay organised by teaching Awards to their group only using Awards designated for their age group level.

It is important to note that the Awards have levels that correspond with the Adventurer developmental abilities. When you are selecting an Award to complete, make sure that you choose age-appropriate Awards.

When working on Awards it is up to the leader to adapt the requirements to the club and children's needs. For example, an Award may require the child to play an action game using a community helper's skills. As parent or leader you might choose to watch a video or visit a community helper.

It is also up to you to decide when a child has met the intent of the Award. Remember that not all children will be capable of completing all Award requirements as written. It is more important that the children try new things and have fun, rather than compete with each other to receive the most Awards or become frustrated by requirements that are beyond their abilities. Flexibility on your part will make the experience more enjoyable and positive for both children and parents!

Children of this age need immediate rewards so you will want to consider giving Early Birds their patch for completing the Award right away to put on their sash. Of course, making sure they don't lose the patch is also important!

Parent involvement is important to success. In some cases, making them aware of what is "normal" for five year olds helps them train their child at home towards the goals introduced at Adventurers.



SECTION 2

Characteristics of Early Birds

This section gives you and your staff a quick overview of that to expect and what not to expect from the Early Birds.

What you need to know

Physical Characteristics

Cognitive Characteristics

Social Characteristics

Spiritual Characteristics

Do's and Don'ts of Disciplines

What you need to Know about Early Birds



In the book *Child Guidance* (Review and Herald, 1954), Ellen White encourages parents to understand the developmental needs of their children.

This section helps you with just that — understanding the physical, cognitive, and social characteristics of Early Birds.

Remember that children develop at their own pace, so some children in your club may not have reached these markers, and others will have passed them. Make sure you focus on the specific needs of each child and not the stages.

Physical Characteristics

- Have difficulty controlling large body movements.
- Can control large motor skills more easily than fine motor skills.
- Struggle to control volume of speech.
- Can take themselves to the bathroom, though accidents occasionally happen.
- Can dress themselves with slight assistance.

Cognitive Characteristics

- Have short attention spans.
- Learn actively.
- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Need specific directions.
- Require consistency.
- Can confuse reality and fiction.
- Want to make their own decisions.
- Are literal.





Social Characteristics

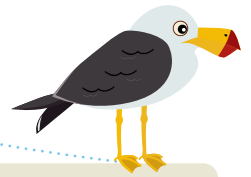
- Can take turns but may not share well.
- May appear to be know-it-alls.
- Are competitive and like to win.
- Can see only their own point of view.
- Are upset or embarrassed by criticism.
- Have tantrums or tattle to test authority.
- Respond well to encouragement and rewards.
- Can jump and hop easier than they can write or colour.
- May appear clumsy, fall off of chairs, or bump into other children.
- Are noisy.
- Need short activities that can be completed in one sitting.
- Follow directions that are given one step at a time.
- Enjoy role playing instead of memorising.
- Like to play with their “best” friend and won’t voluntarily include others.



Spiritual Characteristics

James Fowler, a Christian counsellor, researcher, and specialist in children's development, has identified seven stages in the development of faith; three of which are closely associated with and parallel cognitive and psychological development in childhood.

6 Stages of Faith Development

**0**

Primal or Undifferentiated Faith (ages 0 to 2)

1**Intuitive-Protective Faith (ages 3 to 5)****2****Mythic-Literal Faith (ages 6 to 11)****3**

Synthetic-Conventional Faith (age 11 to Adolescence)

4

Individuative-Reflective Faith

5

Conjunctive Faith

6

Universalising Faith

Stage 0 "Primal Faith" is the beginning steps of faith within the arms of their parents.

Stages 3 to 6 are the faith stages of Pathfinders and adults. As part of James Fowler's research, he sees that many individuals, even adults, may never develop stages 4 to 6 unless intentional ongoing spiritual development is a chosen part of their ongoing deepening relationship with God.

In Adventurers we are working with children who are learning to experience God through stages 1 and 2.

1 Intuitive-Protective Faith (ages 3 to 5)

- Shared Experiences - kids love having a community to share their spiritual learning with.
- Parental - parents are involved in the Adventurer experiences and provide a lot of the spiritual modelling.
- Love and Security - God is real because of the love and security supplied by caregivers, such as parents and Adventurer leaders.
- Concrete Meaning - Truth about the Bible makes sense because of things they can touch and Bible stories they can relate to. They are unable to think abstractly and are generally unable to see the world from anyone else's perspective.
- Experienced Traditions - opening exercises that are always the same, the Adventurer Pledge and Law that are learned and repeated each session throughout the years of Adventurers are a part of this experienced tradition. God becomes more real when things are predictable and they know what to expect from spiritual activities. Faith is not a thought-out set of ideas, but instead a set of experienced impressions WITH parents and influencers.



2 Mythic-Literal Faith (ages 6 to 11)

- Compared - Children at this age are able to start to work out the difference between verified facts and things that might be more fantasy or speculation.
- Trust Circle - Source of religious authority starts to expand past parents and trusted adults to others in their community like teachers and friends.
- Religion as their Experience - Kids in this age group have a strong interest in religion. Later in this stage children begin to have the capacity to understand that others might have different beliefs than them.
- Duty - following God and his teaching is seen as a duty and honour.
- Concrete Meaning - By default, children in this age group see that prayer to God is important and expected. They believe that good behaviour is rewarded and bad behaviour is punished. If I am good to God, God will be good to me. Teaching the reality of God's GRACE beginning at this stage will allow them to further deepen their relationship with Jesus as they enter stages 3 and 4.
- Experienced Traditions = Symbol's Meaning - Symbols of scripture are literal without added meaning. Bible stories are powerful and real motivators.

Do's and Don'ts of Discipline



One of the best ways to prevent disciplinary problems is to keep Adventurers busy and on task. The following strategies will help you manage your Adventurers.

Remember, you're there to help the children and their families learn to love Jesus; therefore, it is important that you model love, patience, and a cheerful attitude. You want the Adventurer Club to be a fun experience for everyone, so try to keep your sense of humour and compassion even when an Adventurer's behaviour is a problem.



Do's of Discipline

- **Do ...** have a few short, simple rules and review them often. Sample rules: Be kind to others. Use good manners. Listen quietly to others. Follow directions. Be positive.
- **Do ...** use signals to let the children know when you want their attention. Signals can be just about anything such as quickly turning a light on and off, turning a flashlight on and off, raising your hand, or using a clicker.
- **Do ...** use silence. Stop what you are doing and stay quiet until their focus is back on you.
- **Do ...** make eye contact. Often getting a child to look at you is a good way to get them to stop what they are doing and focus on you.
- **Do ...** use names. If you say an Adventurer's name followed by a question or directions, you can usually get them back on track.
- **Do ...** stand near an Adventurer to get them back on task.
- **Do ...** ask adults to interact with the children. If adults are happily participating in the activities, the Adventurers are more likely to model the adults' behaviour. Additionally, having adults involved can prevent misbehaviour from escalating.

SECTION 2

Don'ts of Discipline

- **Don't...** embarrass or shame a child in front of others or privately.
- **Don't...** overreact.
- **Don't...** lose your temper—no screaming, using threats or nagging.
- **Don't...** hit or smack.
- **Don't...** insult a child by saying “you’re stupid”, “you’re useless”.
- **Don't...** use sarcasm.
- **Don't...** compare children.
- **Don't...** label children.
- **Don't...** demand respect - respect is earned.
- **Don't...** expect children to behave as adults.



SECTION 3

Early Birds with Disabilities

Learn how every Early Bird can fully participate in your Club by understanding each child and knowing how to plan inclusive activities.

Early Birds with Special Needs Planning Inclusive Activities

Early Birds with Special Needs

When you learn that a child with a disability will be a member of your club, you might initially feel overwhelmed. Don't worry. Often simple changes to an activity or requirement are all that is needed. Remember that parents or guardians are not looking to you to discredit a diagnosis or to offer a "cure" for a condition; rather they are looking to you to welcome and include their child.

Additionally, the other children and adults look to you to see how to act, so make sure you treat the child with special needs with the same openness and ease that you show all of the children.

- **Do ...** speak directly to the child, not to the adult.
- **Do ...** recognise that a child's physical disabilities don't indicate mental disabilities.
- **Do ...** ask about the child's medical or special equipment needs.
- **Do ...** explain special equipment to all children to alleviate fears. Parents can help explain in the correct ways.
- **Do ...** take extra care in planning for the safety of the child with special needs.
- **Do ...** ensure the meeting facility is handicapped accessible.
- **Do ...** ask the child how they would prefer to complete a task.
- **Do ...** foster independence.
- **Do ...** focus on all children's strengths.
- **Do ...** expect reasonable behaviour from all children.
- **Do ...** be flexible.



Planning Inclusive Activities

At times you will need to substitute or change program requirements in order for children with special needs to participate. However, this may mean some creative thinking on your part.

Remember that the point is for the activity to be fun and meaningful for the child. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Instead of requiring the child with a learning disability to memorise their phone number and address for the Fire Safety Award, have her decorate pre-printed business cards that they can carry in pockets and their backpack.
- For the autistic child over-stimulated by noise or new places, allow them to watch a video about a fire station instead of participating in the club field trip for the Fire Safety Award.
- If a child has balance problems, substitute riding a bike with training wheels or a tricycle for the Beginning Biking Award requirement of riding a bike without training wheels.
- A blind child can make a play-doh/or clay craft instead of drawing a picture or cutting out pictures, as suggested in a variety of requirements.
- A child with cerebral palsy may not be able to meet the program requirements of tying shoes, combing hair, brushing teeth, or dressing themselves. Ask the child what new skill they would like to learn. They'll have some ideas.
- Teach all the children how to use sign language to say the Adventurer Pledge. This will allow a deaf child or a child with a speech impairment to participate.
- A child with Down syndrome might act out his favourite Sabbath activity instead of memorising the fourth commandment, as suggested in the Early Bird program requirements.
- Substitute learning the different tastes (sour, sweet, salty, bitter) and explore why God gave us a variety of tastes for a child with low vision instead of learning the colours listed in the Early Bird program requirements.
- Disabilities are many and varied. This website has many practical strategies for you as an instructor <https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/school-play-work/learning-behaviour/teaching-skills-to-children-with-disability>



SECTION 4

Early Bird Meetings

Just like baby birds learn flying, eating and nesting skills, these lessons let your Early Bird experience each of the learning goals you have for them.

Meetings

Activity Tips

SECTION 4

Meetings



Your group of Adventurers is part of a larger club, composed of up to six groups. In many situations, these six groups start and end meetings together, with specialised group activities just for your age group happening in between.

Elements often include:

- Opening exercises with the whole club (Adventurer song, Adventurer pledge and law, song service, prayers)
- Group activities (age group)
 - * Award opportunities
 - * Games, stories, crafts, activities
 - * Varied opportunities to experience Jesus
- Closing exercises with the whole club

Activity Tips

Meetings are designed to meet the program goals and most importantly, the children's needs. With this in mind, the meetings provided in this Adventurer Program are designed to be flexible. Don't feel as if you must replicate each of them exactly. The activity suggestions are provided to help you fulfil the requirements listed! The requirements are developmentally based, which means that at some point during the year, most in this age group will be able to master or improve their skills to match this requirement! If you have created or seen activities that reach the same requirement goals, feel free to substitute or re-imagine how the kids learn! Just be sure it's not "just like school" but instead is mostly about active, hands-on, interactive learning!

While all of the activities in this section are designed to maximise fun, they also lead the children to Jesus and enable them to learn about their world, their families, and themselves. You can intentionally assist the children in recognising these connections to Jesus and their world by specifically stating the purpose of the meeting, connecting the activities to the meeting theme, and asking the children questions that encourage them to summarise the themes in their own words.

Also, be aware that the pace of activities will differ from club to club and meeting to meeting. Sometimes the children will quickly complete everything you planned. It's good to have a back-up game or activity for when this happens. Other times, the children may really enjoy an activity and not want to stop. It's okay to reschedule or adapt activities that you've planned and continue with something that everyone is enjoying. And if something isn't going smoothly, you can stop the activity and redirect the children to something new. However, keeping things moving "faster" than they may wish, keeps them engaged, and willing to come again, since they've never had time to be "bored". Finally, flexibility and enthusiasm are the keys to conducting successful Adventurer group meetings!

