

Reading in the Primary Grades

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Reading is one of the basic subjects in our curriculum, and its foundation is laid in the primary grades. It is the task of the primary teachers to so equip a child with reading skills that he can go on using and applying these skills to his many other subjects. It is so important for the child to acquire these skills that without them he will be a failure in his other work. The foundation upon which all other learning is built is established in these grades. It is here where the child develops all the skills necessary to get meaning from the printed page. A reader of words alone is no reader at all, but rather to learn how to get meaning from these words is essential. It is here where the child learns the many sounds which are represented by the symbols on the page. He learns to use these sounds to unlock new words. He also learns to analyze words, to see the various parts within a word and with these parts to build new words.

The classroom is a busy place during the reading period. At this time the teacher does her best to work with each child according to his own ability. This usually results in teaching the children in small groups, each group using their talents to the utmost. The groups progress at their own rate, and find reading to be fun and challenging.

To teach reading in this way requires a great deal of patience on the part of the teacher. Patience which she receives from God. Privileged indeed is the person whom God has chosen for this great task, for to be entrusted with the task of training God's covenant children and to be responsible for their reading training is a great calling. Precious are His children and great is the satisfaction when one sees progress, be it oh so little in some cases.

Pertinent indeed is this reading training in our Protestant Reformed Schools. For our children deserve to have the best in teaching in this field. It is a big field and there is much to be learned. What we need is teachers! Teachers who will feel the call and devote their time to this great task. How great a calling it really is—to be used by God for this work. His children will use these skills in reading to take their place in His church, as His workmen. This is our real goal, and therein lies the purpose of this teaching.

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