Year 2, Quarter 2, Weeks 7-12:

Weekly, 30-min. book discussion using Aesop’s Fables

(Note: I used the Aesop’s Fables translation by Milo Winter. It can be found online as a free ebook, complete with illustrations. There is also an audio version of his fables, which could be listened to in class in lieu of the teacher/students reading them: <http://www.amazon.com/Aesops-Fables-Children-Read---Listen/dp/0486467708/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1435286463&sr=8-1&keywords=aesop%27s+fables+for+children+with+CD+milo+winter> )

For each week:

1. Read the fables one by one.
2. After reading each fable (including the moral), have the students put the moral in their own words (no more than one sentence in length—see example ideas in parentheses in the teacher guide below). Write the moral decided upon by the students on the board. (You will end up with a list of morals—one for each fable—at the end of the lesson.) (Note: For older groups, do not read the moral listed in the fable until after they have thought of a moral in their own words.) Then ask for everyday examples of when this moral could be applied.
3. Read and discuss as many fables as allows in 25 minutes (saving the last five minutes for step #4). (Note: I listed the fables in the order of preference I would give them, so that those of less importance could be left off if we do not have time for them. I wrote this particular order of the fables for a group of girls on the young side of the dialectic age. The order of the fables could certainly be changed to meet the needs of other groups.)
4. In the last 5 minutes of the book discussion, see if the students can deduce the overall theme/message of all of the fables discussed that day. (One idea for the overall message is listed as the heading for the week in the teacher guide below. After deducing the overall message, the Scripture verse with the same message could be read.) Week 7 will be an easy overall message to deduce, and the message will get generally more difficult as time goes on.
5. If all fables and the overall message are covered before the 30 minutes are complete (or if a longer time allotment is desired for the book discussion), the students could use any extra time to come up with a new moral that would fit under the same theme, and then collaboratively write an original fable which could teach that moral.

(See pages that follow for teacher guide.)

Week #7: ALWAYS BE HONEST. (Proverbs 12:22 or Colossians 3:9-10 AND the 8th Commandment)

*(Note: You may want to start this class by discussing Aesop and what a fable is.)*

Fable: The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf (If you get in the habit of lying, pretty soon no one will trust you.) *(Note: Starting with this familiar fable may help the students feel comfortable with the process.)*

Fable: Mercury and the Woodman (Honesty is rewarded while telling lies is not.)

Fable: The Monkey and the Dolphin (Telling one lie often leads to telling another lie.) *(Note: To help explain this fable to younger students after it is read to them, replace “Athens” and “Piraeus” with a local city and port name and explain.)*

Fable: The Leap at Rhodes (Don’t exaggerate. It is what you *do* that counts, not what you *say* you can do.)

Fable: The Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing (We are harmed by our own falsehoods.)

*(Note: When the overall message is related to Scripture verses, be sure to discuss how fables are never on the same level as Scripture. Scripture is the Word of God. Fables can just help to remind us of God’s marvelous truths.)*

Week #8: BE CONTENT. (or DETACH YOURSELF FROM THE PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD.) (Hebrews 13:5 AND the 9th and 10th Commandments)

Fable: The Goose and the Golden Egg (If you are not content, you may lose even what you have.) *(Note: Beginning with this familiar fable may help the students feel more comfortable with the process.)*

Fable: The Peacock (We can have more freedom when we are not attached to fancy things.) *(Note: Mark 10:17-27 could be discussed. The teacher could also relate this to Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) and how her simple way of life lead her to God.)*

Fable: The Dog and His Reflection (Don’t covet/want what others have. OR Don’t be greedy.)

Fable: The Fox and the Crab (Don’t think that other homes or things will make you happier.)

*\*Note: If you are trying to draw forth the theme of “Be content,” the following fable could also be added, if it seems applicable to the conversation thus far:*

Fable: The Oxen and the Wheels (Don’t complain./Those who complain are often those who are doing the least.) *(Note: The teacher could relate this to a child who complains about doing chores when the parents are doing so much more for the needs of the family without complaint.)*

Week #9: BE PEACEFUL/GENTLE WITH OTHERS. (Romans 12:18)

(or 2 Timothy 2:24-25a—directed toward Timothy/pastors or all?)

Fable: The Two Goats (Don’t be stubborn./Being stubborn can lead to your own ruin.)

Fable: The Bundle of Sticks (You will be stronger and do more good by being united and working together.) *(Note: The teacher might relate this to Jesus praying for the unity of all of His followers (John 17:20-23) and how we can do more good for His kingdom together as one Body showing forth His love (John 13:35)).*

Fable: The North Wind and the Sun (Often it is best to persuade others gently rather than with force.)

Week #10: BE HUMBLE. (Proverbs 11:2)

Fable: The Milkmaid and Her Pail (Don’t make plans that assume things will happen in a certain way.) *(Note: The teacher may choose to alter some old-fashioned words in this fable regarding love. If so, having the teacher read it aloud, instead of listening to the audio tape, would be best. The teacher may also choose to relate this to Proverbs 16:9, which will help to reveal the theme of humility. Finally, as with the last two weeks, beginning with this familiar fable may help the students feel more comfortable with the process.)*

Fable: The Fighting Cocks and the Eagle (Boasting words will get you into trouble.)

Fable: The Quack Toad (Don’t give advice to someone unless you are doing well in that area of your own life.) *(Note: The teacher might relate this to Matthew 7:3-5.)*

Fable: The Lion and the Gnat (Pride often makes us blind to what will harm us.)

Fable: The Mole and His Mother (When you have sinful pride about one area of your life, you probably need to improve in that area and other areas as well.)

Week #11: HOW TO BE A GOOD FRIEND (Sirach 6:14-17)

Fable: The Cat, the Cock, and the Young Mouse (Don’t judge by appearances.) *(Note: The teacher may discuss how we are all God’s children, and that we need to be willing to get to know others and appreciate them for who they are without being quick to judge. The teacher may choose to relate this to God’s choice of David as king: I Samuel 16:7b.)*

Fable: The Goatherd and the Wild Goats (Don’t forget about your old friends when you make new ones.)

Fable: The Fox and the Stork (Be willing to take teasing (or a trick) if you give it out.)

Fable: The Ass and the Lap Dog (Don’t try to act like someone you aren’t.)

Week #12: HOW TO AVOID TEMPTATION (Matthew 26:41)

Fable: The Fox and the Lion (If we get used to evil, we don’t think it is bad anymore.) *(Note: The teacher may discuss how ignored venial sins will often lead to mortal sins, and the importance of frequent Confession.)*

Fable: The Dog and His Master’s Dinner (Don’t stop to consider a tempting thought./If you already know something is wrong, don’t even stop to consider reasons (excuses) for doing it.)

Fable: The Wolves and the Sheep (Listen to those who love you and are wise.) *(Note: The teacher may choose to discuss the role of parents and priests as well as the importance of not listening to those who don’t love you or who don’t seek wisdom from God.)*

Fable: The Farmer and the Stork (Keep the company of good and holy friends.) *(Note: The teacher may read Proverbs 13:20.)*

Fable: The Fox and the Pheasants (Don’t give sin your attention.)

Fable: The Cat and the Old Rat (Don’t let yourself be tricked a second time.) *(Note: The teacher may discuss how we should remember the ways in which Satan has tempted us in the past and not let him do it again by, among other things, avoiding the near occasions of sin.)*

Fable: The Old Lion and the Fox (Learn from others’ mistakes.) *(Note: The teacher might relate this to learning from the mistakes of history. For example, the Romans during the time of the Roman Empire in many ways were not respecting life or God’s laws, and the Roman Empire fell.)*

Fable: The Flies and the Honey (A pleasure which lasts for a short time can lead to death.)