

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN:
A THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS OF
TWENTIETH CENTURY FICTION TITLES IN
A CHRISTIAN CONTEXT

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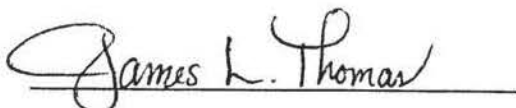
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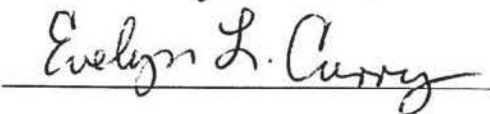
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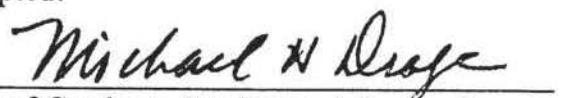
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Ah Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for thee. Jeremiah 32:17 (KJV)

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ABSTRACT

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN: A THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY FICTION TITLES IN A CHRISTIAN CONTEXT

By

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Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, this study sought to identify and analyze fiction written for children and published in the twentieth century (1900-1999) through thematic content analysis, to determine the parental image or images of God, as understood in Judeo-Christian theology, represented in such books. The study also explored the centrality of God to the story and interaction between God and the fictional characters in these titles to determine the nature of that interaction. A search of the WorldCat database using the keywords *God*, *juvenile*, and *fiction* was combined with a search for titles that have the words *God* and *fiction* in the subject field to compensate for the fact that the term *juvenile fiction* was not employed in cataloging of materials before 1986. An instrument was developed to record and code data for the purpose of analysis.

Based on the predominant operating images of God identified in research with children and adults, the study examined the image of God in stories for children as it pertains to God as (a) Provider, (b) Punisher, or (c) Passive Observer. The predominant image of God identified in the 103 books in this study is that of God as Provider, except for a few titles published in the 1970s and 1980s. Eleven aspects of God as Provider emerged from the books studied, the most frequent of which were God as Giver, God as Creator and God Who Loves. While the results of this study indicate that the fictional literature of the twentieth century affirms the God of Love that experts deem so crucial to the child's self esteem and general well-being, they do not confirm all of the research findings pertaining to the child's perception of interaction with God. The data collected confirms research concerning the male protagonists and boys' perceptions of active interaction, but the data concerning females and passive interaction does not. The results also indicate that the appearance of the word "God" in a specific field of a bibliographic record do not accurately predict the level of centrality for that book.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Psychiatrists and psychoanalysts have determined, through patient and field research, that all children develop a God concept and God identification regardless of indoctrination, whether that indoctrination be positive, negative, neutral, or non-existent (Coles 1990, xiii-xix, 279-302; Peck 1993, 119-126, 238-255; Rizzuto 1979, 7-8, 52, 183). The God concept develops early; "children have a leaning toward a God experience from the time their consciousness awakens" (Harms 1944, 115). In fact, newborns "before they have any psychic way of being aware of themselves, are already defined as God-given or not...(circumcision, baptism)...and have been marked physically or spiritually by the sign of God" (Rizzuto 1979, 183). There have been at least forty-five studies conducted on children's development of a God concept and/or God relationship in the past one hundred years, not only recently, but as far back as 1892 (Ratcliff 1988, 60).

Robert Coles, MD, Harvard professor of psychiatry and medical humanities, has been observing, interviewing, and analyzing children of different ethnic and social backgrounds around the world for forty years. Throughout these years of field research, children have offered their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about God in response to Dr. Coles' investigation into their management of stressful life situations, such as war,

desegregation, and poverty. Until 1985, Dr. Coles dismissed these "strong hints" about the importance of God in the children's lives as idle chatter interspersed between the topics of key interest to Coles and his research. Prompted by his work on the moral and political aspects of children's lives (Coles 1985, Coles 1986), he began to look back over years of tape-recorded interviews and notes. This retrospective led Coles to focus on the children's past discussions about God and His role in their lives and to include this type of information from that point forward (Coles 1990, xiii-xix). The research reveals, in part, an acknowledgement of the existence of God even among children whose (one or both) parents vocally reject God in the home. Dr. Coles discovered that many children are able to separate belief in God and a desire to seek God from practicing religion as may be evidenced by going to church. As one ten-year-old expresses it, "Just because you don't go to church and don't believe what they tell you [there] doesn't mean you don't think about God...I can sit and look out the window, and I'll watch it snow; and I believe in God then" (Coles 1990, 290). Children who are taught that God does not exist wonder on their own about the mysteries of life and if there must be a God in order for this world (the sun, moon, and stars and people) to function as it does (Coles 1990, 294). It is with respect to the study of children's perceptions of various aspects of nature that Jean Piaget identified three stages of understanding, the first of which attributes their existence and functioning to God or man (Piaget 1969, 269-272).

Development and Function of the Child's God Concept

The Anthropomorphic Nature of the Child's God Concept

Although Sigmund Freud believed God to be created in man's own image and for his (man's) own purpose (Freud 1927, 33), he did examine the development of the God concept in his theory of psychological development. Freud considered the God concept and God relationship to be an aspect of the Oedipus complex (Rizzuto 1979, 15). The Oedipus complex is defined as: "[a]ttachment of the child to the parent of the opposite sex, accompanied by envious and *aggressive* [original italics] feelings toward the parent of the same sex" (American Psychiatric Association 1975, 108). Dr. Ana-Maria Rizzuto (MD) began with a Freudian model and then employed an object relations approach in studying the God concept and its importance in her patients' lives. Object relations is defined as the "emotional bonds that exist between an individual and another person, as contrasted with his interest in, and love for, himself: usually described in terms of his capacity for loving and reacting appropriately to others" (American Psychiatric Association 1975, 108). Her book, *The Birth of the Living God* is "a clinical, psychoanalytic study of the 'postulated superhuman beings' as experienced by those who do and do not believe in them.... [It is a study of the] private, more secret and personal experience each believer has with his or her God. As for those who do not believe, I have studied the history of their lack of belief in a God they are able to describe. [Dr. Rizzuto associates the inception of the child's God concept with the nurturing relationship with the parents.] The relational-representational experience with objects which starts with

the parents and ends with the child's creation of the divinity closes the first cycle of representational development at the time of the resolution of the Oedipus conflict" (Rizzuto 1979, 3-4, 6).

Piaget has also addressed the God concept in the developing child. He states, "The child begins by attributing the distinctive qualities of the divinity--especially omniscience and almightiness--to his parents and thence to men in general. Then, as he discovers the limits of human capacity, he transfers to God, of whom he learns in his religious instruction, the qualities of which he learns to deny to men" (Piaget 1969, 268). Piaget has also observed, however, that "religious instruction has influenced only a section of the children under our observation" (Piaget 1969, 269), which would support Dr. Coles' findings that children without religious indoctrination also develop a God concept.

In 1944, Ernest Harms reported the findings of a then "new method of social psychological research" which employed "drawings, pictures, [and] symbolic designs, to which explanations or verbal additions may be given" (Harms 1944, 113). Harms identified three stages of "religious experience" (see Figure 1) namely, the "fairy-tale, the realistic, and the individualistic stages" (112). In the first stage the child, ages three to six, identified God primarily as a male personage expressed in terms of "a fairy-tale imagination glorifying the highest fantasies which the child at this age can catch with his little mind" (115). In the second stage the child, ages seven to twelve, is influenced by organized religion and adopts what he has been told (116). The subjects in the third

stage, ages thirteen to eighteen, were divided. The child/adolescent from one group of subjects exhibited doctrinal differences from his peers, while, in another group of children, he saw God through an emotional experience as the embodiment of "Peace" (Harms 1944, 118). Thus, the younger child experienced God anthropomorphically. Through his research with nearly six hundred subjects, Dr. James Fowler, a theologian, has identified six stages of faith development. After a pre-stage period called "Undifferentiated Faith," where the "seeds of trust, courage, hope and love are fused" (Fowler 1995, 121) in the infant, the child enters Stage I, called "Intuitive-Projective" (Fowler 1995, 123). In this stage, the two to six year-old child "uses the new tools of speech and symbolic representation to organize her or his sensory experience into meaning units" (Fowler 1995, 123). Equipped with language and an immature logic, the child is discovering the world around him. Because of his "cognitive ego-centrism," the child at this stage is "unable to coordinate and compare two different perspectives on the same object..." (Fowler 1995, 123). Theology professor Thomas Droege refers to this first stage as "God is like Mommy and Daddy" because the child "identif[ies] God as a caring, loving parent who protects and nurtures" (Droege 1983, 50-2). In the second stage, "Mythic-Literal," the "anthropomorphic elements in [the child's] image of God are far more developed than the nascent anthropomorphic images" in Stage I (Fowler 1995, 139). In this stage, the child will "tend to focus on God as a loving Father for [his] own personal life" (Droege 1983, 52-5). The child's culture--national and religious--now offers forms for the God image (Fowler 1995, 141).

STAGE	Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development	Ernest Harm's Religious Experience	James Fowler's Faith Development
Pre			Undifferentiated Faith Infancy to 2 years
1	Pre-operational 18 months to 7 years representational	Fairy-Tale 3 to 6 years God as "King or Daddy of all children"	Intuitive-Projective 2 to 6 years "God is like Mommy and Daddy"
2	Concrete Operational 7 to 12 years conservation, class inclusion, serialization	Realistic 7 to 12 years symbols, religion Christ-like	Mythic-Literal 7 to 13 years "What's fair is fair"
3	Formal Operations 12 years and up logical thinking	Individualistic 13 to 18 years emotional "Peace"	Synthetic-Conventional 12 to 17 years "I believe what the church believes"

Figure 1. Faith development theories

Stages 1 and 2 are pertinent to this study. The other stages are included for perspective.
(Piaget 1962, *Developmental Psychology Today* 1971, Harms 1944, Fowler 1995, Droege 1983)

In the two volumes he edited on preschool and school age Christian education, Donald Ratcliff reports the findings of several studies (not restricted to the United States) as they pertain to the development of the God concept. Preschoolers have an anthropomorphic view of God with attributes, behaviors, and (physical) features like a human being. Tamminen et al include Italian, Scandinavian and Belgian research which all concur on the anthropomorphic view of God at this stage (Tamminen et al 1988, 60-71). The Belgian study identified three separate stages of understanding each with a different level of anthropomorphism. At age four, one hundred percent (100%) of the

children perceived God as a man and by age eleven forty-nine percent (49%) understood "God as spirit" with forty-seven percent (47%) approaching this understanding and no (0%) eleven-year-olds perceived God as a man (Vianello et al 1992, 58). Arago-Mitjans found similar results, but in younger children: the first group up to age three, the second group ages three and four, and the third group four and a half and older (Arago-Mitjans 1965,).

Other researchers confirm the anthropomorphic concept of God. In his 1964 study, Dr. Ronald Goldman states that children, through their "egocentric thinking," understand God in a truly physical kind of anthropomorphism, limiting God to human characteristics and attributes. Goldman, a professor of educational psychology, further states that until children reach Piaget's formal operational level of thinking, they cannot perceive that which is "spiritual" and not concrete (Goldman 1964, 88). Goldman was also able to substantiate that children have an anthropomorphic concept of God by their understanding of interaction with God via direct communication. Goldman could not, however, determine whether children's anthropomorphic beliefs influence their understanding of God's interaction with humans or whether the reverse is true (Goldman 1964, 93).

Through his research with children ages six to seventeen, Goldman has identified three stages that reflect children's beliefs about communicating with God (see Figure 2). Referring to the Old Testament telling of God's communications with Moses, the children were asked how Moses could hear God and, in order to examine their level of

thinking, whether any bystanders might also have heard God. In the first stage, children eight-years-old and younger believe that anyone who had been present would also have heard because God speaks “solely in terms of material, physical and external...man-to-man talk, human voice speaking to human ear” (93).

STAGE	Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development	Ronald Goldman's Concepts of Divine Communication
1	Pre-operational 18 months to 7 years Representational	First Stage Up to 8 years Like “man-to-man talk, human voice speaking to human ear”
2	Concrete Operational 7 to 12 years conservation, class inclusion, serialization	Intermediate Stage 8 to 11 or 12 years God speaks to the “soul” or “Only holy people hear God”
3	Formal Operations 12 years and up logical thinking	Final Stage 12 to 13 years “non-material, non-physical”

Figure 2. Divine communication theory

Stages 1 and 2 are pertinent to this study. Stage 3 is included for perspective.
(Piaget 1962, *Developmental Psychology Today* 1971, Goldman, 1964)

Children at the second, or intermediate stage, do not believe that anyone other than Moses could have heard because God’s voice is soft and speaks directly to a person’s spirit. His voice is only audible to those who are “holy” or have “received the Holy Spirit” (94). Older children believe that only those for whom God intends the message can hear from God. These children in stage three perceive divine

communication to be “non-material, non-physical and based upon an inner experience” (Goldman 1964, 94).

Goldman's research confirms the anthropomorphic nature of the God concept and other researchers link this concept to that of the parental relationship. In their research involving 196 subjects, Justice and Lambert found a correlation does exist between their “concept of the personality of their parents and their concept of the personality of God” (Justice and Lambert 1986, 167). The concept of God “...may be patterned after the father and the mother (Tamayo and Desjardins 1976, 132). The length and source of religious instruction had no impact on their concept of God (Justice 1986, 169). The image of God is based on their quality of parenting; the “...relational image of God...either parallels the quality of relationship with significant others or, in some cases, compensates for what is perceived as lacking in relationships with significant others” (Heinrichs 1982, 120).

Though psychologist David Heller has identified some differences between children of the two most practiced Christian denominations (Catholic and Protestant) concerning nurturing, guilt, forgiveness, etc., he concludes that the impact of family is not totally responsible for the formation of the God representation (Heller 1986, 104). Heller seems to suggest that children's image of God and the resultant relationship to God reflect their expressed image of themselves and/or observed socialization traits and patterns of their age, gender, religious doctrine, etc. (Heller 1986, 39-104).

In one of these areas, gender, Heller and others have also identified differences in the God concept. Boys perceive God as scientific, actively interested in their lives, yet physically distant and often difficult to reach (Heller 1986, 57-66). They are fascinated with God's omnipotence and they desire to align themselves with that power (Tamminen et al 1988, 70). Boys are also interested in the concept of evil and the devil, indicating a dichotomy that may involve an Oedipal conflict for some concerning their desire to be aligned with God yet at the same time in competition with Him (Heller 1986, 63-5; Tamminen et al 1988, 70).

Girls tend to relate to God in a more emotional and intimate way. They "see" and "feel" God's presence in their daily lives, talking with Him, receiving from Him, giving to Him (Heller 1986, 66-75; Tamminen 1988, 69). Their God is more passive and aesthetic than the boys' active and powerful God. He watches over girls, answers their prayers, and just loves them. There may also be Oedipal implications associated with the girl's desire to have a loving relationship with the father (Heller 1986, 71-3).

The child develops a God-representation from various sources "not just parental relationships [and it can be modified later by] sociocultural experiences and religious teaching" (Rizzuto 1979, 7). "The God image is constructed by each person with a fair degree of freedom for the purpose of maintaining an at least minimally acceptable image of the self" (51). Dr. Rizzuto quotes, "Freud said in 1914 'all of [the child's] later choices of friendship and love follow upon the basis of the memory-traces left behind by these first prototypes'" (7).

The God Image and Self Esteem

The God image cannot disappear; it remains a transitional object throughout life; “it can be rejected, ignored, suppressed or found temporarily unnecessary” (Rizzuto 1979, 10). There are, in fact, individuals who feel that they cannot live without God and for whom

...the sense of self is in fact in dialectical interaction with a God representation that has become essential to the maintenance of the sense of being oneself...In these individuals, the sense of self and its reality is directly and vitally connected with the God representation experienced as an existing reality. I postulate that in these individuals the elaboration and reworking (or lack of reworking) of the parental imagos into a God representation, further elaborated through fantasy and secondary process, is so deeply related to the endless process of separation individuation from the parents, and also to newer identifications with them, that to stop believing in God is to cease to be oneself. (Rizzuto 1979, 51)

The God relationship is one of power/authority over the child (Saussy 1991, 11) and “...no serious study of object representations could be undertaken without considering theoretically the formation of the sense of self, most particularly in relationship to God. God seems to be the only object...who has total knowledge of the self as perceived by the patient” (Rizzuto 1979, 10). Dr. Rizzuto's extensive work on the formation of God images has served as a springboard for others' research. In her book, *God Images and Self Esteem*, Carroll Saussy says:

Self esteem is a complex disposition that is related to at least six major experiences: (1) parental acceptance, (2) an ideology (an understanding of human life and one's place in it) that fosters self-esteem, (3) satisfying relationships, (4) competence, (5) passion for life, and (6) self-acceptance.

The first of these is clearly the most crucial: namely, parental acceptance, love, and esteem of the infant and child.

Both the early formation of God images and the answer the child is given by parents, siblings, or religious educators are profoundly related to faith in self and self

esteem.... Self esteem is related to all three levels of God imagery: unconscious God representations formed through the child's interaction with her parents, ideas about God learned through socialization, and the experience of God in one's life" (Saussy 1991, 18, 47, 52).

Educators Kaori Yamamoto and Helen Felsenthal have studied the research pertaining to the child and his self esteem. Yamamoto defines self esteem. "Acceptance of the self...is...a process through which [the child] comes to know and appreciate himself better. ...such efforts at self-acceptance presuppose some fundamental faith in a self which is much more than what the self concept currently depicts, basic respect for the wholeness and potential of human being, and a high regard for life" (Yamamoto 1972, 1). Felsenthal describes a child with high self esteem as "self-assured and confident...happy, vibrant, and energetic [with] a strong sense of right and wrong" (Felsenthal 1972, 179). Based on the research of Dr. Coles, Dr Rizzuto, and Carroll Saussy cited above, one might conclude that a child's image of God may be associated with a child's emotional well-being.

Dr. M. Scott Peck, MD, has come to recognize the importance of the God relationship in regard to self esteem and other aspects of mental health in his patients. He has identified four stages of spiritual development and takes a "spiritual history" (idea of God, closeness to God, etc.) from his patients in addition to the general (physical, emotional, etc.) history (Peck 1993, 232-255).

Impact of Literature on Children

If, as previously demonstrated, children perceive God primarily as parent figure; one may wonder how they will handle a God who is punitive or indifferent toward representative children and adults in the stories they read. Saussy suggests “...conflicting images of God are at work in [children’s] psyches, canceling out the God of Love” (Saussy 1991, 3).

Research indicates that children interact with and react to stories in different ways. Though no one can predict which way a particular child will react to a particular story, it is apparent from the research that there will be some reaction. An area of study exists pertaining to “analysis of the ideas readers get from their contact with text” (Johnson 1981, 133). After citing much research on the different types of a child’s understanding of what he reads, Johnson concludes that there is something more important taking place in the interaction of reader and text: “...beyond getting the ideas were areas of seeing relationships, evaluating ideas, making judgments, generalizing and concluding, and solving problems” (Johnson 1981, 134).

Theories of literary response differ in their assertions as to whether “the text produces the reader or the reader produces the text” (Travis 1998, 2). Other aspects of the controversy include “transformations in the act of reading over historical periods and changes in readers during the course of reading as well as differences among readers in the context of a cultural field” (Travis 1998, 3). Again, it is safe to conclude that there is

some interaction between reader and text, and there are several types and levels of interaction.

Identification with the characters in a story is one such type of interaction. In his treatise on literary response, Holland presents the theory and research for and against the possibility (and thereby the existence) of identifying with literary characters as though they were “real people” (Holland 1968, 262-277). He concludes that the readers “re-create the characters and give them a sense of reality [and they do this] because the character satisfies a need for [them]” (Holland 1968, 277).

Thus, our so-called “identification with a literary character is actually a complicated mixture of projection and introjection, of taking in from the character certain drives and defenses that are really objectively “out there” and of putting into him feelings that are really our own, “in here.” And, needless to say, we do not just incorporate a character’s drives and defenses – we incorporate the whole character, clothes, features, manners, physique, and the rest... (Holland 1968, 278)

Arthur N. Applebee suggests another explanation for the connecting of young readers and fictional characters, stating that for the young child “a story is something that happened in the past, a *history* rather than a fictional construct” (Applebee 1978, 38). In *The Child's Concept of Story*, he presents evidence that the child under the age of nine believes (to varying degrees) that story characters are real. The youngest child believes that fictional characters are real enough to visit him today and the older child believes that they are real enough to have visited in the recent past (Applebee 1978, 38-47). Dr. Coles has also documented identification with fictional characters and fictitious situations

(Coles 1989, 51-7) and "involvement with the protagonist" (Coles 1989, 70) in older readers.

Citing research on "the power of literature to change the world" with respect to children's literature (which is at the crux of much controversy and concern), Rudine Sims states that "Children's books do have the power to affect self-concept and world view" (Sims 1982, 1-2). Some authors attempt to teach (impart certain ideas and/or values, etc.) through the books they write (Fuchs 1984, 1-2) and some adults attempt to use books (stories) to teach, counsel, and/or comfort children, as in the case of bibliotherapy (Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown 1996, 278-9). Bibliotherapy is defined as "any kind of emotional healing that comes from books" (Jacobs and Tunnell 1996, 93).

There are some authors who admit they "thread subtle messages" into their writings for children because they "know that children will be influenced by the books they write" (McColskey 1999, 4). One important effect of this is evident in the research on incidental learning which shows an increase in incidental learning in children up to age twelve (Stevenson 1972, 12). Children do pick up information, impressions, and ideas that are not considered to be part of the main content of a lesson or story.

In oral cultures, stories are the vehicle for transmission of the culture: history, religion, politics, etc. Though books may not teach per se, they do carry messages: images, ideas, and beliefs of the culture in which they occur. For instance, fairy tales employ the "Pedagogy of Fear" to convey the message that disobedience leads to death (Tatar 1992, 22-50). Fairy tales "aim to mold behavior by illustrating in elaborate detail

the dire consequences of deviant conduct" (Tatar 1992, 25). Nursery rhymes may serve a similar function in that "some rhymes try to shame children into remembering and behaving" (Rollin 1992, 103).

A historical survey of children's literature reveals that the fiction literature of each era tends to reflect the social mores and values of that particular time (Huck, Hepler and Hickman 1993, 108-109; Murray 1998, xv-xix). From the didactic, moralistic stories of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries to the so-called child-centered new realism of the latter twentieth century, fictional images have changed to the extent that society could bear or, in some cases, to an extent that society demanded.

Fiction written for and read by a specific age group in one era can be light-years away, in content and imagery, from fiction for the same age group in another era (Hunt 1995, ix-xiv). However, authors from every time period have been aware of their potential to impart information and values to their young readers along with their stories. Though it may be impossible to identify the exact impact a particular story may have upon a particular child at any given time, research clearly shows that reading can affect children's attitudes and beliefs.

Statement of the Problem

Children often identify with characters in stories and may identify with characters in stories who interact with God. Conflicting images of God in stories can challenge children's existing image of God and thereby confuse children and threaten their self

esteem (Saussy 1991, 3). Accordant images of God may reinforce and expand an existing image. Children are spiritual beings in the sense that they have a concept of God and a relationship with God throughout childhood. Young children have an anthropomorphic concept of God that includes human attributes and characteristics. Furthermore, children interact with God and/or expect certain types of interaction from God according to their age and gender (Goldman 1964, 93-95; Heller 63-5, 71-3). Various aspects of their environment, including stories, influence children directly and indirectly. Although there is no way to determine how any particular book or story will affect any particular child, studies do indicate that children can be influenced positively or negatively by images and ideas presented in stories they read or that are read to them (Rollin 1992, Coles 1989, Tatar 1992). The number of times God is mentioned in a particular title indicates the centrality of God to the story and may have an impact on the reader as evidenced in incidental learning.

Significance of the Problem

The child's image of God is an integral component of the whole child (Coles 1990, Peck 1993). The child's self esteem is linked with and partially dependent upon his image of God (Rizzuto 1979, Saussy 1982). Stories do have an impact on young readers and what they read about God can influence their attitudes and beliefs and thereby their self esteem and possibly their interaction with God. The centrality of God to a story conveying a particular image of God may have a further impact on the reader.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze fiction titles written for children published in the twentieth century (1900-1999), through thematic content analysis, to determine the image of God, as understood in Judeo-Christian theology, represented in such titles. A further purpose of the study is to determine the nature of interaction between God and the fictional characters in these titles and the centrality of God to the story.

Importance of the Study

Parents, teachers and librarians select, purchase, and recommend fiction titles for children. There is need of a tool by which parents, teachers, and school (Christian and public), church, and public librarians can identify and analyze said titles. According to a recent survey fifty-two percent (52%) of American youth profess to be Protestant and twenty-six percent (26%) of American youth profess to be Roman Catholic, for a total of 78% of the American teen population as Christian (Gallup 1999, 148). As two percent (2%) profess to be Jewish, at least eighty percent (80%) of American youth profess belief in the Judeo-Christian God and could be affected. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that younger children, in like number, are practicing the Christian Faith to some degree and therefore believe in the Judeo-Christian God.

Research Questions

1. What is the image of God that appears in the fiction literature for children?
 - a. Is there a predominant image of God and, if so, what is it?
 - b. Have the image or images changed throughout the time period in the study?
 - c. How do the image or images of God relate to the child's developmental stage of faith development as outlined by Harms and Fowler?
2. How does God interact with characters in the fiction literature for children?
 - a. Does the interaction coincide with Goldman's stages of Divine communication?
 - b. Is this interaction active or passive in compliance with Heller's findings?
3. How central is God to the story?

Definitions of Terms

1. God is the Judeo-Christian God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16) as represented in the Holy Bible that is recognized by the Christian Faith.

2. Image of God is defined as "a psychological working internal model of the *sort of person* that the individual *imagines* God to be" (Lawrence 1991). This would include attributes, characteristics, personality traits, and behaviors that people, in this case

children, would attribute to God. “God concept,” “God image,” and “Imago Dei” will be considered as synonyms of the Image of God.

3. Literature for children is defined as that body of literature written for children from birth through age twelve. Literature is a piece of writing that “responds to a search for plot parallels, repeated images, figures of speech, structure, myths, [and] point of view.” (Holland 1968, xi-xiii) Fiction is defined as a story that is not true, although it may be based on some real person, fact, or incident.

4. A thematic content analysis is defined as “the use of a theory or theme to analyze a text or series of texts. The theory or theme is used as an analytical device, the main focus being analysis of the text rather than the development of the theory” (Short 1995, 21). A thematic content analysis can be qualitative or quantitative or both.

5. Christian context refers to all facets and denominations (Catholic, Protestant and Non-Denominational) within the Christian Faith, recognizing Jesus as the “Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1) and Savior to God’s people on earth.

6. Active interaction with God is defined as taking decisive action on God’s behalf or at His direction. This would include obeying or disobeying God’s command or commandment, fighting for or against God, or any other interaction that reflects God’s power.

7. Passive interaction with God is defined as quiet, reflective interaction with God such as talking to and listening to God (prayer), expressing love for and/or feeling love from God, or any other interaction which reflects God’s love.

Assumptions of the Study

1. There are sufficient fiction titles for children from which to identify an image of God.
2. An image of God can be identified using thematic content analysis.
3. If the word “God” appears in a bibliographic record, the book can be considered to be about God.
4. God exists as He is portrayed in the Old and New Testaments and heaven and angels are real.
5. The number of words will be consistent from book to book within the same format.

Limitations of the Study

1. Titles for this study will come exclusively from one source: Online Computer Library Center (OCLC).
2. Only titles with the word God in the title, subject or summary will be identified and retrieved.
3. It will not be possible to identify all fiction titles that pertain to the study due to inconsistencies in indexing.
4. It may not be possible to identify the interest level for all titles.
5. Only one researcher will conduct analysis of the titles.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze fiction titles written for children and published in the twentieth century (1900-1999) to determine the image of God represented in such titles. A review of the literature reveals that research pertaining to the image of God in fiction literature for children is limited. Due to the psychological, theological, and literary nature of this study, this review of the literature will include a) imagery, imagination and the religious imagination, b) images in fiction literature, c) the image of God in literature, and d) models of God.

Imagery, Imagination, and the Religious Imagination

Imagery

Imagery is a psychological phenomenon that is recognized and utilized in the field of mental and emotional health. In fact, in psychology, there are two kinds of imagery, mental and emotive.

Mental imagery is a process through which a person focuses on vivid mental pictures of experiences or events—past, present, or future. [It is] useful in (1) assessing the relationships between clients' emotional and intellectual experiences and their presenting symptoms, and (2) determining how those experiences become exaggerated and intensified in clients' minds. *Emotive imagery* is a procedure...in which the client imagines, in a covert but vivid way, the sensations

and feelings of an actual situation or behavior. (Gilliland, James, and Bowman 1989, 242-3)

The late professor of education, Harold Rugg, defined imagery in slightly different, albeit psychological, terms. Beneath consciousness lies the unconscious where “the perceptual ingredients of the imagined conception are stored...our conscious-nonconscious continuum projects a...dichotomy in imagery—the *reality imagery* of conscious perpetual experiences contrasted with *autistic imagery* based on earlier perceptual experience which has been reconstructed in the unconscious [italics added]. Among the reality images we should distinguish the memory image from the imagination image... both [of which] are the product of, or are verifiable by, direct personal experience” (Rugg 1963, 68-9).

One type of autistic image, the eidetic image, is defined as an “unusually vivid and apparently exact mental image [which] may be a memory, fantasy or dream” (American Psychiatric Association 1975, 49). Rugg presented research that suggests that children are more prone to eidetic images than adults are. In fact, “sixty per cent of the children but only 7 per cent of the adults possessed this faculty in a highly developed state. Why the difference? Certainly there are two factors: the freer, more *imaginative tendencies* [italics added] of children; and the predominance of verbalism in the life of the grown-up and its lesser degree in childhood” (Rugg 1963, 71).

The use of imagery is not limited to mental and emotional health; it has also been recognized and utilized in the field of physical health. Healing with imagery has been

utilized throughout history and is currently an integral component of alternative medicine. Psychiatrist Dennis Gerstein, publisher of a national newsletter on imagery says, "Imagery is the most fundamental language we have. Everything you do the mind processes through images. [Practitioners of holistic medicine maintain that] your imagination can cure your ills" (Gottlieb 1995, 84). Imagery and imagination are also integral components of the child's development.

The materials of thought, which are called cognitive units, include images, symbols, concepts, and rules. These mental units are properties of the mind, as temperature is a property of molecules in action. They are abstract potential forces that provide the child with the ability to make sense of experience, to remember past events, and eventually, to solve problems. These units are acted upon by cognitive processes, which include encoding, memory, generation of hypotheses, evaluation, and deduction.

The *image* is probably the first mental unit to develop. (*Developmental Psychology Today* 1971, 201)

According to Piagetian theory, "Images represent absent objects or events...bearing some resemblance to the object represented" (Ginsburg and Oppenheimer 1969, 160). Dr. Fowler defines image as

A vague, felt inner representation of some state of affairs and of our feelings about it. As we have suggested, the forming of an image does not wait or depend upon conscious processes. The image unites "information" and feeling; it holds together orientation and affectional significance. As such, images are prior to and deeper than concepts. When we are asked what we think or know about something or someone, we call up our images, setting in motion a kind of scanning interrogation or questioning of them. Then in a process that involves both a forming and an expression, we narrate what our images "know." The narration may take story form; it may take poetic or symbolic form, transforming nascent images into articulated, shared images; or it may take the propositional form of conceptual abstractions. (Fowler 1995, 26)

Imagery has both a positive and negative side and psychotherapy can utilize both aspects. In negative imagery, therapists help clients by asking them to “imagine...their most feared inappropriate emotions [and then replace them with] appropriate feelings” (Gilliland, James, and Bowman 1995, 199). A child may actually create an image to compensate for a lack or personal failure in his life and turn a negative relationship or situation into a positive one. This image, called an *imago* by analytical psychologists, is “formed by a combination of the inner individual image and contact with...the person with whom relationship is formed” (Wickes 1988, 30).

Imagination

There can also be both positive and negative implications of the imagination. In Carl Jung’s psychological theory, imagination exists in the individual’s unconscious, or what he terms the “*collective unconscious* [which is an] inheritance from ancestral and racial psychic life [that] consists of the inherited potentialities of human imagination” [original italics] (Wickes 1988, 27). Repressed memories, which may develop into neuroses, go to this lower level and, from this same level, “cosmic images rise to the conscious and become the material of the poet, the artist, or the spiritual prophet” (Wickes 1988, 27).

One way in which imagination may manifest in some children is in the form of an imaginary playmate, situation, or object. A child may create an imaginary companion to fill a relationship void in her life, or she may transfer a personal need onto a doll or other

plaything. Another child might create a fanciful world or role into which he might retreat when life becomes frightening, oppressive, or lonely (Fraiberg 1959, 16-23; Wickes 1988, 156-194).

There is a negative aspect of imagination that can be a harmful or even destructive force in some children's lives. In treating children and adults with severe emotional disturbances, psychoanalyst Dorothy Bloch has uncovered deep-seated, debilitating fears that cause certain children to create a defensive fantasy (or fantasies) to shield themselves from situations and circumstances beyond their control. Based on their feelings of imagined unworthiness, and seeking love and safety—or perhaps the safety of being loved, they construct an imaginary world in which they feel safe from their fears of rejection, abandonment, and infanticide. If allowed to go untreated, these fears may become dormant and continue into adulthood as unconscious fantasy (Bloch 1978).

In *Webster's New World College Dictionary* the first definition of imagination has two parts, “ a) the act or power of forming mental images of what is not actually present [and] b) the act or power of creating mental images of what has never been actually experienced, or of creating new images or ideas by combining previous experiences; creative power” (*Webster's New World College Dictionary* 4th ed., s.v. "imagination"). Rugg calls the former definition “reproductive imagination” and the latter, “creative imagination” (Rugg 1963, 37).

Rugg considers imagination to be an important facet of human existence because the process of thinking depends on it. “Imagination is the instrument of discovery. [It] is

the universal and indispensable instrument of all levels of living in the human world. Our daily lives depend on it" (Rugg 1963, 36-7).

In literary criticism, imagination is considered to be a reason for using language, to create stories and other works of literature. Here, imagination can be defined as "what makes our practical life really human[;] a third level of the mind, a level where consciousness and practical skill come together" (Frye 1964, 21).

Fowler states that "all of our knowing begins with images and that most of what we know is stored in images" (Fowler 1995, 25) and "education at this age...has a tremendous responsibility for the quality of images and stories we provide as gifts and guides for our children's fertile imaginations" (Fowler 1995, 132). Other experts agree that stories can have a major impact on children's imaginations.

Bruno Bettelheim, professor of education and psychology, has published the definitive study of fairy tales, a type of traditional literature, as they pertain to the child's development. Bettelheim maintains that these stories "speak to children" in a way that contemporary realistic stories can not. Bettelheim discusses the child's acceptance of the fairy tale as true "because its world view accords with his own [and it helps to fulfill his] need for magic" (Bettelheim 1989, 45-53).

James Fowler concurs with Bettelheim's assessment of the value of fairy tales and their ability to "provide powerful symbolizations for children's inner terrors and for hidden fantasies of violence or sex that bring them secret feelings of guilt. [He states] The useful realism of fairy tales--and of many biblical narratives—provides indirect yet

effective ways for children to externalize their inner anxieties and to find ordering images and stories by which to begin to shape their lives” (Fowler 1995, 130).

In fact, Fowler wishes to "substitute for [Bettelheim's] somewhat pejorative word *fantasy* - which suggests 'make-believe' and 'unreality' - the stouter word *imagination*. Imagination can indeed be fanciful, but it arises in this stage [Fowler's Stage I], for reasons Bettelheim helpfully sets, as a powerful and permanent force by which we compose an ultimate environment and orient ourselves toward the being or beings that constitute its character" (Fowler 1995, 131-132).

Children employ imagery and imagination in their understanding of and interaction with the world around them. Stories of and about God supply them with mental images and help them to imagine what God is like.

The Religious Imagination

In his book, *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination*, Garrett Green, a professor of religious studies, seeks to solve the centuries old debate regarding the “*Anknüpfungspunkt*, or point of contact, between the Word of God and the human creature. Analysis of the debate shows how it led to an impasse, a dilemma in which theologians seemed to be left with a devil’s choice between ‘natural theology’ and ‘positivism of revelation’” (Green 1989, 5). Green suggests that imagination is as pertinent to science as it is to art and literature because “objects of imagination may be either real or illusory” (Green 1989, 3). Green’s theory states that

the point of contact for revelation is formally the paradigmatic imagination and materially the image of God. The doctrine of the *imago Dei* identifies the human essence with the created image of God. The *imago* thus represents at once the essence of human nature and the *Anknüpfungspunkt* for revelation [original italics and parentheses]" (Green 1989, 84-5). "The doctrine of the *imago Dei* lends itself naturally to the issue of imagination because both depend on a similar set of images. The religious imagination does not 'image' God (i.e., construct some kind of picture of God) but *imagines* God (i.e., thinks of God according to a paradigm). The paradigmatic imagination is not mimetic but analogical; it shows us not what God *is* but what God is *like* " [original italics and parentheses]. (Green 1989, 92-3)

One criticism of Green's work is its supposed Protestant perspective, although Green maintains that it is meant to represent all Christian denominations (Green 1989, viii-ix). Andrew Greeley, on the other hand, states the purpose of his book, *The Religious Imagination*, as a study of the "stories of God ...in the religious imagination of American Catholics, particularly young American Catholics, and the implication for the presumably nonreligious dimensions of their lives" (Greeley 1981, 6). Greeley's theory is that "the raw, elementary power of religion comes first through the imagination [and that an individual's] image of God, picture of Jesus..." (3) will reveal more about that individual than his church attendance or doctrinal beliefs.

Greeley thereby associates the God image with the human "propensity for hope [and] the capacity for experiences which renew their hope" (7). He has developed a model of religious imagination based on man's need, whether it is genetic or psychological, for "hope-rewarding experiences [which he calls] grace" (7-8). Greeley explains,

The experience of grace, first of all, is an impact on the senses and then is filtered through the imagination where it has an enormous and sometimes overwhelming effect. Even long after the experience is over the residue remains in the

imagination, capable of recollection and of exciting once again resonances of the experience. The interaction between experience and imagination is complex and intricate. The repertory of images and pictures available to any given person's or community's imagination will respond to the experience and the recollection of the experience, if not the experience itself. (Greeley 1981, 10)

Greeley's sociological study of his subjects' reactions to stories of God--and the impact of those stories on their lives--pertained to those stories as related in the Bible of the Christian faith. Green also believed that "...the inspiration of scripture is its imaginative force, its power to re-form the human imagination" (Green 1989, 5). The same phenomenon described above might be transferable to other stories of God, those found in the literature of less divine origin.

Images in Fiction Literature

The Elements of Fiction

Much of the theoretical and research literature pertaining to fiction addresses the concepts of imagery and imagination. The *Webster's New World College Dictionary* defines fiction in the following manner:

n. 1 a making up of *imaginary* happenings; feigning 2 anything made up or *imagined*, as a statement, story, etc. 3 a) literary narratives, collections which portray *imaginary* characters or events, specif. novels and short stories b) a narrative of this kind 4 something accepted as fact for the sake of convenience, although not necessarily true (*Webster's New World College Dictionary* 4th ed., s.v. "fiction") (italics added)

Imagery and imagination are integral components of fiction. The basic elements of fiction, all of which help to create images for the reader, are plot, setting, characterization,

point of view, theme, and style. The plot, or story line, drives the story to its conclusion employing conflict that "keeps the story moving and stirs the interest of the reader" (Horning 1997, 154). The setting, where and when the story takes place, can have a direct bearing on the plot or merely serve as background and color.

Characterization includes the main character and one or more secondary characters. The main character, or protagonist, is usually well developed by the author to evoke a relationship or connection with the reader. The characters' speech, actions and relationships with one another reveal who they are to the reader. The point of view, or voice of the story, may come from inside the story as told by one or more characters in the story (first person) or may come from an outside narrator. The narrator may be all-knowing (omniscient) where "the author can move around inside the story and enter into the thoughts and feelings of any of the characters [or the narrator may be] "limited omniscient [where] the author uses third person but sticks to the viewpoint of one character" (Horning 1997, 166).

The theme, or message of the story, is "a significant, underlying truth embedded just beneath the surface of the story" (Horning 1997, 175); it "reveals something of the author's purpose in writing the story" (Huck et al 1993, 23). The author's use of words and their arrangement constitute the style for "language dictates style in all writing" (Horning 1997, 168). An author may employ literary devices such as imagery, figurative language, hyperbole, allusion, and sound devices to "evoke emotional responses in the reader" (Horning 1997, 168-171).

In *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature*, educator Rebecca Lukens identifies imagery as “the most frequently used device, and the most essential. **Imagery** [original bold] is the appeal to any of the senses; it helps create setting, establish a mood, or show a character. The writer relies on imagery to give the reader impressions of what the writer wishes to depict” (Lukens 1995, 153).

Fictional Images

A major concern pertaining to images in fiction literature, both traditional and realistic contemporary fiction, is that of the stereotyping of a people, whether it is with regard to gender, age, societal role, race, ethnicity, or lifestyle. Through the years authors, educators, and psychologists have been examining and analyzing children's fiction to identify literature that might “reinforce and perpetuate the racism and sexism that have had such negative effects on [children's] lives and on society in general” (Sims 1982, 2).

Gender and age images are two concerns in traditional and realistic stories. Where authors of contemporary realistic fiction strive to give depth to their characters, fairy tale characters tend to be flat or universal in scope, “symbolic of the completely good or entirely evil. The beautiful girl is usually virtuous, humble, patient and loving. Stepmothers are ugly, cross, and mean. The hero, usually fair-haired, or curly-haired, is strong, virile, brave, kind, generous, and long suffering” (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman 1993, 317-18).

A study of female characters in three subgenres of high fantasy, another form of traditional literature for children and adults, revealed females in one subgenre that do not fit the stereotype of the weak, passive female who is dependent upon her male counterpart. In the subgenre of Alternate World/History, "independent women are found in the majority of novels...additionally women are rarely found in 'weaker' roles such as a sex object or passive victim. These females are more likely to take active roles in the process of a story although, on average, women are more passive than men in high fantasy" (Solomon 1998, 30).

The female character in the fiction of earlier eras was almost exclusively meek and mild as well as moral, sometimes orphaned and sometimes dying, but usually in need of help and attention from a strong, yet compassionate male (Murray 1998, 54-58, 106-109). In 1964, Harriet M. Welsch arrived on the literary scene and changed this image permanently. Harriet, Louise Fitzhugh's irrepressible protagonist from *Harriet the Spy*, records unflattering observations about her classmates, spies on adult neighbors, uses language bordering on profanity, and engages in backtalk to her parents, thereby changing what could be tolerated in contemporary children's literature (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman 1993, 151, 543; Murray 1998, 190).

While their female counterparts reflected the moral conscience of their respective eras, young male protagonists enjoyed adventures on the frontier or at sea and often misbehaved as boys are inclined to do--boys will be boys. Sometimes they were redeemed into a Christian life and sometimes they went unpunished, unrepented, and

unredeemed, a few appearing to prosper from their misdeeds (Murray 1998, 52-54, 72-76).

The parents of these fictional children have not been neglected. Positive parental images in children's stories are the concern of educator Patricia Montgomery-Aaron. Negative images in children's stories can give children reason to fear stepmothers. One six-year-old, facing the reality of a stepmother in her life, remembered what happened to her friend Cinderella and was convinced that all stepmothers are "mean; they only love their real children. When children feel confident that parents are reliable, they are likely to view the external world as promising and positive. On the other hand, the world is threatening and unpredictable to children who doubt parents. Thus, for young children, defining reality begins with their impressions of parents, whether they be biological parents, stepparents, adopted parents, foster parents or other primary caregivers" (Montgomery-Aaron 1986, 287).

The so-called "perfect parent" appears to be an icon of the fiction of the past. Mrs. Moffat, of Eleanor Estes' Moffat trilogy of the 1940s, "appears as the epitome of the perfect mother, never complaining, never losing patience with the children's misadventures...and seeing the humor in even the most trying circumstances" (Murray 1998, 155). Fitzhugh's parental images of the 1960s and 1970s, the antithesis of those found in Estes' works, are representative of many fictional parental images of the latter part of the twentieth century. These parents are either too busy to notice and/or parent their children, or they are more socially conscious than family or child conscious (Murray

1998, 190-1). Somewhere in between are the conscientious, loving parents of the Krupnik (Lois Lowry, 1970s to 1990s) and Quimby (Beverly Cleary, 1950s to 1990s) households. Sometimes struggling to make ends meet, always coping with life's many challenges, these mothers and fathers balance family and careers with varying levels of success. They usually manage, however, to share in their children's problems and accomplishments (Huck, Hepler and Hickman 1993, 534-536).

Images of grandparents and the older generations are also present in children's stories. In a bibliographic essay entitled, *Images of the Old and Young in Recent Children's Literature*, library science educator, Beverly Miller, reports a shift in the focus of these titles and positive interaction between the generations. "No longer is it common to find the old person portrayed as a stock character or as a shadowy figure in the background. Instead, we have stories with characters emanating a full range of human emotions, weaknesses, and faults" (Miller 1989, 291).

Other fictional images have been changing as well. The negative stereotyped image of librarians--female, hair bun, finger to the lips signaling for quiet--appears to be changing. Suzanne Monroe reports on an increase in the number of "trade books portraying images of libraries and librarians. Images are of both women and men as librarians, and both girls and boys are featured as library patrons. [Monroe offers an analysis of examples of] children's literature [which] provides empowering images and positive messages of literacy, specifically within the context of the community library" (Monroe 1999, 150-1).

A scrutiny of racial and ethnic images has been taking place in the latter part of the twentieth century. In *Shadow and Substance*, African American author and educator, Rudine Sims, presents a model for identifying the role and image of African Americans in children's contemporary realistic fiction. She has identified three distinct categories of fiction pertaining to African Americans: social conscience, melting pot, and culturally conscious. Books with social conscience stories deal with integration and interracial issues; African Americans are depicted only in their relationship to Americans of European descent. Melting pot books contain stories that are devoid of all racially specific content and include situations and environments to which any American children can relate. Sims concludes that the "melting pot books represent a major improvement over invisibility and over most social conscience books [because] they transcend the demeaning images of the past and provide in their place positive images of Afro-American children and their families" (Sims 1982, 45).

Sims deems culturally conscious stories more authentic, and thereby, more accurate for audiences in general and more self-affirming for African Americans specifically, because they "consciously seek to depict a fictional Afro-American life experience" (Sims 1982, 49). During the period of her study, 1965-1979, more culturally conscious books were being published than those in the other two categories (Sims 1982, 103).

Another study utilizing Sims' fiction categories examined the image of African Americans portrayed in picture books recommended by a respected reviewing journal

over two five-year periods ten years apart, 1977-1981 and 1987-1991. Though there was an increase between the two five year periods in the number of recommended picture books overall, from 13 to 85, the prevalence of culturally conscious books prevailed. This study linked visibility and images of African Americans portrayed in picture books to the self esteem of African American children and a better understanding of other American children toward African Americans in general (DeShay 1993, 49).

As late as 1995, negative images of a people were identified in contemporary realistic fiction as well as traditional literature. In an interview for *Wilson Library Bulletin*, Yulisa Amadu Maddy, a novelist, playwright, actor, director, and choreographer from Sierra Leone, voiced his concerns regarding the image of Africans portrayed in children's picture books published in the 1990s. Maddy blames Euro-American bias and ignorance for the perpetuation of cultural and historical misinformation about the disparate nations of Africa. He cites a lack of mutuality between Euro-American characters and African characters who are lacking in morals and values as well as "backward...stereotypically vain and chaotic" (MacCann and Richard 1995, 41-5).

Nor are folk tale retellings, according to Maddy, exempt from Western bias and the taint of neocolonialism. Some Western retellers include biased and/or inaccurate prefaces and afterwords and make inappropriate comparisons with folk tales of European origin. Maddy finds that often the "originality of the work is given to the wrong source. Worse still is when the theme of the stories is completely different and the motives and

messages (from an African perspective) [original italics] are incomparable” (MacCann and Richard 1995, 41-5).

This interview of Maddy has become the final chapter in a book co-authored by Maddy and Donnarae MacCann, who has authored books and articles on the image of African Americans in children’s literature. In *African Images in Juvenile Literature*, the two authors address neocolonialist beliefs and attitudes in several stories in detail as in the case of a particular story about apartheid, where they cite instance upon instance of misunderstood and misrepresented cultural beliefs and practices.

These foreigners neither understood nor respected the images they described.

In a word, this supposedly anti-Apartheid novel pretends to expose and condemn all that is evil in Apartheid, yet the narrative includes repeated stereotypes and distortions. There is no discussion as to how blacks can begin to reconstruct their world and build a positive future for their children. Nowhere is this more evident than in the final sections of the story, scenes that explicitly suggest the maintenance of the status quo.

Incidents and characterizations that are unwittingly pro-Apartheid take various forms in this novel. One form appears in the implication that anarchy will ensue if blacks are not held down. While [the author of the novel] does not hesitate to describe police abuses, the most appalling scenes reveal the sadism of young African freedom fighters...And girls are letting the school boycotts serve as an excuse for getting pregnant.

Another way that [the author] gives support to the status quo is by characterizing blacks as bewildered, indecisive, and unable to cope with new situations and environments. (Maddy and MacCann 1996, 98-99)

A similar situation may exist in the folk literature of other ethnic groups in America. Suzanne Lo and Ginny Lee, authors and librarians, suggest that much of the available folk literature features culturally inappropriate images of Asian people and their

culture. Of equal concern is the lack of visibility of this sizable and growing community in contemporary realistic fiction for children. "Invisibility is dangerous to one's self-esteem. Asian Americans are interested in seeing images and words in books that reflect their culture and heritage to pass on their children" (Lo and Lee 1993, 15).

Are the members of certain populations overly sensitive to the perceptions of outsiders? Are outsiders incapable of portraying individuals and accurately conveying their beliefs and customs? These very questions have been the subject of debate for many years. Some members of various so-called "minority" populations will contend that this is indeed the case; only those who have lived the experiences can accurately and without bias relate them to others or evaluate them for others. (Burgess 1990, 175-178; DeShay 1993, 15-16; Sims 1982, 64-73, 79-99).

Is there just one voice for any culture? When many cultures come together to form a community, all facets of the varied cultures may not blend harmoniously. As a culture, Christianity has many voices, many denominations, and many doctrines. Can there be one voice for all Christians? Who can say he speaks for God?

One voice crying out, if not for God per se, then for Christianity and therefore on God's behalf, is Michael O'Brien, artist, author of fiction, father of eleven children, and editor of a Catholic journal for families. Citing the twelfth chapter of Revelation from the New Testament of the Bible, O'Brien points out that the image of the dragon is clearly that of Satan, the evil one, the adversary of the people of God. He expresses concern for the sanitizing of this demonic image into a harmless, or worse yet, a lovable

character more godly than the people of God. One might argue that this is a positive change, portraying an individual in a more positive light. O'Brien maintains, however, that there is a danger in portraying pure evil as anything other than what it is and that doing so will contradict truth and confuse children's understanding of what is evil and what is good (O'Brien 1988, 59-92).

In assessing images in fiction for children, it is often difficult for parents, teachers, and librarians to determine which images are accurate and appropriate and from whose perspective. Often those who tell good stories do not have a full understanding of the context in which they choose to narrate. Or perhaps those who evaluate these stories do so with their own agendas in mind. What are the implications for the stories about God? From whose perspective are they written? How will the images they portray impact the self esteem of young readers?

The Image of God in Literature

There appears to be a dearth of research literature pertaining to the image of God in fiction literature for children. For this reason, this section will begin with a discussion of the research literature on the image of God in literature for adults and conclude with a discussion of the very limited research literature on the image of God in fiction literature for children.

One area in which much has been written critically and historically regarding the image of God in literature is the field of English, most notably in the genre of poetry.

Although poetry is not fiction, it closely intimates the nature of fiction in its ability to evoke an emotional response in the reader. Relying heavily on imagery, “[p]oetry communicates experience by appealing to both the thoughts and the feelings of its reader. It has the power to evoke in its hearers rich sensory images and deep emotional responses. Poetry demands total response from the individual—all the intellect, senses, emotion and imagination” (Huck, Hepler and Hickman 1993, 452). The following example demonstrates the imagery of poetry.

Fueled

Fueled
by a million
man-made
wings of fire—
the rocket tore a tunnel
through the sky
and everyone cheered.
Fueled
only by a thought from God—
the seedling
urged its way
through the thickness of black—
and as it pierced
the heavy ceiling of the soil—
and launched itself
up into outer space—
no
one
even
clapped.

(Hans 1965)

Poetry captures from the author, if not the exact meaning of the work as such, then the spirit or essence of that work, and conveys it to the reader. The imagery of the

poetic language and form allows the reader to see, hear, smell, feel and taste an object, event, or experience. Narrative poems, one specific type of poetry, are “children’s favorites [perhaps because they] tell a story” (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman 1993, 464).

An epic poem is a narrative poem, usually of considerable length, that relates the story of a great mythical or historical hero or speaks about a “great and serious subject” (*The Norton anthology of poetry* 1983, 1403; Huck, Hepler, and Hickman 1993, 371).

Paradise Lost is an epic poem, which relates, from poet John Milton’s perspective, the story of the fall of man as related in the book of Genesis.

C.A. Patrides, an educator and scholar of ancient and traditional literatures, has examined the works of John Milton (1608-1674) as they pertain to the image of God. Quoting Isaiah 55: 8-9, which proclaims the mystery of God, Patrides explains that many of Milton’s contemporaries of the Renaissance era believed it impossible to describe God and less possible to understand Him. Nevertheless God is described in one of two ways, either in terms of what Milton terms the “negative” or in terms of the “affirmative” (Patrides 1979, 9). The negative approach, also popular in the fifth, thirteenth, and fifteenth centuries, portrayed God as unlike man and unreachable by him. The affirmative approach, as postulated by Milton and contemporaries such as John Donne, asserts that God speaks to man in man’s own language and for his understanding.

According to Milton’s theology as evidenced in his treatise, *de doctrina christiana*, “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are proclaimed to be ‘one’ in love, communion, spirit, and glory” (Patrides 1979, 16). Milton uses the name “God” for each

entity of the Trinity, stating that they are of the same substance, but not of the same essence, each having His own (16).

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton reveals the nature of God through His attributes—“God’s eternity and immutability, unity and truth, infinity and intelligence and will. Notwithstanding, three attributes were most frequently dwelt upon: omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence” (Patrides 1979, 10). God is omnipotent; He allowed evil into the world and He sets the limits as to how much He will allow (91-6). Even the pagans know about God and they are not impervious to His power (68-9). God is omniscient; before He created man He knew that man would fall and need to be redeemed. He created the world out of His goodness and for His glory (33-40). God is omnipresent; He moves through His creation—nature and man and even Satan—to effect His purpose in the earth (91-7).

Milton also reveals God’s wrath, His mercy, and His grace in *Paradise Lost*. For their part in mankind’s disobedience and subsequent fall, Satan and his angels are “‘cast downe,’ expelled from heaven ‘immediately’ and condemned to Hell ‘for ever’” (Patrides 1979, 119). God has mercy on mankind, however, for Adam and Eve are not cast down, but are “‘cast out’”(119). God has also planned for mankind’s redemption through the Savior--the Christ--and He has done so because of His mercy and grace (130-152, 187-219).

Man shall not quite be lost, but sav’d who will,
Ye not of will in him, but Grace in mee
Freely voutsaf’t; once more I will renew
His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthralld
By sin to foul exorbitant desires;

Upheld by mee, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe,
By mee upheld, that he may know how frail
His fall'n condition is, and to mee ow
All his deliv'rance, and to none but mee. Milton III. 173-182)

During the nineteenth century, Milton's traditional spiritual beliefs and those of his poetic predecessors and contemporaries came into question. Professor James Benziger attributes this rejection of tradition to a worldwide paradigm shift in all disciplines. Humanism and New Ageism replaced many traditional Christian beliefs and practices. Man appeared to begin worshipping the creation instead of the Creator.

One critic of the nineteenth century Romantic poets considered them to be in a state of "spiritual despair [as one might consider anyone who] seeks to create one's own revelation by the excuse of one's own imagination" (Benziger 1962, 11-12). Benziger's study includes Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold of the nineteenth century Romantic period as well as three later poets, Yeats, Stevens, and Eliot.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) who was, apparently, the Romantic poet who "most insistently rejected the anthropomorphic deity of tradition [would also] most frequently imagine his own lofty ideal embodied in the persons of fellow mortals, usually women" (96). Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), unable to lay hold to the essence of God, sought that essence in himself, for not only did his soul exist before his human life, his soul remembered that earlier existence (142-3).

Of the three later poets, whose work and lives touched both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, William Butler Yeats (1865-1935) began his career as a proponent of

the symbolist movement. His poetry reflected this belief in man's ability to create and through his "imagination to supply some Absolute to take the place of traditional religion" (227). Before Yeats' death, however, he had come to acknowledge and accept "the God of unwilling belief" (Ellman 1948). Each poet in these studies had written about his personal understanding of God. Each poet reflected the period of time in which he wrote.

This phenomenon also held true in an unprecedented 1938 study of the image of God in African American literature from 1760 to 1937, professor emeritus of Morehouse College Benjamin Mays, identified three main ideas of God represented.

The ideas of God in Negro literature are developed along three principal lines: (1). Ideas of God that are used to support or give adherence to traditional, compensatory patterns; (2). Ideas, whether traditional or otherwise, that are developed and interpreted to support a growing consciousness of social and psychological adjustment needed; (3). Ideas of God that show a tendency or threat to abandon the idea of God as "useful instrument" in perfecting social change [original quotation marks]. (Mays 1968, 245)

The study was divided into three time periods, 1760 to 1865, 1865 to 1914, 1914 to 1937. It was further divided into two types of literature: "mass literature" or that which was available to the people at large, including sermons, prayers, spirituals (religious songs) and other traditional literature of the people and "classical literature" or the more formal writings of poetry, essays, biography and other nonfiction, and works of fiction (Mays 1968, 1).

Regardless of the time period or type of literature, Mays found that the African American's image of God was directly related to the status that race accorded African

Americans at the time. The earliest period was one of slavery for the majority of African Americans in this country and God was considered for many to be their only way to freedom, if not in this world then in the next. The prevalent idea of God during this period was compensatory; although God was not for slavery, He was against disobedience and would therefore reward the obedient slave in heaven (Mays 1968, 97-102).

Mays commenced the second period of his study with the end of the Civil War because it changed the status of the African American from slave to free. Many African Americans recognized the Hand of God as their deliverer and the initiator of the first migration north. Richard T. Greener, the first African American to receive a Bachelor's degree from Harvard (1870), "uses the idea of God to encourage Negroes to seek a land where conditions are better. The social emphasis shifts to a clamor for social and civic privileges denied the Negro in the post-Civil War period" (Mays 1968, 130.)

The third period, 1914-1937, was an era of segregation, disenfranchisement, and other injustices toward African Americans. The writing of this period was primarily compensatory in nature, although there were some dissenting voices from this viewpoint. The majority of the writing centered on the "central theme that God is wholly impartial, that from one blood He created all races and nations" (Mays 1968, 162).

There was, in the period after 1914, the emergence of another voice, a heretical voice, denying God's desire to help the disenfranchised Black man, His ability to do so, or even His existence. Would God not have done something for one He loved if He were

real and capable? Perhaps God is White and has ordained this place of degradation for the Black to keep him under the thumb of his White oppressors on earth. Such was the belief of poet Countee Cullen (1903-1946) and, at times of the educator, scholar, and human rights activist W.E.B. DuBois.

Keep not Thou Silent, O God!
Sit not longer blind, Lord God, deaf to our prayer
And dumb to our dumb suffering. Surely Thou,
Too, are not white, O Lord, a pale, bloodless,
Heartless thing. (DuBois 1920, 275-76)

Thus, it appears that the image of God held by African Americans as presented in Mays' study was dependent upon the social and racial atmosphere of the time. Each individual writer, however, reflected his own situation—slave or free—as well as how he fared personally, what he desired of life and what his educational status was. It stands to reason that the writer of fiction about God for children may be writing from the social and/or ethnic situation of his time, his educational status, his personal needs and experiences, and his religious orientation and indoctrination.

Isaac Bashevis Singer wrote from such a perspective. In a critical analysis of Singer's writing for children and adults, educator Frances Vargas Gibbons maintains that Singer wrote in an attempt to find the love and (love of) God that were missing in his life. Singer, a Polish Hasidic Jew, was smothered in the religious life of his parents' expectations. He has competed and struggled with the males in his life: his father, intense in piety and devotion; his successful brother, to whom he has always deferred, and his God (Gibbons 1992, 31-37).

Throughout his entire life Isaac saw God as his competitor. And Isaac claims to have created his own ethic of protest—one cannot get more competitive than that—and to be always ready to picket God for His unfairness and cruelty to men and animals. If the mature man could view God as such an opposer, one can imagine that the child would have felt this even more poignantly, and that the young hero of “Growing Up” [one of Singer’s stories for children] retreated in anguish because he could not envision success in the midst of so many powerful male competitors. (Gibbons 1992, 42-3)

Singer becomes the protagonists in his stories, Haiml/Ben Zion in “Growing Up,” Tam in “The Milk of a Lioness,” Menashe in “Menashe and Rachel, three of his children’s stories and Yasha Mazur in the *The Magician of Lublin*, one of his adult novels. These protagonists relive Singer’s own developmental struggles; they are “different impersonations of the author who are devoted to an idealistic search for God and love... Convinced of their own goodness and benevolence, they develop adversarial relationships with the God whose cruelty they vehemently decry and seek to replace God with literature and with erotic love, generally, heterosexual love” (Gibbons 1992, 67).

Singer’s apparent obsession with a dominating father figure and the resultant confrontation with God bespeaks the importance of the God relationship in terms of the parental—in his case, father—relationship.

Yasha Mazur is the main embodiment of Singer’s competition with God and he enacts the dangers inherent in such endeavor by his need to subject himself to complete enclosure, the opposite of flight. But the flight/enclosure dichotomy and Yasha’s competition with God also have oedipal implications.

God was the only father figure against whom Singer could rebel, and thus He was the only father from whom he could really fear castration. To satisfy Singer’s and Yasha’s own needs, Yasha Mazur stops competing with God and becomes the Lord (just as Singer had become his older brother in “Growing Up”). Naturally, as Yasha takes on God’s prerogatives by attempting to be his own engenderer, he is also forced to adopt God’s punishing (castrating) functions by imprisoning himself in the brick cell. (Gibbons 1992, 239-240)

Singer's image of God was apparently born of his family dynamics and it persisted into his adulthood. He was searching for the God of Love that, based on the reality of his situation, he could only imagine. "In novels and stories which make the quest its own reward, the search for God becomes open rivalry with the creator and the pursuit of love goes full-circle from childhood to childlikeness" (Gibbons 1992, 238).

In her dissertation on religious and political concepts in fantasy for children, Suzanne Rahn focuses one area of her study on "encounters with God" (Rahn 1986, 375-488). Of the four books that Rahn analyzes, two pertain to a higher being and two pertain to seeking a higher place. One of the higher beings is identified as the Judeo-Christian God. This higher being, identified as representing God in George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* and its sequel, is female (Rahn 1986, 375-76).

Rahn makes a case for accepting a female God when the Judeo-Christian God is traditionally considered to be male. Drawing comparisons, on several points, between Princess Irene's great-great-grandmother, the higher being, and the Judeo-Christian God, Rahn proclaims a perfect match.

The great-great-grandmother says that she is not yet two thousand years old—a number that suggests our reckoning of time from the time of Christ's Incarnation. The 'sky and moon and the stars' are in her tower because she is their Creator and she uses doves (white pigeons) for her messengers. The three rooms in her tower suggest the three aspects of God represented by the Trinity; the princess finds her different in her bedroom (God the Father, perhaps as it is this room that contains the heavens) and in her workroom (God the Son, as associated with God's work on earth), and never visits the third (which may represent the mysterious Holy Spirit).

Finally in *The Princess and Curdie*, when the great-great-grandmother disguises or incarnates herself as an ordinary human being in order to help Curdie save the kingdom, she takes the form of a humble servant girl. And even when her true identity has been revealed, at the final feast, 'in ruby crown and royal

purple she served them all,' just as Christ washed the feet of his protesting disciples (John 13:4-15).

In her relationships with different characters, the great-great-grandmother demonstrates various relationships between God and humanity. Some characters can see her and some cannot...while others...are pure skeptics, unable to believe anything outside their normal experience. Curdie, who cannot see her at first, undergoes a kind of conversion experience.

Finally, the great-great-grandmother acts as God does. She has the power to wipe out the stains of sin with her flaming roses. She promises eternal life. (Rahn 1986, 399-401)

Rahn purports that MacDonald's image of God is a direct result of his own childhood God experience. In fact, it is an adverse reaction to his "Scotch-Calvinist-devil-worship" upbringing. [This is why he] emphasize[s] God's love and care for his children, in part because [his] childhood God was one of anger and overbearing authority" (Rahn 1986, 402).

Where Singer continued to grapple with his unloving God of his childhood, MacDonald succeeds in escaping his childhood image and replacing it with an image of the God of Love. "MacDonald's concept of God thus stresses certain characteristics: the maternal quality of God's love, God's suffering with His (or Her) children, the inexorability of God's love, and God's participation in a process of spiritual evolution designed to bring about the eventual perfection of the individual" (Rahn 1986, 408).

Several studies on religion, spiritual values, and spiritual concepts in children's literature have touched upon the presence or image of God. In her 1991 dissertation, Sylvia Byington Nosworthy examined award-winning realistic fiction published between 1979 and 1984 for religious content. Nosworthy identified ninety-three realistic fiction titles from several national lists and analyzed them, using content analysis, for attitude

toward religion and occurrence of religious practices including church attendance, prayer, miracles, and others. Her study distinguished between stories set in the present and those set in the past and only included those stories with protagonists under the age of fourteen (Nosworthy 1991, 52-55).

Throughout the ninety-three books in the study, there were 105 mentions of God in stories set in the past and seventeen mentions of God in stories set in the present. At least three books that referred to God were not referring to the Judeo-Christian God. Ten books set in the present referred to God and none of these books contained “serious discussions of punishment or vengeance, protection or blessing....Although some negatively portrayed characters...see God’s punishing hand...most favorable characters emphasize God’s protection” (Nosworthy 1991, 110). Federal law separating church and state was considered a major factor in the lack of religious content in literature in this country (Nosworthy 1991, 50).

In her doctoral study of spiritual values in award winning children’s fiction, Carol Yandell identified values shared by children’s librarians and children in the third through seventh grades (or children approximately ages eight through twelve). The researcher determined that both groups of subjects identified the same values, but expressed them in different terms appropriate to their respective levels of understanding and experience. A librarian interpreted a scene in one story as evidence of God and a minister changing the heart of an individual. Responding to that same scene a child credited the persistent kindness of a family as the catalyst for the change. In an example from a different story,

the children did not recognize or understand the abstract meaning of a scripture that was quoted from the New Testament; some of them recognized the determination of the protagonist where at least one librarian recognized it as a reference to “God’s authority” (Yandell 1990, 60, 44).

In 1999, Mary Kathryn McColskey identified images of God as one aspect of her qualitative doctoral study of spiritual concepts in specific children’s contemporary realistic fiction titles published in a specific year, 1994. McColskey examined one hundred forty-five books that were reviewed and recommended in professional journals. She identified “49 spiritual concepts classified as a belief in a being greater than self, 23 beliefs were about God as viewed by Christians and Jews and [they] occurred in 15 different books” (McColskey 1999, 94-7).

The six images of the Judeo-Christian God identified in the fifteen books are God as: "Creator", "Provider," "Powerful," "Healer and Controller of Death," "Controller of Circumstances," and the last image related to "God’s Character." The book with the most occurrences of the Judeo-Christian God was *Fred Field* by Burgess, with six occurrences (McColskey 1999, 97-104).

McColskey found four incidents of “God as Creator;” two of which referred to God as the creator of animals and the other two referred to “God as Creator” with respect to humans (97). In another four incidents in four separate books, “God was seen as the provider of ghost, life, talent, and children” (100). There were three incidents identified of “God as Powerful.” God can create a masterpiece overnight and perform miracles, but

He could not make up for a character's death (100-101). Four incidents pertained to God's involvement in healing and death. Belief in God's power over life and death varied from character to character and story to story. One character, however, referred to God's need to explain Himself for not healing someone if He does, in fact, have power over death (101).

There were six occurrences of "God as Controller of Circumstances," two of which were negative. God did not have time to involve Himself in everyone's daily issues and He would not help someone who had done something wrong (101-102). Only two incidents referred to "God's Character" and in both instances adult characters authored the comments (102).

McColskey cites earlier research pertaining to gender and age differences of belief that reported "higher levels of female protagonists with religious values than males [and that] adults tend to be more positive than teens. [In support of this research, McColskey found that] males under 18 stated five beliefs that were positive about God and two that were not. Females under 18 stated three positive beliefs about God and four negative beliefs. Children under 18 years of age stated six of the seven negative statements" (104).

Models of God

Children employ imagery and imagination, which are integral components of their development, in their understanding of and interaction with the world around them (Rugg

1963, 71; *Developmental Psychology Today* 1971, 201). A child's image of God pertains to what that child thinks God is like (Lawrence 1991; Green 1989, 93).

Studies have been conducted with adults and children to determine what they believe God is like. Children have an anthropomorphic image of God; they perceive Him to have the same kind of attributes and personality traits that humans have (Droege 1983, 33-40, 50-57; Fowler 1995, 121-173; Harms 1944, 114-121; Justice and Lambert 1986, 166-172; Goldman 1964, 87-88; Tamayo and Desjardins 1976, 131-140; Tamminen et al 1988, 60-71; Vianello et al 1992, 56-69; Heinrichs 1982, 121-128; Heller 1986, 23-104). Furthermore, children and adults usually have an operating image of God that governs their personal relationship with God. Theology professor Sallie McFague has developed a theology that recognizes three models—or operating images-- of God, each of which is based on a different aspect of God's love. God as friend is identified as *philia* or brotherly love. God as lover represents God's redemptive love, or *eros*. God as mother embodies *agape* or unconditional, parental love (McFague 1989, 91-180).

Through her object relations therapy sessions with adult patients, Dr. Ana-Maria Rizzuto has identified both paternal and maternal Oedipal manifestations. All four operating (object) God images are rooted in the parent-child relationship (Rizzuto 1979, 93-173). In the first type of object image, the child develops a close, traditional God relationship that is both emotional and religious. This relationship is based on paternal Oedipal manifestations with possible latent maternal considerations. The child/adult of the second type is unsure of God's existence because of a distorted maternal relationship.

A male adult from this category says, “I do not feel close to God because I feel [that] if there is a God he could do a great deal more to prevent human suffering” (117).

Due to an aggressive, emotionally abusive father figure, an individual of the third category of object image has no emotional investment in a God relationship. A lack of maternal affirmation can lead individuals to the fourth and final operating image of God, where He is the “enemy...[a] demanding, harsh God they would like to get rid of if they were not convinced of his existence and power” (149).

Theology professor Charles V. Gerkin, also working from an object relations framework, has identified the existence of three separate object images of God from which an individual will form his operative image of God. These object images are “the image of God as the exciting object, the image of God as the rejecting object, and the image of God as the ideal object” (Gerkin 1994, 60). Individuals who develop an image of God consistent with the first object image may either separate themselves from God by rejecting a relationship with Him or they may perceive God as the “fulfiller of all wishes” (61-2).

Individuals who are bound by guilt, shame, or other feelings of unworthiness may form a relationship with the second object image, the “God who rejects and frustrates the self” (62). Individuals in the third category may adopt a revolving image of God; sometimes embracing God “in the images of perfection, omnipotence, and omnipresence [and at other times struggling with] the ultimate mystery of the God who is beyond our ability to understand” (62).

Studies from other perspectives have identified other images of God. In their study of the image of God from the stories in the Bible, John and Katherine Paterson have divided the images into three categories: "Images from the Created World...Images from Ordinary Life...[and] Images of Watchfulness and Creation" (Paterson and Paterson 1998, 15-107). In the first category, God's image is that of the elements of His creation: elements of the earth, animals and humans (15-49). From the thirteenth chapter of Exodus, they identify God's "protection and guidance...as a pillar of cloud, by night as a pillar of fire" (38). The second category identifies family roles and household materials (51-79). Jesus tells, in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, of the housewife who stopped all other activity until she found a lost coin. Jesus compares the housewife's persistence in locating that valuable coin to the persistence of God in locating one who has been lost to Him. The third category includes what might be termed vocational or social roles, including that of the shepherd which is "one of the most frequently used images of God in the Bible" (90). The Patersons present a variety of images from both the New and Old Testaments to represent the many attributes of God including His love, forgiveness, mercy, and judgment.

Research indicates that children's perceptions of God are directly related to their perceptions of their parents (Justice and Lambert 1986, 169; Tamayo and Desjardins 1976, 132). David Heller and Robert Coles have identified models of God from direct interaction with children whose image of God is closely related to their relationship with their parents (Coles 1990, Heller 1986). Their extensive interviews with children have

yielded several God images. Children have described God as “king...mate...executioner” (Heller 1986, 90-1, 80-3, 85-8). God is also described as “healer...teacher...friend...judge...one who makes retribution...‘my parents’ parent, and mine, too” (Coles 1990, 112-7, 219, 114, 91-2, 127).

How do parental roles compare to these perceived roles of God? Child care experts and researchers, including Wolfendale in a 1983 study, suggest the “parents’ primary responsibilities to children are to:

(1) provide a means of survival and emotional support within a protective environment; (2) guide personal and intellectual development in a setting that encourages exploration and fosters independent functioning; (3) act as transmitters of information and models of language and social/emotional behavior; and (4) act as decision-makers and arbiters of decisions. (Montgomery-Aaron 1986, 288)

Parents should also provide pleasurable situations, outings, and events for their children, discipline them, and teach them certain skills.

Children offer their own expectations and requirements of parents. Cataldo and Geismar report children's major focus as one of love and mutual enjoyment.

Children described situations that generate positive feelings as involving physical affection, hugging, kissing and having a good time together in humorous play. They explained negative feelings in these terms: sadness – being hurt, crying, loneliness and making a mistake; physical aggression—hitting, spanking, throwing and punching; and anger—“Dad gets mad,” and “Dad is mean.” (Montgomery-Aaron 1986, 288)

Children and adults agree that parents should nurture, encourage, and discipline their children. Three major roles that parents and God fulfill emerge from the research: Provider, Punisher and Passive Observer.

Summary

Research indicates that imagery and imagination play an important role in children's development. Images in children's stories can have an impact—positive or negative—on children who read them or to whom they are read. Children imagine what God is like and might be influenced by the stories about God that they encounter.

Research also indicates that an individual's writings about God reflect his own social and political status, educational background, personal experiences and needs, and religious training up to that time. A shift in the social, political, or artistic climate may produce a shift in the paradigm of the religious imagination.

The existing research on the image of God in fiction literature for children has identified a presence of God in Isaac Bashevis Singer's stories that are similar to traditional Jewish literature as well as in the fantasy of George MacDonald (Gibbons 1992, Rahn 1986). The research also reveals a presence of God in contemporary mainstream literature (McColskey 1999, Nosworthy 1990, Yandell 1991) in stories that do not profess to be about God. There may also be a particular image of God that can be identified in stories that do profess to be about God.

Psychologists, psychoanalysts, theologians, and other experts have identified various theories and models of God as well as accepted parental roles and responsibilities. Children have expressed their views and expectations of God, His character, and His attributes as well as the role and desired characteristics of parents. Young children have an anthropomorphic understanding of God, often experiencing Him as a parental figure. The image of God identified in stories about God should support the research and coincide with one of the three major roles that parents and God fulfill: Provider, Punisher or Passive Observer.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze fiction titles written for children published in the twentieth century (1900-1999), through thematic content analysis, to determine the image of God, as understood in Judeo-Christian theology, represented in such titles. A further purpose of the study is to determine the nature of interaction between God and the fictional characters in these titles. Thematic content analysis will be the method of analysis.

Design of the Study

Thematic content analysis is defined as "the use of a theory or theme to analyze a text or series of texts. The theory or theme is used as an analytical device, the main focus being analysis of the text rather than the development of the theory" (Short 1995, 21). A thematic content analysis, a combination of theme analysis and content analysis, can combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies or use one or the other.

Theme analysis is "descriptive research that analyzes the content of literature in order to investigate certain ideas, attitudes, and patterns in these books. [It is often deemed] less reliable [than content analysis because it does] not use the same objective, quantitative, systematic techniques" (Sutherland and Arbuthnot 1986, 629).

Content analysis is a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. [It] involves specialized procedures for processing scientific data” (Krippendorff 1980, 21). Content analysis can be used to identify, analyze, and encode attitudes, behaviors, intentions, trends, and patterns in various types of communication between or among individuals or groups (Weber 1985, 9; Holsti 1969 14; Krippendorff 1980, 21-2).

Combining qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry can provide several benefits; most notably it can add balance, depth and breadth to the study. In their textbook on qualitative research, Miles and Huberman present further evidence to support combining qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry in one study.

Rossmann and Wilson (1984, 1991) suggest three broad reasons: (a) to enable confirmation or corroboration of each other via triangulation; (b) to elaborate or develop analysis, providing richer detail; and (c) to initiate new lines of thinking through attention to surprises or paradoxes, “turning ideas around,” providing fresh insight (Miles and Huberman 1994, 41).

Population and Sampling

A search of the WorldCat database was conducted to identify the stories about God published from 1900 to 1999. WorldCat is the OCLC Online Union Catalog that contains over 41,000,000 records from OCLC member libraries around the world. Bibliographic records are added to the WorldCat database daily. The search, using the

keywords *God*, *juvenile*, and *fiction* in the bibliographic records, yielded 145 titles.

Before 1986, the term *juvenile fiction* was not utilized in Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR) cataloging practices and procedures. All juvenile literature—fiction and nonfiction—was cataloged using the broader term, *juvenile literature*, thereby not distinguishing the different genres from one another. A secondary search, identifying titles that have God and fiction in the subject field, was conducted and it yielded an additional 143 titles.

All stories that were designated as fiction were considered for the study, including contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, and science fiction, in board book, picture book, short story, or chapter book format. Stories that did not refer to the Judeo-Christian God were eliminated from the study. Retellings of stories from the Bible as nonfiction were excluded from the study, but fictionalized accounts of these stories were included. The extended search identified several titles that were for adult readers, either adult fiction or critical analyses of adult fiction. These titles were also eliminated.

One edition of each book was read and analyzed for the study. For books that had multiple bibliographic records retrieved during the search, the first available edition was read.

Only titles that were available through libraries were considered for the study. A search of the local academic and public library collections was conducted to identify and obtain all titles available locally. All other titles were requested through interlibrary loan. Thirty books were unavailable through local collections and interlibrary loan. One book

arrived after the cut-off date of April 30, 2001; twenty-one did not arrive at all, although promised by various lenders. A total of 103 books were analyzed for the study. A list of the books studied appears in Appendix A arranged by title and in Appendix B arranged by author.

Genre and Formats of Fiction

The genre (or type) and formats of fiction used in this study are as defined in *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman 1993), *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature* (Lukens 1995), and *From Cover to Cover* (Horning 1997).

Contemporary Realistic Fiction

In contemporary realistic fiction, all events “can conceivably happen to real people living in our natural physical world” (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman 1993, 527). Contemporary realistic fiction can be humorous or serious or both; it can center on sports, school, family or other familiar aspects of a child's life. Studies continue to indicate that children prefer these stories, perhaps because they address issues and experiences that are relevant to the child reader of today (527). Beverly Cleary's books about Ramona Quimby are contemporary realistic fiction.

Historical Fiction

Historical fiction is defined as realistic fiction set in the past. These stories often combine actual historical facts with fictitious events to create a sense of authenticity. When well written, it will cause the reader to ask “How much of this is true?” (Lukens 1995, 15). Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House* books are examples of historical fiction.

Fantasy

Fantasy is a type of fiction that is outside the realm of possibility. These stories often employ some form of magic. Animals with developed verbal and societal skills, people who fly without benefit of technology, and the ability to make oneself visible and invisible at will can often be found in fantasy stories. Folk tales, such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White* are examples of traditional fantasy. Modern fantasy would include such stories as *Charlotte’s Web* and the *Chronicles of Narnia* series.

Science Fiction

Unlike fantasy, science fiction is considered possible, but at some future time when the technology or other necessary knowledge has been developed. Yesterday’s science fiction may very well be today’s or tomorrow’s reality. Stories that depict space travel, artificial intelligence, or other aspects of a futuristic society, such as John Christopher’s *White Mountain* trilogy, are examples of science fiction.

Board Books

Board books are specifically designed for very young children. They are “constructed with heavy laminated cardboard [and] illustrations...need to be simple, uncluttered, and easily identifiable, with little or no background to distract from the main object” (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman 1993, 175-76). Helen Oxenbury and Nancy Tafuri have each created board books for babies and toddlers. Several popular picture books have been re-issued in board book format.

Picture Books

Picture books are profusely illustrated books in which the text and illustrations share the responsibility for conveying the message of the book or telling the story in the case of a picture storybook. They are usually thirty-two pages in length and are primarily intended for children ages three to eight. Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are* is a picture book that tells a story.

Chapter Books

Chapter books are books of sufficient length to warrant division into chapters to help control the flow of the reading. They may be beginning readers, transitional books, or full-length novels. Beginning readers are intended for the earliest readers who may require controlled vocabulary, more white space, and short chapters. Transitional books feature vocabulary that is not too difficult, uncomplicated sentence structure, short chapters and compelling content to help maintain the reader’s interest. They help to

transition the reader from beginning readers to the full-length novels for experienced readers at the third grade reading level and above. The *Frog and Toad* and *Little Bear* series, *Julian and Jenny Archer* series, and *Ramona Quimby* and *Anastasia Krupnik* stories are examples of beginning readers, transitional books and full-length novels, respectively (Horning 1997, 142-48).

Short Stories

Short stories are works of fiction written in prose style that comprise all of the elements of fiction, including plot and characterization. Short stories may appear in any genre—contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, or science fiction (Abrams 1988, 172).

Data Collection

The researcher identified titles for the study and collected data to answer the research questions as stated in chapter one. They are as follows:

1. What is the image of God that appears in the fiction literature for children?
 - a. Is there a predominant image of God and, if so, what is it?
 - b. Have the image or images changed throughout the time period in the study?
 - c. How do the image or images of God relate to the child's developmental stage of faith development as outlined by Harms and Fowler?
2. How does God interact with characters in the fiction literature for children?

- a. Does the interaction coincide with Goldman's stages of Divine communication?
 - b. Is this interaction active or passive in compliance with Heller's findings?
3. How central is God to the story?

The researcher read the text of each title identified in the search and marked and recorded each passage of the text—paragraph or group of paragraphs—that included a mention of God, indicating the corresponding page number (see Appendix C). These data were used to identify the image of God and answer question 1. Each interaction between God and a character in a title was noted on the Data Collection sheet. These data were used to identify the nature of interaction between God and the fictional characters, answering question 2. The researcher also recorded each incidence of the mention of God by name, using a hash mark next to each corresponding page number, and used these data to identify centrality to the story and answer question 3.

The number of times God is mentioned in a story was compared to the total number of pages of that story to determine centrality to the story. Since incidental learning is a factor in children's learning, a higher ratio of times mentioned to the number of pages may demonstrate more impact on the reader than a lower ratio.

The bibliographic information of each title was recorded for identification purposes. Parents, teachers, and librarians who utilize this study may also find this bibliographic information useful for locating specific titles. The interest level and/or reading level were recorded, when available, to identify the age of the targeted audience.

The genre and format of each title were recorded to confirm that the title fit the criteria for the study. To test for intercoder reliability, another expert in children's literature read ten percent of the titles and recorded data to determine if there is consistency in data collection and coding.

Data Analysis

Based on the predominant operating images of God identified in research with children and adults, this study examined the image of God in stories for children as it pertains to God as (a) Provider, (b) Punisher, or (c) Passive Observer. What attributes and behaviors do children associate with the three images of God?

God as Provider creates, gives life, feeds and otherwise nurtures the child. He loves the child unconditionally. God as Punisher is critical, harsh, and exacting. He judges, chastises, and hurts the child. God as Passive Observer is silent and non-interactive. He does not nurture. He does not hurt (except through lack of action). He sees all and does nothing.

Analysis of the stories was not evaluative; it did not involve evaluation of the quality of the writing or the elements of fiction. The researcher analyzed identified titles to answer the research questions using both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. The researcher interpreted the attributes, behavior(s), and/or statements attributed to God that had been recorded on the Data Collection sheet (Appendix C). Based on this analysis, the researcher assigned an image of God to each incident,

continuing through the text until each incident was identified and assigned an image of God. The researcher then tabulated these images to determine the overall or predominant image of God for each title. The image of God that was identified most times in each title was considered the predominant image of God for that title. If each image of God is identified an equal number of times for a specific title, that title was considered to have no predominant image of God.

Next, the researcher examined each Image of God Data Collection Sheet for incidents involving interaction with God. Each incident in which God interacts with other characters was analyzed to determine active or passive interaction according to the definition in Chapter One that was based on actual research as described in *The Children's God* (Heller, 57-75). Incidents of interaction were further examined to determine the mode of interaction and whether it was external or internal in accordance with Goldman's research on divine communication (Goldman 1964, 93-4).

Upon acquiring each book, the researcher read the book through once to identify and mark each mention of God on the Data Collection Sheet for Centrality to Story. This exercise not only identified the mentions of God for later coding and analysis, but also gave the researcher an understanding of the story as a whole to assist with identification of each incident and to understand each incident in the context of the whole story. Only pages that were actually part of the story were included. For example, if the story began on page five and ended on page 114, a total of 110 pages was used to determine centrality, regardless of the number of pages listed in the bibliographic record of that

particular book. Picture books that were not paginated were considered to begin on page one. Pertinent illustrations, such as the illustration on the last page or the first illustration after the title page, were counted as part of the actual story even if they did not include text. For example, *Baby in the Laundry Basket* (Carlyle 1994) starts on page six and ends on page twenty-nine, with twenty-four pages of actual story. Forewords, afterwords and notes to the parent were not included.

At this time the researcher also marked each incident that involved interaction between God and characters with an asterisk on the form next to the page number. For interactions that did not correspond with a specific page number on the form, the researcher listed the appropriate page numbers in a column in the left margin.

The researcher marked each mention of the name, “God,” in English. To avoid confusion, names such as “Lord” and “Father,” names that could be misinterpreted or could be applied to others were not counted. “Lord” sometimes refers to Jesus as in *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995, 19) or, especially in historical fiction, could be a term of respect used to address a member of a so-called higher class or position of authority. “Father,” even with an upper case letter, could be a name to address one’s natural or physical earth father as in *God Is Near* (Long 1992, 15).

The name “God” in languages other than English might not be understood by all children, whereas the English name “God” should be recognized and understood as the God who exists in children’s personal and/or religious lives. Therefore, in *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), the German word “Gott” was not counted, nor were the

Hebrew names for God—"Adonai," used in *Escape From Egypt* (Levitin), and "Yahweh," used in *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975).

Once centrality was determined, the researcher reread the book to analyze and code each incident involving God. Each incident was written onto the Image of God Data Collection Sheet to clearly identify and separate one incident from the next. Each incident was coded from the perspective of the story character involved. Each incident that involved an interaction with God was marked with an asterisk in the appropriate margin.

An incident was anything that took place in the story that involved the mention of God in some way. It could be an event, a conversation, a character's thoughts, or some part of any of these. An incident could involve one mention of God or several. In *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975, 80), there are five mentions of God in three incidents, one Punisher, one Provider, and then another incident of Punisher. In an encounter between Moses and Pharaoh, Pharaoh sees God as Punisher because of the plagues He has inflicted upon the people of Egypt following each of Pharaoh's refusals to release God's people to go into the desert to worship Him. Moses, on the other hand, sees God as the Provider to whom the Hebrew people will offer their sacrifice in the desert.

An incident, however, has only one image of God and for only one reason. For instance, in *The Stormy Night* (Baker 1991), there are two consecutive incidents of God as Provider, but with different rationales. The first incident -- "God gathered her in his arms and held her fast as they flew" (11) -- was coded as Provider because God protected

Anna and kept her safe. In the second incident on that page – “And God dropped down on their dance a crown of flowers” (11) – God as Provider is giving the mountains a “crown of flowers.” Because the incidents showed God as Provider for two different reasons, they are considered separate incidents.

For the sake of consistency in coding, certain attributes and behaviors of God, which recurred frequently throughout the books, were coded the same, unless there was undeniable evidence of a different image. For example, the recurring theme of God who requires obedience--obedience being the source of one's provision--was coded as Provider, unless there was text that specifically stated that punishment would ensue if God were not obeyed. In *The Humpy, Grumpy Camel* (Tangvald 1995), Joshua implores the tired, thirsty camel to keep marching around Jericho so that the people may obey God. Joshua scratches the camel behind his ears, consoles him regarding his weariness, and explains that they must march in order to obey God (8). The camel then feels sad about his non-compliance (10) and decides to help Joshua obey God (15-6). When God performs a miracle, the camel is pleased that he was able to do his part (23). These incidents were coded as Provider.

Incidents in which punishment from God for disobedience was explicit were coded as Punisher. In *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a), Alex's parents remind their children of the consequences of disobeying God who sent the flood that drowned all the people who had not obeyed Him. Later God sent a whale to swallow Jonah and hold him in its belly for three days because of his disobedience (60-61).

If one of the three images occurred more than the other two in a book, it was considered to be the predominant image of God for that book. In *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), Susie is steadfast in her faith in God throughout the story; therefore, all incidents involving her were coded Provider. The adults, however, do not always share her unshakable belief that God will provide what they need and express their doubt that He could be “interested in the prayers of little girls” (18) and, therefore, this incident was coded as Passive Observer. God as Provider was the predominant image of this book because thirty-nine incidents demonstrated God as Provider and two incidents showed God as Passive Observer.

There were several incidents in a number of books that did not qualify as any of the three identified images of God. The name of a church or denomination such as the Church of God in *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925) and physical description of God or His attire as in *The Heavenly Seven* (Forth 1996) do not indicate an attribute or characteristic of God that might be identified as a particular image of God. Such incidents were coded as “N/A” for “Not Applicable.” The main characters in *The Tent* (Paulsen 1995) develop a scheme to raise money by pretending to “preach the word of God”(9). Since each incident was coded from the perspective of the story character involved, several of these incidents were coded as “N/A.” In two books all incidents were coded as “N/A.”

In the further interest of consistency, and to test for intercoder reliability, another children’s literature expert read ten of the books from the final list and coded them

according to the three images of God. The researcher then met with this expert on three separate occasions to compare and discuss the coding until the recommended *intercoder agreement* of approximately 90% was achieved (Miles and Huberman 1994, 64). The coding decisions for the remaining books were based on this *intercoder agreement*.

After coding and analysis were completed for the image of God, the researcher determined which incidents involved an interaction between God and a character in the story and analyzed those incidents to determine whether the interaction was active or passive. Any interaction that was considered to involve decisive action on God's behalf or at His direction, including obeying or disobeying God's command or commandment, fighting for or against God, and/or any other interaction that reflects God's power, were considered active. Any interaction which the researcher deems to be quiet, reflective interaction with God, such as talking to and listening to God (prayer), expressing love for and/or feeling love from God, or any other interaction that reflects God's love were considered passive. These interactions were tabulated to determine a predominance of active or passive interaction for each title. They were then further analyzed to determine the mode of interaction for each interaction, whether it was external and audible to others, or whether it was internal between God and the character only. Findings are presented and discussed in the next three chapters: Image of God in chapter four, Interaction with God in chapter five, and Centrality to the Story in chapter six.

CHAPTER IV

IMAGES OF GOD

This chapter includes a discussion of the three images of God as identified in the 103 books that were available for study. Each image of God is organized by the various aspects that recurred throughout the books. Examples from the books or descriptions of the contents that demonstrate each particular aspect are included in the discussion.

Children view God in a parental role. They expect parents to nurture, encourage, and discipline their children. The three major roles that children ascribe to both parents and God are Provider, Punisher, and Passive Observer.

God as Provider

God as Provider creates, makes, gives, loves unconditionally, and nurtures in other ways. Several attributes and behaviors associated with God emerged from the texts of the books. The attributes and behaviors that were generally coded as God as Provider were God the Giver of Gifts, God the Creator, God who Loves Unconditionally, and God as Helper. These were the most frequently occurring aspects of God as Provider. Incidents of God as Protector, God as Healer, God's Forgiveness, God who Requires Obedience for the Good of All, God's Mercy, God's Grace, and God's Goodness were all considered aspects of God as Provider.

This section includes charts that depict the eleven aspects of God as Provider by title. Following each chart is a brief discussion of incidents for the titles represented on that chart. The aspects of God are arranged according to the number of occurrences and are discussed in descending quantitative order. For each title a total of the number of God as Provider incidents is provided just as a total number of incidents for each aspect of God as Provider is given at the bottom of each chart.

Eighty-nine books out of 103, or 86% of the books, had a predominant image of God as Provider. In thirty-three of these books, God was provider in every incident. Figure 3 presents the distribution of incidents for each aspect of God as Provider for the books in which every incident was coded God as Provider.

In sixteen books all of the incidents were coded as Provider except for those incidents where there was no identifiable image of God. The data for these titles are displayed in Figure 4.

In the remaining forty books, God was identified as Provider, but other aspects of God's personality were also evident. The data for these titles are displayed in Figure 5.

Seven books in which the predominant image of God was not Provider included forty-two incidents of God as Provider. The titles and corresponding aspects are displayed in Figure 6.

God as Provider Only												
	God as	God as	God as	God Who	God as	God Who						
Title	Giver	Creator	Helper	Loves	Protector	Requires Obedience	God as Healer	God Forgives	God's Goodness	God's Grace	God's Mercy	Totals
All the Way to God				3								3
Baby in the Laundry Basket: A Christmas	1											1
Before I Was a Kid	1			3								4
Bernes for the Queen: A Book About Pati				1								1
Bright Christmas: An Angel Remembers	1											1
Daddy, Where Is God?		11										11
Dream Quilt	1		1	2	1							5
Emma & Mommy Talk to God	1	2	7	1								11
Go Away, Dark Night	3			1	5							9
God Gives Me Everything	4			4								8
God Gives Us Beaches	3											3
God Gives Us Food	2		1									3
God Is Near	4											4
God Made Everything Just Right		12										12
Good Night, Little One	3		1	5	3	1	1	1				15
Humpty Grumpy Camel	2					4						6
I Love My Daddy!	7	3		1	1							12
I Wonder Who Hung the Moon in the Sky	3	9										12
Jessica Giraffe's Long Neck		3										3
King Without a Shadow		3										3
Making Memories	2	3										5
Miracle of the Potato Latkes	7											7

Figure 3. God as Provider as the only image of God.

God as Provider Only												
	God as	God as	God as	God Who	God as	God Who	God as	God	God's	God's	God's	
Title	Giver	Creator	Helper	Loves	Protector	Requires Obedience	Healer	Forgives	Goodness	Grace	Mercy	Totals
My Life as a Smashed Burrito	2		5			2						9
My Mr. T Doll				1								1
No Friends for Hannah	4	1	2	1								8
Perfect Hiding Place				3								3
Polka Dots, Stripes, Humps 'n Hatracks		4										4
Pumpkin Patch Parable	1											1
T-Bone Trouble	2			1			2				2	7
When God first Made the Animals	1	1										2
White Pony: A Tale of Great Love	1			1								2
Who Made the Wild Woods?		11							10			21
Whose Nose?												
Whose Toes?	7											7
Totals	63	63	17	28	10	7	3	1	10	0	2	204

Figure 3 (continued). God as Provider as the only image of God.

God as Provider with Some Incidents N/A												
	God as	God as	God as	God Who	God as	God Who						
Title	Giver	Creator	Helper	Loves	Protector	Requires Obedience	God as Healer	God Forgives	God's Goodness	God's Grace	God's Mercy	Totals
Berenstain Bears and the Big Question	2	4										6
Can We See God?	1	1		2								4
Families of God				1								1
God and Joseph and Me				3	1							4
God is Never Too Busy To Listen!	2		3	2		1	1			1		10
Little Soul & the Sun: A Parable	10											10
Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale	1	10										11
My Angel Named Herman	4	20										24
Noah's Trees	1				1							2
Remember the Secret	3	3										6
Special Gift to God	9	1		3					1			14
Stormy Night	1	1			4							6
Thank God for Sunshine	1		2									3
Waldo, Tell Me About God	3	3	1	11				1				19
Where Does God Live?	3	8		3								14
Where Does God Sleep, Momma?					1							1
Totals	41	51	6	25	7	1	1	1	1	1	0	135

Figure 4. God as Provider as predominant image with some incidents with no identifiable image of God.

God as Provider with	Other Images of God Evident											
	God as Giver	God as Creator	God as Helper	God Who Loves	God as Protector	God Who Requires Obedience	God as Healer	God Forgives	God's Goodness	God's Grace	God's Mercy	Totals
And Then There Were Dinosaurs		7										7
Around Old Bethany	36	4	3	4	7		4	2	1	2		63
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God	4	4	5	2	3					2		20
Better Tomorrow?, A	1		3	1								5
Bridge to Cutter Gap	5	2	1	2								10
Carrie and the Crazy Quilt	7	3	11		5							26
Daddy, Is There Really a God?	2	7	1	1								11
Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?	1	7		1	1							10
Dr. Drabble's Phenomenal Antigravity Dus		1		4								5
Escape From Egypt	26	1	26	2	2	1		3		1		62
Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen	16	5	2	2	1		2	2				30
Gnat's Lifeboat & Other Stories	18	42	1	1	2				1		2	67
God is Everywhere: The Good News	2	1	2	1	1			1				8
Heavenly Seven: Mighty Archangels	22	6	1	11	1	6						47
How God got Christian into Trouble	37	2	4	12	2	1	1				2	61
I Like to Talk to God	8		2	5	3							18
In Your Dreams (Sierra Jensen Series #2)	5		1		1							7
Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle	4		4	2	1							11
Mayflower Secret: Gov. Bradford	10	4			1					3	5	23
My Buddy God	9											9
My Life as a Broken Bunge Cord		1	5	3	2							11

Figure 5. God as Provider as the predominant image of God with other images of God also evident.

God as Provider with Other Images of God Evident												
	God as	God as	God as	God Who	God as	God Who						
Title	Giver	Creator	Helper	Loves	Protector	Requires Obedience	God as Healer	God Forgives	God's Goodness	God's Grace	God's Mercy	Totals
My Mom is Dying	5		1	1								7
Nothing Plus God	14	1	5	4	10			3		1		38
Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets	9	1	1	1	2	10						24
Race for Freedom	5		1		6				1			13
Road to Damiella	25	9	5	1	8				1	1		50
Rustlers of Panther Gap			4		4					1		9
Shadows on Stoney Creek	11		10	2	4					1		28
Shoelaces & Brussell Sprouts	1	1	1									3
Talk to God . . . I'll Get the Message	8	3			1		1	1				14
Tent: A Parable in One Sitting	8	3										11
Too-Soon Mr. Bear, and other Stories	9	1		1								11
Tree Tall to the Rescue	11	5	16	3	2			1				38
Uncle Noah's Big Boat	2				2							4
Unplanned Voyage		1			1							2
Whaddayamean	6	2			1	3						12
What a Truly Cool World	2	10				2						14
What is God's Name?	3	3		2	1		1					10
When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West	1		4									5
Wood Stork Named Warren: A Fable	11	13	1	13	2							40
Totals	344	150	121	82	77	23	9	13	4	12	9	844

Figure 5 (continued). God as Provider as the predominant image of God with other images of God also evident.

God as Other Than Provider with Some Incidents of God as Provider													
	Predominant	God as	God as	God as	God Who	God as	God Who						
Title	Image of God	Giver	Creator	Helper	Loves	Protector	Requires	God as	God	God's	God's	God's	Totals
Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret	Passive Observer	2		6				1					9
Daniel and the Lion's Den	Punisher			1		2							3
Dear God, HELP!!!! Love, Earl	Passive Observer			2									2
King Who Wanted to See God	Passive Observer	1	2		1			1					5
Old Turtle	None	1	1		2								4
Princess of the Two Lands	Punisher	4	3	1		3	3						14
Where is God?	Passive Observer		2		3								5
Totals		8	8	10	6	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	42

Figure 6. God as other than Provider as the predominant image of God with some incidents of God as Provider.

The religious leaders in *A Wood Stork Named Warren* (Breslin 1991) have summarized many aspects of the image of God as Provider.

But we see God every moment. We believe He is everywhere—that all God creates is part of Him and that part of Him is in all He creates. We see Him not only in the acts of the humans He is teaching to love, but in the smell of the Spring meadow, the howl of the wolf, the touch of the snowflake, the taste of the wild raspberry, and the sight of the tiny oak sprouting from the acorn. He has shown us how deeply He loves us. And He has shown us He will never leave us alone or fail to take us back those countless times we push Him away. He is here where we are, reaching out to those who do not know Him and helping those who do find joy, peace, understanding, forgiveness, and hope. (74)

God as Giver

God as Giver gives gifts, sustenance, laws, opportunities, responsibilities, and His word. Four hundred fifty-six incidents were coded as God as Giver in seventy-five books. In four of those books, God as Giver was the only image of God identified. The number of incidents ranges from one incident in each of nineteen books to thirty-seven incidents of God as Giver in the book *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984).

In the single incident in *Baby in the Laundry Basket: A Christmas Story* (Carlyle 1994), Mama tells Natalie, “Baby Adam is the best and most perfect gift that God could give his parents” (17). In *Bright Christmas: An Angel Remembers* (Clements 1996), God gives His Son, a heavenly light that causes the angels to give a song like God’s smile.

God gives His children opportunity in the single incident in *The Pumpkin Patch Parable* (Higgs 1995) because He desires so much for them (25). He gives beaches and

all their contents in the three incidents in *God Gives Us Beaches* (Fischer 1999). In *God is Near* (Long 1992), God is near and gives comfort in all four incidents. God also gives comfort in one incident in *Before I Was a Kid* (Spears-Stewart 1991), and three incidents in *Go Away, Dark Night* (Higgs 1998).

God gives many gifts. “God gave us a good world,” in one of the eight God as Giver incidents in *Talk to God...I’ll Get the Message* (Geller 1983) and He gives gifts for life in three incidents in *What Is God’s Name?* (Sasso 1999). He gives flowers in an incident in *Can We See God?* (Ter Pooten 1992). In *Making Memories* (Oke 1999), Grandma tells Joe to ““thank God for His gift of memories. The things we enjoy, we can relive again and again””(4). This conversation is one of the two incidents of God as Giver in the book.

Emma is a gift that God gave to her mommy in the incident in *Emma & Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996, 3). In an incident in *The Berenstain Bears and the Big Question* (Berenstain and Berenstain 1999), Grizzly Gran is happy to have the two grandcubs, Brother and Sister Bear, that God gave her (25-26). God gave a father and son love for each other in *I Love My Daddy!* (Rich 1995, 44). He also gave the nighttime for rest for His created beings in another incident (62).

God gives joy in a single incident each of *Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?* (Carlstrom 1993) and in *My Buddy God* (Conte 1996). In *The Bridge to Cutter Gap* (Marshall 1995), Miss Alice tells Christy that God wants people to share joy with others as He shares joy with them (84-87). In the book *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996), God gives

peace and He also can give Sierra “a wonderful, peculiar treasure right to [her] door” and that is exactly what her friend, Christy, is praying for God to give her in a separate incident (50).

Each life that God creates is His gift to the world in an incident in *Remember the Secret* (Kübler-Ross 1982). In *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995), Jimmy reflects on the beauty that God gives on a summer morning in the woods (56). God crowns the mountains with flowers in *The Stormy Night* (Baker 1991, 11).

In *The Little Soul and the Sun: A Children's Parable Adapted from Conversations with God* (Walsch 1998), God gives support (2), explanations (4-5), and assurance (11-12) to the Little Soul in different incidents. He has given the world the great gift of opposites, for without darkness, there would not be light (7). God has also given angels (19).

God provides sustenance in twelve incidents. He gives food that is needed in *God Gives Us Food* (Fischer 1999), and He even gives the food what it needs to grow (3). In *The Miracle of the Potato Latkes* (Penn 1994), Tante Golda always has enough potatoes to make potato latkes for herself and her friends at Hanukkah. The year that Tante Golda can only find one scraggly potato, she is heartbroken, but still shares that little bit with a hungry stranger. God rewards her selflessness with a bountiful supply of potatoes for the rest of her life.

In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), the fire that has besieged the community is so hot it scorches the ground. God is giving them cooked potatoes after

their all-night ordeal in the river. He also gives them each other for company, comfort, and support. God provides food for bears at a certain time of year and a warm place for them to sleep the rest of the year in the book, *Too-soon Mr. Bear and Other Stories* (Runyon 1979). In the other three stories of this book, God provides the right food in the right size for a mouse (17), a friend for Missy the kitten (22), and families for baby birds (26).

In twenty-three incidents God gives many things necessary for the physical survival of His beloved creation. In *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999), God gives what is needed, whether it is “berries and honey and bugs” for the bear or grass tall enough for cover so that the fawn can sleep safely; God provides. God gives strength, comfort, and strawberry jam in *God is Never Too Busy to Listen!* (Burgess 1987). In *Thank God for Sunshine* (Williams 1998), God gives Bobby and his mom a dog, Sunshine, that saves them from the fire that breaks out in their home. God gives His new creation the clothing they need in the book *When God First Made the Animals* (Subramanyan 1985). In *Mama God, Papa God* (Keens-Douglas 1999), He gives His new creation different languages (25).

God gives laws in *T-Bone Trouble* (Levene 1987c), so that man will know how to live. Through Jesus, God gave man laws, requiring him to love God and his fellow man. God gave Jesus two laws to bring to earth for man to follow (106). In *Talk to God...I'll Get the Message* (Geller 1983), God gave laws to help man maintain the life that He also gave to him (6).

God gives of Himself when He listens to children. In the book *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995), ten children relate their experiences of time spent conversing with God. Katie draws pictures to God in a special book her mom has given her for that purpose. Danielle has a special “prayer phone [on which she dials] 332-7403. That spelled ‘Dear God’ on the telephone dial” (15-16). Justin and his daddy take turns talking to God about family members. Chester walks with God when they are talking. God gives Samantha happiness and He likes to hear her tell Him about it. God wants to give everyone eternal life (28).

God also gives of Himself by giving His presence and His companionship as depicted in *My Buddy God* (Conte 1996). God walks along the beach with the young narrator, holding out His hand and sometimes carrying him along so he can rest (5). In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), God gives His presence through the night “Be brave, my children. God is with us” the priest reminds them (45). In *Race for Freedom* (Johnson 1996), Libby’s pa reassures her of the power of God’s presence, “Even if the very worst happened, God would be with me. He’s the one taking care of both of us. Wherever we are, He is” (131). God has also made Himself known and available to Sarah’s pa in *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997). He gives His word and a promise that “‘All things work together for good to those who love God’” (127). God also gives hope and light (129). God spends time with the Little Soul in *The Little Soul and the Sun: A Children’s Parable Adapted from Conversations with God* (Walsch 1998).

The theme “God gave everything for man; He gave His son” is evident in an incident in *The White Pony: A Tale of Great Love* (Byrd 1999). In *The Pumpkin Patch Parable* (Higgs 1995), God makes salvation available to His children because He desires so much for them – “In the same way, God the Father offers His children the chance to be made new, full of joy and full of light, shining like stars in a dark world” (25). God’s gift of salvation is explained in *The Unplanned Voyage* (Davoll 1999, 22).

In two books, *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987, 51) and *The Tent* (Paulsen 1995, 2), God gave Jesus to save His creation. In *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997), Sarah reminds Charlie that “God loved us so much that He sent His Son to the cross to take the punishment for our sins, so He surely cares for us!” (123).

The theme “God gave Christ that we might be saved” is evident in *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985) in which God has also given His name. In *God Is Everywhere: The Good News Kids Learn About Self-Control* (Mock 1993), God has given Jesus to help mankind (30). He has also given young Harry to be a help in the world (31).

God has given His word to the earth. In *Uncle Noah’s Big Boat* (Tsurumi 1999), God gives His word, a promise of happiness, and He gives the rainbow as a sign of that promise all in a single incident (23). In *The Tent* (Paulsen 1995) people are coming to hear God’s word, expecting to receive something from His word that will improve and enrich their lives (54). God’s word touches Corey and Steven with more than they could have hoped to receive through the scam that Corey devised to get rich on the revival circuit (84-86).

In *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987), God has given His word and given man freedom from evil. In *Shoelaces and Brussels Sprouts*, God has given His word that teaches to resolve conflict peacefully (55). God has given His word in *Daddy, Is There Really a God?* (Morris 1997, 27). God gives Noah His word in *Noah's Trees* (LeTord 1999, 17). God gives two children His word to take to the adults of the world in *Whaddayamean* (Burningham 1999, 21).

God gives man to the earth (life) and eventually God calls man back to Him (death). Robert's dying grandfather explains death in this way in an incident in *Talk to God...I'll Get the Message* (Geller 1983, 5-6). When Robert's grandpa dies, God will give him Robert's messages. This same message of giving man to the earth and then calling him back to God is also conveyed in *Remember the Secret* (Kübler-Ross 1982).

God gives one what one needs to do what He requires. God gives Warren human abilities so that he can carry a message for God in *A Wood Stork Named Warren* (Breslin 1991, 36, 78). God also gives him guidance (12). God gives strength as He gave Hannah in *No Friends for Hannah* (Stahl 1992b).

In *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996), God gives his archangels what they need to carry out His word. He gives Michael a title, power, sword, uniform, and God's own shield (19-21). To Gabriel, God gives His own voice and a horn to announce God's word, light, and love (29). Raphael receives a new garment, a golden magic staff that heals, and knowledge from God (37-38). Uriel also receives a new garment as he becomes God's "Angel of Light" (44). God gives titles

and gifts of power to the remaining three angels, Metatron (49-50), Raziel (55-56), and Haniel, the latter receiving the greatest gift--being named the "Glory of God" (57). God gave man free will in the book *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985, 216). God gives peace to the world (95), wisdom (189), and children as gifts to their parents as in the book *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985).

In *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a), Alex's parents drive home the lesson of obedience with several examples. God wants children to learn obedience, so He gives them parents (64). God gives good things like freedom to those who obey Him (59). He took care of Moses and Noah (59-61); He protected the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace (59-60). God provides the lesson on obedience because He knows that Alex disobeyed her mother, even though her parents do not know this yet (112-13).

In *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), God gives miracles. He works out every detail for Susie and the rest of the congregation. He stops the train in their town and sends the wealthy Mr. Gould walking down that street just at the exact moment the church is being auctioned (13-15). God gives them back their church because of their faith. God also saves souls, giving them a chance at eternal life. He also gives a permanent home to those who have fulfilled their earthly tasks (38).

Sometimes God gives something other than a gift. He may give an opportunity, task, or calling as in *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997). In incidents in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), Johnny hears God's call on his life for evangelical work and Susie prays that God will call many others as well. In the book, *Race for Freedom*

(Johnson 1996), God gives His guidance and uses hardships to give valuable growth opportunities (186, 185). Sometimes God will give someone a test in order to strengthen and save him as is evident in the book *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985, 191-2).

In *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), God gives Christian an opportunity to grow when He allows Christian to speak for Him at school and at Mr. Petroccini's apartment. While Mr. Petroccini is immediately accepting of the possibility that God could choose to appear in the body of a seven-year-old waif, Christian's classmates require a little more convincing. God tells Christian that a lot depends on how he handles the day; He is giving Christian a "'moment of truth'" (60). God has great confidence in him and Christian does not let Him down.

God gives Hope strength and He has given her all of her favorite things in *Where Does God Live?* (Holly 1997). In *A Special Gift to God* (Theodore 1986), Spyro's grandmother explains to him that being clean enough for God means being filled with what God gives—His goodness, presence, and love (15). Everything that they have already, God has given to them. God also gave them the Lamb of God to pay for their sins and save their eternal lives.

God also gives strength to the colonists in several incidents in *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998). He gives life and sustains it (136). God also gives entry into heaven. Mayor Bradford tells Elizabeth that man belongs with God who gives him the gift of families (149-151). God provides William Bradford with the ability to be a governor to the colonists (82).

In *My Mom is Dying* (McNamara 1994), Kristine believes God will give her answers to all her questions about her mom's remaining life and her death. "What is [death] like? Will it hurt? How long will mom live?" (5). Did she cause her mom to get sick when she fell onto her last year (13)? God provides Aunt Michelle to give Kristine an answer to her possible involvement in her mom's illness (14). During and after the funeral, Kristine derives comfort from God, because she knows that she can tell Him her feelings and she also knows that her mom is with God (23). God gives Kristine and her dad friends for the times ahead (24).

Herman explains to his young charge some of the gifts that God has given to man in *My Angel Named Herman* (Towns 1998). God gives all people special talents. He has also given man a reflection of His own spirit and a way—through Jesus—to go where God is.

God gives His spirit and salvation to those who ask. In *The Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr* (Williamson 1990), He has given His word and also ten laws that He wrote in stone Himself. God gives His spirit to Nathan and to all men who seek Him. He pours out His spirit upon the faithful at Pentecost. He has given His promise, the Messiah, to save man.

Evidence of God's giving is plentiful in Sonia Levitin's work of historical fiction, *Escape From Egypt* (Levitin 1994) with twenty-six incidents of God as Giver. God gives life and whatever is necessary to sustain the life He has given. When the Hebrew people cry out against God and Moses about the lack of food and water, God supplies fresh

water (120-1), pheasants and daily manna from heaven for their sustenance (123-4, 127). God gives His glory to the Israelites briefly when they are in the desert (156-8). So great is this glory, even for that brief period, that Efrem desires to have it again and puts his life in jeopardy to achieve that end (173-5). God gives the Israelites His word and the privilege of hearing His voice. He also gives them a standard by which to live (191-2, 258). Finally, God's people prepare to go into the land that God promised to give them as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God remembers them in Egypt (94), brings them out of their bondage (93-103), and leads them to the land of His promise (260-7).

In *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), God has given certain members of Christian's ancestry a special gift for hearing voices. Christian inherits this gift upon the death of his grandfather (10), but he does not hear the voices of devout men and women of the past. God gives Christian His own voice and, when Christian so requests, God gives His bodily presence as well (24-25). This is only the beginning. The body God chooses is that of one José Martinez. God also gives Christian something he has never had before. God calls it "beatitude" (24).

I got this fantastic surge of great feeling inside. It was like nothing I've ever felt before. It was as if all the happiness in the world suddenly got together and went inside my body. It was like expanding, growing bigger than the earth and taller than the stars. The thing was, usually I would be scared, or worried, or embarrassed by something so new. But I wasn't any of those things. Maybe it was the realization that I was someone with a bunch of ancestors behind me who'd rather die than deny their voices. I guess it was finally understanding this special thing I was given, this gift, not getting just some saint or martyr of my own but getting God! (Wojciechowska, 27)

This is the gift God gives to Christian. God tells Christian that He intends for everyone to feel beatitude every day.

God also gives miracles, demonstrating this on a somewhat small scale when He asks to see Christian's dad and his dad actually admits them into his room (33).

Christian's dad has been in hiding since Christian's mom became active in her feminist group and started holding meetings in the family's apartment. During God's visit Christian's dad actually resumes his profession as a diamond cutter and immediately takes charge of his marriage again (37).

God gives Christian advice about his worrying, trying to get him to see that doing is better than worrying (56-57). God also gives Christian a compliment. When Mr. Petroccini asks God if He is ever proud of any of His people, God responds that He is proud of someone every day. When prompted to name someone specific of whom He is proud at that very moment, God points to Christian (49-50).

In his sermons, Father Williams represents God as a coach, someone who gives direction, guidance, and inspiration (52). Some of Christian's classmates are willing to accept God as a seven-year-old boy visiting their school if He will do tricks or perform miracles for them. One young admirer of Christian agrees to believe the boy is God if He will get Christian to marry her (63).

When God goes to church with Christian, He shares His love with everyone there and gives Holy Communion to the parishioners (56). God has given man free will and, honoring that gift, He does not interfere with people who are perpetrating evil, even those

people whose victims are children (69). God assures Christian that He will never leave him, “I will be with you always” (80).

God is also with Kathy and His love is just one of the things He has given her in *Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle* (Stahl 1992a). He has also given her power, a sound mind, and His presence. Kathy knows that she should praise God for all that He has given her, but she is not sure she *can* praise God for her little sister, Megan, and her brother, Duke.

God is depicted as Giver in all eleven of *The Gnat's Lifeboat* (Robinson 1936) stories. God gives knowledge in *The Feathered Preacher* (23), *A Visit From Mr. Hard Freeze* (60-61), and *The Fallen Oak and the Fallen Man* (66-67). He gives food to the gnats in *The Gnat's Lifeboat* (9-10), His word to Jonah in *The Bible Story of Jonah* (28, 35), and light to man and the world in *Wonderful Light* (44).

God will also give a man or woman to a people to accomplish a task. He has given Daniel and Thomas, a Delaware father and son, to the Cherokee people to teach them His ways in *Beneath the Sky of An Angry God* (Jenkins 1997,11). God gave Joshua to His people as a leader in *The Humpy Grumpy Camel* (Tangvald 1995, 5). God gives Moses a position of power in *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers1975). He will give Scota “great blessings” for the gifts she has given to His people (108). The new beings that God is about to create in *Old Turtle* (Wood 1992) will be a message that God is sending to the world.

Sometimes people seek God hoping to receive something from Him. The king in *The King Who Wanted to See God* (Matsuura 1995) desires to receive something from

God or from the experience of seeing and hearing God (2). Christian's classmates in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984) want things from God before they will believe in Him (62-63).

In *A Better Tomorrow?* (Harrison 1997), Janet's family is struggling to make ends meet during the Depression. Her mother explains that God wants people to use what He has already given them and then He will give someone something—an idea or a skill—that will help all men (67-68).

God as Creator

In fifty-four books in which the predominant image of God was Provider, God was identified as Creator in 272 incidents. The number of incidents ranged from one incident in fifteen books to forty-two separate incidents in *The Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories* (Robinson 1936). In six of the books, God as Creator was the only image identified.

God made all the earth and everything in it. Two books, *God Made Everything Just Right* (Bigler 1990) and *Polka Dots, Stripes, Humps 'n Hatracks: How God Created Happy Forest* (Hollingsworth 1990), are comprised of lists of all the animals and other things in nature that God has created. Among these are flowers, trees, grass, and several different kinds of animals. The book *God Made Everything Just Right* also mentions the narrator and reader as being made by God and lists some of the reader's body parts as part of God's creation (17). In the book *Polka Dots, Stripes, Humps 'n Hatracks: How God*

Created Happy Forest (Hollingsworth 1990, 1, 24) God made the earth and “every living thing” including Prickles Porcupine. Then He made Adam and placed him on the earth to enjoy its goodness (28). Jessica knows that God has made all the animals and wonders why He made her to be so different from the other animals in *Jessica Giraffe’s Long Neck* (Tangvald 1998).

In the book *I Wonder Who Hung the Moon in the Sky* (Hodgson 1999), God doesn’t need suspenders to hold the planets or a crane to lift the moon (12). God spoke and the things He created obeyed –the moon and the planets got into position and they stay where God told them to be (14). God created dirt to grow the trees and flowers He created (16). He also created the clouds to provide rain for the flowers (20). God takes care of all the things He created (24).

The book *God Made Hugs* (Conan 1994) mentions several types of hugs – “little hugs for snails...giraffe hugs very tall” (13,17) – that God made to accommodate His different creations. In *Daddy, Where Is God?* (Barsch 1997), God is found in all the things He created (4-15).

Another fifty books include God as Creator, although not exclusively. God created the earth—land, water, air—then the animals and then He created people In *Emma and Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996), the title characters thank God for all the wonderful things He has created (1-2).

God created the earth by speaking to it in *The Stormy Night* (Baker 1991). God spoke and “by His word the heavens and earth were made” in *Does God Know How to*

Tie Shoes? (Carlstrom 1993, 4). God owns and controls all that He created. He knows and enjoys His creation (16). A young boy learns about the creation of the world in the book *My Angel Named Herman* (Towns 1998). God created people, the earth, the stars, the planets, and the universe, all out of atoms (60). God created the world by speaking, thus causing the Big Bang that scientists agree occurred at the beginning (46). God created everything in a particular way for a particular purpose (54).

God created the world and continues to nurture it. This theme is evident in *What Is God's Name?* (Sasso 1999). God made the world in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945). God made everything in the world – “seen and unseen” – and part of Him stays with whatever He has made. He also lives inside His creation – flowers, clouds, and all people in *Where Does God Live?* (Holly 1997). God created the earth and the water in *Can We See God?* (Ter Pooten 1992) and beaches in *God Gives Us Beaches* (Fischer 1999, 9).

God created a beautiful world. Christy can see much beauty in God 's world despite the ugliness that now exists alongside the beauty it in *The Bridge to Cutter Gap* (Marshall 1995, 76). Robert Davis sees this same beauty traveling home one night in *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925). He watches as “flecks of cloudlets began to redden, and the denser strata of clouds took on a deep purple, as the western sky blazed out in a marvel of beauty. And Robert thought, truly, that ‘the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork’” (54).

Even though some scientists believe that the world just happened, in *Daddy, Is There Really a God?* (Morris 1997), scientists at the Institute for Creation Research are Christians and believe that God created the world (4). These scientists study God's creation to prove that the Bible is true (4). Joy likes to ask questions and make observations and, through this process, she comes to understand that God must have created the world, just as the Bible says (27).

The book *Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale* (Keens-Douglas 1999) is based on a folktale version of the creation. In this tale, God has two aspects—one feminine, the other masculine--that comprise the God of the Book of Genesis. Papa God begins with light, "Let there be light" (3). Satisfied with His work, He creates the world and then man in His own image (5-11). Mama God creates woman, music, and wind (13, 17). Together they create vegetation and a larger, diverse population (7, 21).

God creates the world with assistance from an Angel named Shaniqua in *What a Truly Cool World*. He reaches a branch down through a hole in heaven to make trees, water, and land. Then He sings the flowers into existence (Lester 1999, 1, 12). In the book *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), God was surprised at how much flowers cost, "I thought I made enough flowers so they wouldn't cost so much" (41).

The young Egyptian princess, Scota, does not understand why the Hebrews claim that their God created everything in *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975, 17). In another kingdom, a little girl sees God in all that He has created. In *The King*

Who Wanted to See God (Matsuura 1995), she tells the king that God is “everywhere! Look at the trees, the birds, the mountains, the flowers. That is God’s work” (18).

With the help of his daddy, a young boy finds God in all of His creation in the book, *Daddy, Where Is God?* (Barsch 1997). In the book, *Dr. Drabble’s Phenomenal Antigravity Dust Machine* (Brouwer 1991), Chelsea and PJ are surrounded by God everywhere they go because God created the world and everything in it. Chelsea and PJ discover that God is always available to them (21).

In *My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord* (Myers 1993), Opera, who has a fear of the outdoors, credits God with “invent[ing] central heating and air-conditioning (14) to keep people safe inside. In *Shoelaces and Brussels Sprouts* (Levene 1987b), Alex knows that God can get her out of trouble. She reasons that, “If God could make the branches and the leaves and the sun and the sky” (96), He can certainly help her.

In the book *Whaddayamean* (Burningham 1999) God has created the earth. God created the earth and asked man to take care of it. In *God is Everywhere: The Good News Kids Learn About Self-Control* (Mock 1993), He resides in His creation; His creation belongs to Him (15). In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), God created the woods and fire and can control fire how and when He chooses. It belongs to God (2). The Cherokee are being forced to move from the land that has sustained them and their ancestors in *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997). The whites now claim that land, but Thomas tells his son that the land does not belong to either of them. It belongs to God; He created it and it is His (6).

In the book ...*And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993), God created a sixth world, a world of dinosaurs, before He created this current, seventh world. For 150,000,000 years the dinosaurs lived in harmony, each eating different parts of different plants. The land provided everything they needed in bountiful proportions.

After God created the earth with sky, wind, and rain, He created animals. In the book *Who Made the Wild Woods?* (Rich 1999), God creates all the animals in the woods. Two other picture books, *When God First Made the Animals* (Subramanyan 1985) and *Whose Nose? Whose Toes* (Reinertson 1999), convey that God has not just created, but He has also given His creations everything they need to function in the world. God has created wood storks to enrich the world in *A Wood Stork Named Warren* (12).

In *The Berenstain Bears and the Big Question* (Berenstain 1999), God created everything to provide for bears, including the endless questions they ask. God made families to help each other in *Too-soon Mr. Bear, and Other Stories* (Runyon 1979, 30). In *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987), God has “made the salmon and the river waters” that sustain his family (101). In *Old Turtle* (Wood 1994), the willow, island, sky, robin, bear, and lion are all parts of God’s creation that are trying to define God (13-16). Old Turtle speaks of a new entity that God is about to create—man (25).

After He made the animals, God made people. He made people in His own image in *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985). In *No Friends For Hannah* (Stahl 1992), Hannah is reminded that God made ducks one way, but He made her “with a free will”

(122). In *Making Memories* (Oke 1999), Grandpa explains, “God made our brain so it kind of does the work [of making memories] on its own” (25). And He created Robert’s grandpa in *Talk to God...I’ll Get the Message*. In *Waldo, Tell Me About God* (Wilhelm 1988) and in *Remember the Secret* (Kübler-Ross), God has created the human body, the world, and the animals. Peter and Suzy have two friends, Theresa and Willy, whom only they can see. Willy tells them that God created the world and everything in it, including their bodies. They should be proud of their bodies, Willy tells them, because God created them.

God created man, wind, day, stones, and birds. In *The Unplanned Voyage* (Davoll 1999), God created people and He has planned something special for them. He has created man in His own image as described in *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985). In *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a), God made Alex’s heart and so it would be wise for her to listen to her heart and do what she feels her heart is leading her to do (93).

The book *I Love My Daddy!* (Rich 1995) is a celebration of the love that God created between children and their daddies. The theme of the book is “God has provided for all our needs in His creation.” He made the darkness to provide cover for some of His creatures. As the little girl delights in the frost on her window, her daddy says, “God makes beautiful things, doesn’t He?” (46).

The colonists in the book *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998) believe they belong to God, because He created them. He also knows their comings and goings for this same reason (81).

In the book *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996), God created man and woman in His own image and presented them to His angels. God's plan was for men to be part of Him. In *Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr* (Williamson 1990), God created the world, "Heaven and Earth...and chose to show his holiness among men by means of one nation, the Jewish people" (Williamson 1990, 18).

In *Escape From Egypt*, Jesse, a member of that chosen nation, acknowledges God as his creator, but he is not completely satisfied with the way God made him with feelings that he cannot control (Levitin 1994,159). Jessica also questions how God created her in *Jessica Giraffe's Long Neck* (Tangvald 1998). She thinks God must have made a mistake in creating her because no other animal has a neck as long as hers or a tail as "wimpy and limpy" (3). When Bitty Baby Bird falls from the nest, Jessica realizes that God made her just right--just right to save Bitty Baby Bird. In *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995), Jimmy feels threatened when he sees a sudden movement in the woods. He is limited by his human capabilities and "wishe[s] God had created people with a highly developed sense of smell like dogs had" (45).

Nine of the eleven stories in *The Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories* (Robinson 1936), including the title story, present an image of God as Creator. God has created the

world with great wisdom, for each creation has a specific purpose and a mechanism for self-maintenance and self-perpetuation. God made the gnat to right itself when tipped over and the gnat's eggs in such a shape that the gnat is able to hatch them (9-12). In *Water*, God made water to recycle itself through evaporation, condensation, and rain (13-21). In *The Wonderful House*, He also made the human body so that it could be fixed when damaged (74-80). In *A Visit From Mr. Hard Freeze*, God knew that water would freeze and provided for that with contraction and expansion (55-62). In *The Bible Story of Jonah*, God made a sperm whale big enough to swallow a man without killing him, because He knew He would need such an animal for Jonah (28-35). In *God Richly Provides*, God made different kinds, strengths, and sizes of trees because He knew that man would have so many different kinds of needs (46-54). In *Wonderful Light*, God made light because He knew that man would need it later when He created him (36-46).

Prompted by a question from a young subject, the king in *The King Without a Shadow* (Sproul 1996) seeks information about a king who reportedly does not have a shadow. After a discouraging search, he reaches a cave-dwelling prophet from whom the king receives an answer. God created the world and He reigns as king over His creation. He is higher than His creation; He is Holy. God is the King without a shadow.

God as Helper

Characters receive help from God in 154 incidents in thirty-eight books, ranging from one incident in sixteen books to twenty-six incidents of help in *Escape from Egypt*

(Levitin 1994). The need for God's help arises in situations of danger and trouble. Help is often required to achieve one's heart's desire or when a choice must be made. Some characters need God's help to survive on a daily basis.

Several characters receive help through direct assistance from God while others are helped through intercession. Some actively call on God while others receive His help without realizing it at first. In *Emma & Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996), Emma learns that God will help her if she asks for His help when she has a need in her life (11). In *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987), Tree Tall realizes that God has been helping him all along, "working things out in his young life" (87). Perhaps that is why, in the book *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996), God sometimes "lead[s] in ways we can't see or understand," because He sees what is ahead and is helping Sierra before she asks or even knows to ask for His help (79).

God helps characters in dangerous situations. In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), God helps Carrie and her companions get through the night. He provides a cow as an anchor, and keeps them afloat and alive as they seek refuge from the raging fire that is devouring their community (45-65). As they leave their comfortable, familiar surroundings in *When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West* (Graham 1997), the pioneers count on God's help in five of the six incidents. He helps them all along their journey westward to make a new life.

Jimmy needs God's help when an escaped convict takes him and his uncle captive in *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995, 88). Uncle Cully, shot by the convict

named Ben, is forced to stay behind in the cave (100-1) while Jimmy must accompany Ben who is obsessed with his search for treasure (105-17). Jimmy asks God to help him think of a way to escape (114) and then to keep Ben asleep until he has a chance to execute his plan (119). God does both.

God helps Kathy and her friends find Megan when she disappears from the playground in *Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle* (Stahl 1992, 15-17). When the little raccoon in *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999) gets lost late at night, God sends help (9). God helps Christy when she falls into an icy creek in an incident in *The Bridge to Cutter Gap* (Marshall 1995, 62). He sends the new minister to fish her out of the creek. When a voice tells Gary to set him back down on the floor of the school bus in *My Life as a Smashed Burrito with Extra Hot Sauce* (Myers 1993b), Wally immediately thinks that God has stepped in to help him, either "in person" or through one of His archangels (8).

God helps characters when they get into trouble and Alex knows that He can help her out of the trouble she has created with her lies in *Shoelaces and Brussels Sprouts* (Levene 1987b, 96). In *Race for Freedom* (Johnson 1996), God is the only one who can give Libby the courage she needs to face the trouble with the slave catchers on land and the ice in the Mississippi River (98). In *My Life as a Smashed Burrito with Extra Hot Sauce* (Myers 1993b), Wally has to call on God for help when the trap he sets for Gary is about to back fire. Earl expects God to help him stay away from the school bully in an incident of *Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl* (Park 1993, 10-11).

God helps characters find what they need to get them out—or keep them out--of trouble. In *Where Does God Live?* (Holly 1997), “...God helps us find truth...” (24) to avoid trouble. In the book *The Rustlers of Panther Gap* (Morris 1994), Barney believes that God will help the Leatherwoods escape financial ruin by helping them find and catch the people responsible for stealing their valuable black walnut trees. He wants so much for them to believe it too, but God helps them even though they did not believe He would. In *Roxie and the Red Rose Mystery* (Stahl 1992c), Roxie is pressed into service as a “King’s Kid” to help Mary Harland whose household is in spiritual, financial, and emotional need. Roxie helps Mary with her chores and younger siblings and also advises and encourages her with her art contest entry. When it comes to the adult situations that Mary’s parents are battling, however, she assures Mary that God will help the family get turned around (71, 99, 120).

In *My Mom is Dying* (McNamara 1994), God helps Kristine through her mother’s illness and death by listening to her, answering her questions and fears, and by giving her friends. In the book *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996), Sierra believes that God will help her with her problems, but that sometimes there is something she must do herself. She turns her troubles over to God, but knows that He may bring a problem back to her if there is something she must do herself (135).

In *Forbidden Gates* (Williamson 1990), God helps Dorian and two of Jesus’ disciples, Peter and John, out of the Roman prison (82, 93), but He only helps those

whose actions He has ordained. Nathan sees God as the source of his help when he is left homeless because of the disgrace he has brought upon his family (78).

God helps several characters achieve their hearts' desires. In three separate incidents, Margaret is hoping that God will help her realize her heart's desire—to mature physically--in the book *Are You There, God? It's Me Margaret* (Blume 1974, 1, 37, 50). God can help Bobby keep Sunshine when the dog's former owner appears to claim her in *Thank God for Sunshine* (Williams 1998, 47-48). Daniel tells the king that he will help him restore the city “with God's help” in *Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986, 35).

In *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997), God helps Sarah to establish and run a school for the younger children (48-72, 161-178). Sarah helps the children see how God has helped each of them in the past (72).

In *Escape From Egypt* (Levitin 1994), God has a plan to help His chosen people come out from Pharaoh's bondage in Egypt and a plan for each individual's life. He delivers them out of Egypt just as He said He would and He will also help them to live free from sin.

God also helps Tree Tall's adopted sister, Bright Sky, to control her tongue and He helps Tree Tall control the fire that burns within him in two separate incidents in *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987, 39, 46). In *The Tent* (Paulsen 1995), Steven is asking for God's help in bringing ending his dad's plans to defraud people before the plan gets started (23). In *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985), God will help Mother Sibilia keep

Clare from her seven brothers who are trying to force her to forget her vows and go home.

Sometimes God helps in unseen ways. In *My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord* (Myers 1993a), God placed Wally and his friends in uncomfortable situations, forcing them to trust in Him. As soon as they have to rely on God's help, He does help them in ways they can see. Opera overcomes his fear of the outdoors, Wally overcomes his fears of heights, Wall Street learns to trust God, and Miguel learns that God really does exist. "Good ol' God. He did it again" (111).

God has been helping Alex to grow through all that she experienced as a result of her disobedience in *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a, 115). Waldo assures his young charge that God will help him even when he makes a mistake in his daily living in *Waldo, Tell Me About God* (Wilhelm 1988, 13).

God helps those He calls to do a work for Him; therefore Susie is expecting God to help the missionary who will address the congregation of the church she attends in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945, 34). In *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996), God bestows gifts and powers upon seven angels and sends them forth to help His newly created beings with all of life's challenges (11, 44-45, 61). In His service as a "King's Kid" in *No Friends for Hannah* (Stahl 1992), Hannah calls on God for help. He helps her survive baby-sitting a family of four children--three unruly children, ages three to six and a hungry, four-month-old baby (52-61).

The humans in *A Wood Stork Named Warren* (Breslin 1991) know that they “will never be as wise, powerful, or loving as” God (57). They will always need God’s help to live better and contribute to, instead of detract from, the earth. God will help Robert Davis forgive the Newbys in *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925, 55). Robert cannot do it without God.

Janet and her family need God’s help for their daily survival during the Depression in *A Better Tomorrow?* (Harrison 1997). The Larsens have been forced to close their store and rent living space from a very strict landlady, Mrs. Cooper. Janet’s mom expects God to help them once they have exhausted their own resourcefulness, but Janet needs Him now to help her get along with Mrs. Cooper (67-68).

God helps Christian and his family in several incidents in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984). In two of those incidents, Christian discovers that God has been helping him all along (27) and God helps Christian’s dad by encouraging him to resume his profession as a diamond cutter (33-35).

Justin and his dad ask God to help their family members in an incident in *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995, 17-19). God is there to listen and to help a little boy’s parents argue in *God Is Never Too Busy to Listen* (Burgess 1987, 15). Daniel turns to God for help and solace when his family circumstances seem to overwhelm him in *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997, 8).

In *God Gives Us Food* (Fischer 1999), God helps nourishing food grow in gardens by providing the necessary elements (9).

God has given man free will, but He still helps with making decisions. In *God is Everywhere: The Good News Kids Learn About Self-Control*, “when people *think* before they do things, God can help them do the right thing” (23). God sent Jesus to help man (30). God sends other helpers, too – children like Harry help to keep the earth clean (31).

God Who Loves

“God, with His Mighty face of Light and Love, smiled with great joy as He sat upon His golden throne” (Forth 1996, 5) because God loves His creation. God’s love is depicted in 141 incidents in forty-nine of the books, ranging from one incident in nineteen books to thirteen incidents in *A Wood Stork Named Warren: A Fable* (Breslin 1991). In three books, God Who Loves is the only image of God identified.

God’s love is the most love that there can be in *All The Way to God* (Giuliano 1999, 22). In the sole incident in *Berries for the Queen: A Book About Patience* (Noonan 1993), God is “patient and kind...and loves us very much” (30). In *My Mr. T Doll* (Graeber 1985), Mr. T reminds Susie that regardless of what she may not have, she does have God’s love (17).

God’s love is mentioned briefly in all of the following titles in which God as Provider is the only image of God: *Before I Was a Kid* (Spears-Stewart 1991); *The Dream Quilt* (Ryan 1999); *Emma & Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996); *Go Away, Dark Night* (Higgs 1998); *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999); *No Friends For Hannah* (Stahl 1992b); and *T-Bone Trouble* (Levene 1987c). His love is inescapable in

The Perfect Hiding Place (Campion 1982). In *Can We See God?* (Ter Pooten 1992), Old Grandma tells Katrina that God loves her (42) and that “God is love” (38).

In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), Kate Newby comes across a denominational tract that defines God as “Life, Truth, Love” (71). In *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), the narrator explains God’s love to the reader (26), the same love that sustains Susie throughout the book. In the book *The Tent* (Paulsen 1995), Steven can feel God’s love in one of the attendees at his father’s fake revival. Steven marvels that God’s love is actually in this man (78), that he feels love from God and reflects that love to others. In *Where Does God Live?*, God loves and His children who remember that God is with them share God’s love with others (23). Uncle Cully feels God’s love “shine through” Jimmy in *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995, 140). Alex can “feel God’s love surrounding and protecting” her whole family in *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a, 57). Even though most of his family does not believe it, Tree Tall knows that God loves him in spite of his Indian heritage in *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987, 23).

God’s unconditional love is evident throughout the book *A Wood Stork Named Warren* (Breslin 1991). His love comes through those humans who have come to know Him. God loves Warren and all the earth. He even loves the humans who do not care for the earth as He intended. God loves all. As Waldo explains in *Waldo, Tell me About God*, “God loves you even if you do naughty things”(6).

In the book *Where Does God Sleep, Momma?* (Bestmann 1996), God takes care of His people, never sleeping, always watching and keeping them in His care (16). In *Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?* (Carlstrom 1993), “God wraps His love around us like the wing of a...protecting her baby chicks” (7). In an incident in *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997), Sarah reminds Charlie and Katie of God’s love, a love so great that He sacrificed His own son so that others could live (123). Francis Bernardone recites a poem wherein he names the signs of God’s love of which Christ is the pillar in *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985, 219). The narrator explains God’s unconditional love in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945, 26). God gives because of His love. In *The Bridge to Cutter Gap* (Marshall 1995), God loves all that He has created (104).

Moses talked of God’s love in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994) and Jesse finally comes to understand that it is necessary to love “both of them, man and God. To love one, you must also love the other” (254). In the book *A Special Gift to God* (Theodore 1986), Spyro knows that God loved St. John the Baptist and He loves Spyro, too (9).

In *God and Joseph and Me* (Carlyle 1992), a little girl rescues an abandoned kitten and takes him home to care for him. Her papa compares her actions to those of God who rescues people from sin and takes them home to be with Him at the end. As much as she loves her kitten, Joseph, God loves her even more (20). Because Suzy knows God’s love in *Remember the Secret* (Kübler-Ross 1982), she is not afraid when her friend Peter dies. She knows that God has taken Peter to a place “where no one knows any pain or grief or sorrow” (26).

In *God is Never Too Busy to Listen!* (Burgess 1987), God listens because He really cares (7). In *Families of God* (Swartz 1994), a father and daughter travel around the world photographing families in Africa, Japan, and other countries. They exclaim, “God’s loves is reflected on all of their faces!” (27).

When the windy weather prohibits their scheduled balloon trip in *My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord* (Myers 1993), Wally is ecstatic and assured of God’s love. “I finally had proof that God really exists! And more importantly, I knew that He loved me...me, Wally Walking Disaster McDoogle” (23). Wally would like to convey this knowledge to Miguel, to let him know that God loves him unconditionally, but he doesn’t know how (54). Miguel’s sister, Wall Street, keeps trying though. She is determined to get Miguel to know God’s love (88).

In *Dr. Drabble’s Phenomenal Antigravity Dust Machine* (Brouwer 1991), God loves Chelsea and PJ completely and unconditionally (11). He is always available to them and would welcome their visit anytime (19). In *Daddy, Is There Really a God?* (Morris 1997), God loves His creation and desires love from the people He created (26). God loves Amy in *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995, 29).

God expresses His love for Uriel, Raziel and all of mankind in several incidents in *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996, 5, 44, 55, 56, 60). In fact, Lucifer was considered to be God’s most beloved while he yet resided with God in heaven (11). In *Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr* (Williamson

1990), God loved Stephen and the evidence of that love helps to sway Nathan's father to join with the Christians (119).

God tells Christian, in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), that He loved José Martinez. José was a "scrawny-looking Puerto Rican, maybe eight years old...[h]is forehead is badly bruised, and he's got a black eye, and his neck looks hurt...and his legs look all battered up, and [one] hand...has a real bad burn" (24). José's parents had apparently been abusing him and in fact, God was the only one who had loved him in his whole seven years on earth (29). Christian later realizes that by showing His love for the homeless man in the park, God is demonstrating His love for all mankind (38). God demonstrates this great love again the next day when He encounters two junkies in the park and sits down on the ground and cries with them out of compassion (58-59).

God's love is manifest through some of Christian's classmates. As they sit in the principal's office, the children share God's love; they touch Him, swear allegiance to Him, and "Venus Grace kisses God on the top of his head and says, 'Whither thou goest, I shall go'" (Wojciechowska 1984, 74). God loves these children and delights in them. He cannot stop smiling.

In *Old Turtle* (Wood 1992), the star and the island proclaim God's proximity and His love (34). In *A Feathered Preacher*, one of the *Gnat's Lifeboat* stories, Uncle Charlie tells the children about God's love for His creation, how He watches over all, man and bird alike (Robinson 1936, 24). Out of His love, God brings a kitten family

to live near Missy so that she can have a friend in *The Pretend Friend*, one of the stories in *Too-soon Mr. Bear, and Other Stories* (Runyon 1979, 22).

Joseph's parents tell him of God's love for him in *Where Is God?* (O'Leary and Dalton 1991, 2) and he seeks God for himself. Near the end of Joseph's search for God, the baker tells him of a voice proclaiming God's love (18). When the king finally finds *God in The King Who Wanted to See God* (Matsuura and Matsuura 1995), he lists some of God's attributes including "loving as a mother of a newborn child" (23).

God has placed His love in man, but sometimes man does not exhibit that love. Kathy does not always love her little sister, Megan, partly because she literally is *Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle* (Stahl 1992). Her frustration builds until she says she hates Megan and wishes her dead. Kathy's dad reminds her that she can love Megan with God's love that He placed in her heart; she does not have to rely on her own love (155).

God as Protector

God is seen as a protector in ninety-nine incidents in thirty-eight books. Sixteen books include one incident each and one book, *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), portrays God as Protector in ten separate incidents, the most in a single book. There were no books in which God as Protector was the only image of God identified. As a protector, God keeps characters safe from physical, emotional, and/or spiritual harm.

In *Go Away, Dark Night* (20, 29) God keeps Anna physically safe during a storm in *The Stormy Night*. In *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999), God keeps the bunny safe during a storm.

Good night, little bunny; so snug in your bed;
There's a storm up above, but you're dry and well fed.
God has protected you, just as he said.
Good night, little bunny; so snug in your bed. (3)

In *The Dream Quilt* (Ryan 1999) God saved Noah and He can keep a little boy safe in the night (31). In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* God protects Fritz and Father Pernin from the fire the day they are hunting pheasants in the woods. Sarah credits God with keeping Katie and Charlie safe from the zealous revolutionaries who killed their parents in *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997, 122).

Jimmy thanks God for keeping Lassie safe as she recovers their canoe (39-40) and for keeping his sister, Katie, safe at home (100) through this whole woodland adventure. God has protected them both just as He protects Jimmy and Uncle Cully in the ordeal with a dangerous prison escapee (84-134).

In *The Rustlers of Panther Gap*, God provides a ledge to catch and save Barney when he falls from the side of the mountain in the dark, with the pouring down rain. In *Nothing Plus God*, God can protect Susie's family no matter where they are. He can keep their little wagon train safe from Indians right in the middle of a scary attack. Later, when Johnny evangelizes in Africa, God will be there to protect him as well.

In *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998), God protects the colonists on their dangerous journey. He delivers them safely to the shores of Cape Cod and sustains them after their arrival. In *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994), the people of Israel are afraid when they come up against the Red Sea, knowing that Pharaoh's army is in hot pursuit. Moses comforts the people, "Do not be afraid! God will fight for you, but you must remain silent" (103). God protects them from Pharaoh's army and makes a way for their escape to safety.

God protects those who obey His word. In *Noah's Trees* (Le Tord 1999), God protects Noah and his family, the animals, and saplings from the trees Noah loved most (15, 23, 25). In *Uncle Noah's Big Boat*, God tells Uncle Noah of a big rain that is coming. He instructs Noah to build a big boat where his family and the animals will be safe (1). In *Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986), God protected Daniel in the lion's den because of his faithfulness to God (39-45).

When the children are accosted by Brody's drug dealing brother in *Kathy's Babysitting Hassle* (Stahl 1992), a man pulls up in his car and rushes to their rescue. Megan is convinced that the man is an angel from God. She tells the others, "'God sent him to protect us. I saw his wings'" (92).

In *The Bible Story of Jonah* from *The Gnat's Lifeboat* (Robinson 1936), Uncle Charlie tells the children how God protected Jonah in the belly of the whale and kept him from harm for three days. God made the whale in such a way that it could contain a man and then safely expel him at the appointed time (28-35).

In the single incident of *Shadows and Shining Lights* (Hibbard 1990), God has sent His angels to watch over Michael and Christy to protect them during their backyard overnight camp out (30). On the other hand, God provides darkness as protection for His creatures that seek food at night in *I Love My Daddy* (Rich 1995, 64).

Katrina's papa tells her that God protects His loved ones in much the same way as a crow protects her little ones in the sole God as Protector incident in *Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?* (Carlstrom 1993, 7). Alex can feel God's loving protection whenever she is surrounded by her family in *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a, 57). She is confident that God will keep her family safe. God is proving to Opera and Wally that He will protect them in the woods and in the air, respectively, in *My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord* (Myers 1993, 82-3).

Stephen declares Nathan's cut to be "shallow" (55) because God was protecting Nathan when he encountered the Roman guard's spear in *Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr* (Williamson 1990, 55). The Egyptian Scota asks the Hebrew's God for protection for her husband as he accompanies Pharaoh's army against the Hebrew people in *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975, 116).

God protects the spiritual being and has provided a way—Jesus—for man to be saved and brought to eternal life. In the sole incident in *Where Does God Sleep, Momma?* (Bestmann 1996), "God never sleeps. He watches over all of us – our souls for Him to keep" (16). Robert asks God to watch over his grandpa's soul when his grandpa returns to God in *Talk to God...I'll Get the Message* (Geller 1983, 15). Thomas trusts

Henry's soul to God when Henry's ankle is crushed by Jake Crawford's horse on the Trail of Tears in *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997, 15-17). Henry is tired and ready to give up living.

In *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987, 31) God is protecting Tree Tall from superstition. A little girl saves a kitten from the side of the road and her papa tells her that God has saved her "from the sinful and dangerous world" in much the same way in *God and Joseph and Me* (Carlyle 1992, 2).

Robert Davis claims God's salvation through "Jesus Christ the Lord" (33) in several incidents in *Around Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925). He knows that God has saved him (27) and that he will reign with Christ in the next world if he lives "godly, in this present world" (33).

When they sing a hymn with great spirit and conviction in *Race for Freedom* (Johnson 1996), Elsa's parents remind Libby that God provides protection, a refuge, for His people (92). In *The Road to Damietta* (), God's protection is requested and expected on the road from Assisi to Venice as Raul transports Ricca to the exile her father has planned for her.

God also protects the emotional aspect of man from harm. In the book *In Your Dreams*, Sierra's mom seeks God's protection for her sister's children during their mom's convalescence. She is concerned about the twins because of their parents' troubled marriage. Joel is shy, but he feels safe sharing his feelings with God in *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995, 11).

God Who Requires Obedience

God sees all and requires obedience so that He can provide what is best for all His creation. This God who Requires Obedience is an aspect of God as Provider identified in thirty-four incidents in eleven of the books, ranging from one incident in each of four books to ten incidents in *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a). There were no books in which God who Requires Obedience was the only image of God identified. Six of the books are works of fiction based on occurrences in the Bible.

In *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999), Bruce and Shaniqua obey God as He creates the earth. Bruce, God's secretary, comes at God's every beckon and brings whatever God commands him to bring. When God tells Shaniqua to demonstrate her singing, she complies. "Shaniqua opened her mouth. The sound that came from her throat was as soft and as smooth as a flower's breath. As quiet as it was, it could be heard all over heaven. The angels stopped what they were doing to listen" (Lester 1999, 22).

Seven of God's archangels in *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996) obey God's word and offer themselves to serve God's new creation and to fight the forces of evil that Lucifer is gathering against them. In two other books, based on offerings from the Book of Genesis, God's command to build an ark is obeyed. Uncle Noah obeys and builds to God's specifications in *Uncle Noah's Big Boat* (Tsurumi 1999, 1-3).

Noah's Trees (Le Tord 1999) is another fictionalized account of the same biblical event. Noah lovingly tends to his tree saplings, nurturing them until they grow into a

great forest. He plans to leave the trees to his sons and envisions his progeny enjoying the products the trees will provide and the creatures they will shelter (3-13). When God tells Noah to use his beloved trees to build an ark, Noah obediently sets about his task and works diligently until he has completed the ark (15-21). He brings some tree saplings along to plant in the new place God has chosen for them (25).

God gives the Hebrew people commandments by which they are to live and He expects them to obey those laws in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994, 168). In *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975), Gathelos tells Scota, an Egyptian, that the Hebrews' God requires that His people obey and worship Him (26). In *The Humpy, Grumpy Camel* (Tangvald 1995), Joshua is able to obey God with the little camel's help (15-16).

In *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a), the children recall several people in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible who obeyed God with miraculous results (59-61). God still gives good things when people obey Him. Remembering to always do that can sometimes be just beyond Wally's reach in *My Life as a Smashed Burrito with Extra Hot Sauce* (Myers 1987b, 47), even though Wally realizes that God, the source of life, must be obeyed for everyone's well being. In *Whaddayamean* (Burningham 1999), the children do obey God and try to carry forth the word God gave them for the inhabitants of Earth (24-30).

In *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), Christian's dad complies with God's request to demonstrate his diamond-cutting skill (34). Mr.

Petroccini believes that man's laws contradict one another and man, therefore, has no choice except obeying God's laws (46).

God as Healer

God as Provider is manifested as a healer in fifteen incidents in ten books, ranging from one incident each in seven of the books to four incidents in the book *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925). There is no book in the study in which God as healer was the sole image of God identified. Characters experience God's healing in different ways—some actually witness and/or receive physical healing, others believe they have witnessed God's healing, some feel assured of His healing, and others ask, believing that God heals when it is His will to do so.

The four incidents of God's healing that occur in *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1935) center around the healing of Mary Davis when a minister from another town anoints her with oil and prays for her (85-87). The Davises celebrate Mary's healing as the work of God. A woman in *What Is God's Name* (Sasso 1999) proclaims God a healer (7). God uses Stephen to heal the sick in *Forbidden Gates*, where "the power of God drew down around them: blind men saw; wounds were healed; the lame walked" (Williamson 1990, 111).

This is not always the case, however, when Steven and his dad travel around rural Texas pretending to preach in the book *The Tent* (O'Dell 1995). The father and son team

join forces with two seasoned tent revival veterans who know how to bring in the money with services for healing. During the first service a woman comes forward to receive healing for weakness in her body. Corey believes he has witnessed God's healing power, not realizing that this is merely part of the scam (58).

Some characters are assured of God's healing. The young protagonist in *God Is Never Too Busy to Listen* (Burgess 1987) believes that God will heal all his ills (13). God's desire to heal is also revealed in *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999).

Good night, little cougar; you've had a hard day.
You injured your paw while you were at play,
But God heals our hurts and watches our ways.
Good night, little cougar: you've had a hard day. (23)

When Alex's little brother falls from a high limb of a tree in *T-Bone Trouble* (Levene 1987c), their mom asks God to heal him. Their older sister, Barbara, comforts Alex and reminds her to trust in God for Rudy's healing (51). Margaret thanks God in advance for healing her dad's injured hand in *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974, 16).

Robert seeks healing for his grandfather when he is diagnosed with an illness in *Talk to God...I'll get the Message* (Geller 1983, 9). His grandfather tells Robert that God will hear their prayers and answer according to His will, His plan for the grandfather's life (10).

God's Forgiveness

God's forgiveness is another aspect of God as Provider, identified in eleven books. Four of the fifteen incidents occur in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994) while five of the books contain one incident each.

In *Daddy, Is There Really a God?*, Tracker John explains that people sin, "even children sin, and break God's heart," but He forgives. He is only waiting to be asked. In *Talk to God...I'll get the Message* (Geller 1983), Robert is seeking God's forgiveness for being angry about his Grandpa's illness and subsequent death (23). In *Waldo, Tell Me About God* (Wilhelm 1988), Waldo tells of God's forgiveness. In *A Special Gift to God* (Theodore 1986) Spyro recalls how John the Baptist asked God to forgive the people, expecting that God would grant it (9). In *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999), God even forgives mischievous "little rats" (13).

God offers forgiveness and reconciliation to those who have strayed far from Him in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945). When Joe thinks he is too far from God to ever know Him again, Susie's song reminds him of the parable about the prodigal son whose father welcomed him home after he had squandered his entire inheritance (29-31). Joe decides to seek God's fellowship and is welcomed with love and forgiveness (31-33).

God forgives, and, in His word, He has taught His followers to forgive. He expects them to forgive each other and all those who hurt them. In *Roxie and the Red Rose Mystery* (Stahl 1992c), that is just what Roxie realizes she must do when one of her best friends sabotages her entry for the art contest. In *T-Bone Trouble* (Levene 1987c),

Alex must forgive Julie for turning her classmates against her (116). In *God is Everywhere: The Good News Kids Learn About Self-Control* (Mock 1993), “God forgives us, for Jesus’ sake, for the times we forget...” (30).

In *Forbidden Gates*, as Stephen is being stoned to death for preaching the ministry of Jesus, he asks God to forgive his murderers. When Efrem joins the idolatrous revelers in *Escape From Egypt* (Levitin, 1994), Shira begins to mourn for her husband who is now lost to God. Talia comforts her, however, with the promise of God’s forgiveness, “Mama, Mama, it’s all right. Father will come back. You’ll see—God will forgive him” (175).

God’s Goodness

Specific reference to God’s goodness occurs in fifteen incidents from six books, with five books containing one incident each. Nine of the twenty incidents in *Who Made the Wild Woods* (Rich 1999), pertain to God’s goodness.

GOD made prickly porcupines that waddle in the woods!
God made stinky-winky skunks, furry foxes, scolding squirrels, merry mice,
beautiful birds, and windblown wildflowers! God is *so* good! (25).

God’s goodness fills Spyro’s mind and body when he prays in *A Special Gift to God* (Theodore 1986, 15). In one of only three God as Provider incidents in *Where is God?* (O’Leary and Dalton 1991), Joseph begins his search for God because his parents speak to him of God’s goodness and love (2).

In an incident in *God Richly Provides*, a story in *The Gnat's Lifeboat* (Robinson 1936), God's goodness is evidenced in the fact that He has given man so much. God made different kinds of trees to provide for man's every need and enjoyment (53).

In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), Peter Newby attests to God's goodness by quoting from the Book of Matthew in the New Testament, "There is none good but one, that is God" (24). The traveling minister, Jeremy Justice, proclaims God's goodness in *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997). Even though "God often worked in mysterious ways... 'God is good, brothers and sisters'" (182).

Alex comes to understand about God's goodness in *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a).

"Every time you learn something from the Lord, your faith grows."

"And I climb higher up the mountain!" shouted Alex. Her face shone with excitement. "Brussels sprouts! All this time I've been climbing up the mountain and I didn't even know it!"

Alex felt sudden tears in her eyes. She looked at her parents and saw tears in their eyes, too. At the same time, she and her father moved to sit by Mother on the sofa. All three hugged each other tightly.

"God is so good," whispered Mother. Amen. (114)

God's Grace

God grants His grace in thirteen incidents in nine books, with one incident each in six of the books, two incidents in two books, and three incidents in two books, *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925) and *The*

Mayflower Secret (Jackson and Jackson 1998). In the former title, it is “by God’s grace [that Mary Davis escapes] a yoke of bondage, a yoke of man’s making” (79) as she comes to an understanding regarding the religious doctrine of a particular denomination. God’s grace sustains the Pilgrims in *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998) on their long, arduous journey across the Atlantic. By His grace they arrive at Cape Cod and many survive the sickness and other hardships that beset the colonists (32-34, 77, 149).

God’s grace keeps Thomas from being severely wounded when Jake Crawford shoots him in one of the two incidents of God’s grace in *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997). The bullet penetrates the Bible he is holding and Thomas receives “only a flesh wound” (10).

In *God Is Never Too Busy to Listen* (Burgess 1987), God’s word helps a young boy to “remember His grace” (15). Even though the Leatherwoods did not believe God would help them, He did, by grace, in an incident in *The Rustlers of Panther Gap* (Morris 1994, 139). After Francis Bernardone has chosen God in *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985), he woos the Virgin Mary, “by the grace of God, I sing under the window of the Virgin Mary” (126-7).

In *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), the missionary visiting Susie’s church gives a “first-hand testimony of the power of God’s transforming grace to change a savage cannibal into a humble follower of the Lord Jesus Christ” (36). In *Shadows on Stoney Creek*, it is only by God’s grace that Sarah, or anyone, can escape “the flames of hell” (130).

God's Mercy

God shows mercy in eleven incidents in five books in the study, ranging from one incident in *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985) to five incidents in *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998). There were no books with God's Mercy as the only image of God identified.

In one of the five incidents of God's Mercy in *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998), Elizabeth Tilley and her friend, Mary Chilton, have been teasing John Howland throughout their voyage to the New World. When John falls overboard, the girls feel guilty and call out to God for mercy for John and for themselves (81).

In *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999), God shows mercy on the little fox caught by the farmer's cart. He lets the little fox escape even though the little fox was at fault by trying to be clever (17). In *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985), Francis Bernardone believes that God has sufficient mercy to pardon the crusaders' "unpardonable sin" (214) of looting the conquered Damietta.

In *T-Bone Trouble* (Levene 1987c), when Alex's dog, T-Bone, causes \$1,000 worth of damage in a mall store, Alex's dad reminds her that God looks at His children with mercy and understanding. He quotes the Bible, "God looks at the intentions of our hearts" (114). As a Christian father, following the example of his Heavenly Father, he too must look at the intentions of her heart (114-15).

In *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), God shows mercy when the Fitzpatricks' arrogance causes Him to fall off the pew in church. He gets

up from the floor and sits in the pew behind them. Later during that same service, God shows mercy for Father Williams by not laughing at his “great coach in the sky” sermon (55).

In *The Bible Story of Jonah* in *The Gnat's Lifeboat* (Robinson 1936), God shows mercy for Jonah by keeping him alive in the belly of the whale for three days. God could have punished him more severely, but He knows Jonah's heart and He gives Jonah a second chance to obey Him (28-35).

Summary: God as Provider

God as Provider was evident in 100 of the 103 books in the study, the predominant image in ninety-six of these. At least one of the three most numerous images of God--God as Giver, God as Creator, and God as Helper--was evident in all but eleven of the 103 titles. Some aspect of God as Provider appears in all the books that have another predominant image of God, in a total of forty-two incidents. There are, however, no incidents of God's Mercy or God's Grace in books that had a predominant image of God other than Provider.

God as Punisher

God as Punisher is critical, harsh, and exacting. He judges, chastises, and hurts the child. Sin is the primary cause of God's punishment in the books included in the study. In *Daddy, Is There Really a God?* (Morris 1997), the scientist from ICR tells Joy

about God and sin. “[I]t breaks His heart when we choose to do wrong. This is called sin, and we all sin sometimes. Maybe we disobey our parents, or treat someone mean. Maybe we tell a lie. It’s all sin. The Bible tells us that the punishment for sin is death—death forever—in a place far away from God and His love” (26).

Two types of sin that are evident in the books are the sin of disobedience and the sin of wickedness. Some characters attribute their woes to God’s anger and punishment for some unknown sin. These incidents were coded God as Punisher under Fear of Punishment. Other characters await God’s final judgment and the punishment it will bring for many.

Two books in the study depict God with a predominant image of God as Punisher. Both books depict at least one other image of God as well. There are no books in which the sole image of God is God as Punisher. Figure 7 shows these titles.

Both books with God as Punisher as the predominant image of God are chapter book fictionalized accounts of events from the Old Testament. In *Daniel and the Lion’s Den* (Benagh 1986), three young people from the twentieth century, Derek, Margo, and Moki, travel back to the time of the Babylonian captivity. There they witness the handwriting on the wall and the subsequent demise of Belshazzar, the entry of Darius the King, the conspiracy of Nebiza and Alreth, and the casting of Daniel into a den of lions, and five separate incidents of God as Punisher.

Title	Sin of Disobedience	Fear of Punishment	Sin of Wickedness	God's Judgment	TOTALS
Daniel and the Lion's Den	1	2	2		5
Princess of the Two Lands	13	4			17
Totals	14	6	2	0	22

Figure 7. Image of God as Punisher as the predominant image of God.

With seventeen God as Punisher incidents, *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975) tells the story of Scota, a daughter of Pharaoh, as she experiences the effects of God's wrath on the Egyptian people when her father refuses to release the Hebrew people to go into the desert to worship the One True God.

Fifteen other books contain incidents with the image of God as Punisher. Ten books with the predominant image of God as Provider include incidents that were coded as God as Punisher. One book with the predominant image of God as Passive Observer includes one incident that was coded as God as Punisher. Representative incidents from each book are discussed below Figure 8 which lists these titles.

Title	Sin of Disobedience	Fear of Punishment	Sin of Wickedness	God's Judgment	Totals
...And Then There Were Dinosaurs			1		1
Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret			1		1
Around Old Bethany: A Story of Robert and Mary Davis				1	1
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God		3			3
Escape Form Egypt	12	5	4	2	23
Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr				1	1
The Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories	4	1	4		9
The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels	2		1		3
How God Got Christian into Trouble			2	3	5
Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets	6				6
Road to Damietta, The		1	2	1	4
Shoelaces and Brussels Sprouts		1			1
Tent: A Parable in One Sitting, The				1	1
Uncle Noah's Big Boat	1				1
What a Truly Cool World		2			2
Totals	25	13	15	9	62

Figure 8. God as other than Punisher as the predominant image of God with some incidents of God as Punisher.

Sin of Disobedience

Characters commit the sin of disobedience in thirty-nine incidents in seven books, ranging from one incident in each of two books to twelve and thirteen incidents

respectively in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin) and *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975). Both books recount the Old Testament events in which God sends Moses to Pharaoh to demand release of the Hebrew people so they can go into the desert to worship Him. Each time Pharaoh refuses to release the Hebrews, God unleashes another plague upon the Egyptians.

Moses spoke. "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you to bid you let His people go in order to worship Him in the wilderness. So far you have not listened to Him. So Yahweh says, 'By this you shall know that I am Yahweh.' With this staff I have in my hand, I shall now strike the water in the Nile and it will be changed to blood. The fish will die, and the river will stink. The Egyptians will be unable to drink water from the Nile." (Parker and Myers 1975, 64)

God makes good on His word and the Nile runs red with blood (Levitin 1984, 60-1; Parker and Myers 1975, 64-5). God punishes the Egyptians with swarms of gnats, flies, and locusts (Levitin 1984, 71; Parker and Myers 1975, 75-6, 80-1, 92-4). He also inflicts the Egyptian people with frogs and boils (Levitin 1984, 71; Parker and Myers 1975, 67, 85). With each plague Pharaoh would relent, but then his heart would be hardened again and God would inflict yet another plague.

When God delivers the final, crushing blow of death upon the Egyptians, Pharaoh releases God's people to go into the desert. God sends the Angel of Death to smite the firstborn of every Egyptian household, including that of Pharaoh (Levitin 1984, 86-9; Parker and Myers 1975, 106-7). God, "this God...who maims and kills" (Levitin 1984, 93), punishes Pharaoh's disobedience.

In *Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986), Belshazzar ignores all warnings and disobeys God's decree that the temple vessels be kept holy. When the handwriting appears on the wall during Belshazzar's feast, Daniel, the prophet of God is called to interpret the words, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPSHARIN...These words were written by the hand of God. You have blasphemed, King Belshazzar. You have glorified yourself instead of God...God has brought your kingdom to an end..." (28-30). Belshazzar is slain that very night.

When God presents His new creation to the angels in *The Heavenly Seven* (Forth 1996), He requires that they serve this new man. Lucifer, however, refuses to obey and God banishes him from heaven, stripping His glory and His light from Lucifer forever. Now Lucifer is relegated to darkness and God raises up an army to vanquish him (11-13).

In *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a), Alex's parents remind the children that the Bible bears witness to the "bad things that happen when people don't obey God" (61). God sent a flood and drowned all the disobedient people, caused a whale to swallow Jonah, and turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt (60, 62-3). Barbara remembers that Adam and Eve were the first to disobey God (61). God punishes people who do not obey Him.

God punishes Jonah in *The Bible Story of Jonah* (Berry 1925). When Jonah refuses to warn Nineveh of God's plan to punish that city if the people do not repent, Jonah refuses to go. God sends a storm to trouble the ship Jonah took and causes Jonah to be tossed into the sea. He then sends a whale to swallow Jonah and hold him in its

belly for three days. Jonah learns to obey God, but Uncle Charlie tells the children, “Some people have to be punished again and again” because of disobedience (35).

Fear of Punishment

God’s anger can evoke fear of punishment in His creatures and does so in nineteen incidents in eight books, ranging from one incident in three books to five incidents in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994). In one such incident God speaks to His people with such force that they cannot not bear it.

The piercing sound of a ram’s horn shattered the stillness. It reddened the atmosphere, ringing out, a deafening blast.

And then the sky went wild—crimson flashes, streaks of thunder, a hail of starry light, blinding against the sudden blackness of the sky, then thunder rang from hill to hill, blazing ever louder; a thousand anvils of thunder crashed at once, so that all ears were stopped with it, and Jesse hung suspended, tormented beyond feeling, his heart a thing of iron beating in his breast so hard that he thought it would surely shatter him completely. His eyes were crowned with a glare that rang into his skull, sound becoming vision—gold and smoke. (156)

As the experience intensifies in sound and vision, filling them completely, God speaks.

“**I...AM...THE LORD YOUR GOD...**” (157). God wants to instill His fear upon them to keep them from sin, but the people cry out to Moses to go away from them. They cannot bear to hear the voice of God. They fear that they will die there on the spot under the sound of His voice for the sin that was already in them (157).

Cousins Jesse and Avi chafe under the constant threat of God’s punishment, “There is no love, no freedom, nothing but death and force, and it is all in the name of God” (211). How can they be expected to follow such a God? (151).

Jesse's Uncle Rimón fears God's punishment as the people receive the golden calf from Aaron and throw themselves into a frantic and wicked display of dancing and shouting. "'God will punish all of us. He will wipe us out,' Rimón said again and again" (175). Rimón's fears are well founded.

In *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999), when God becomes angry and frustrated with His creation, He bellows Bruce's name "in a voice so loud that heaven shook" (19). Bruce demonstrates fear and mumbles his answer in an attempt to sidestep God's question (20-1).

In *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997), Daniel, a Delaware Indian, believes that God must be punishing him and his father. Daniel's mother and infant sister died during childbirth and now he and his father have to move from their home (and the two graves) to accompany the Cherokee to Oklahoma along the Trail of Tears (1). When Jake Crawford bursts into their cabin and shoots his father, Daniel is convinced that God is angry with them and inflicting punishment upon them (12).

In *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985), Ricca believes that it was this same fear of God's punishment that kept Clare di Scifi's brothers from storming the monastery at San Paolo to take Clare by force. They had come to claim the young runaway and restore her to her parents (106-113).

Sin of Wickedness

Wickedness is present in seventeen incidents in eight of the books, ranging from one incident in each of three books to four incidents each in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994) and *The Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories* (Robinson 1936).

In *Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986), Daniel is a faithful prophet of God who keeps God's law. When the king decrees that no man worship another, Daniel maintains his faithful prayer before God. His enemies report him to the king for punishment. God intervenes on Daniel's behalf; He closes the mouths of the lions and Daniel's enemies are devoured by the lions instead. God protects Daniel and punishes his enemies with death. The king declares, "Let all people everywhere fear and reverence the God of Daniel, for he is the living God who works wonders. His kingdom shall last forever..." (48).

Man's wickedness was the impetus for God's desire to destroy all that He had created. In *Uncle Noah's Big Boat* (Tsurumi 1999), Noah and the other survivors understand the full impact—that everyone else died in the flood as God's punishment—after the boat is afloat (11). According to the book, *...And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993), this was not the first time God destroyed that which He had created. God destroyed a previous world, the sixth world, because of the selfishness of the dinosaurs. The dinosaurs began to fight amongst themselves and nothing that God or the earth did restored harmony among them. "‘Destroy these creatures!’ God commanded

the Land. BARROOM!!!! Exhausted, the Land fell silent. No more creatures were alive” (26).

God looks down upon His people, Israel, in the desert whence He delivered them and speaks in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1995).

God declared to Moses, “Go down for the people whom you brought out of Egypt have become corrupt. They have been quick to leave the ways that I ordered them to follow, and they have made themselves a cast-metal calf. They have bowed down and sacrificed to it. Now, do not try to stop Me when I unleash My wrath against them to destroy them.” (183)

By God’s command Moses, aided by the Levites, puts forth his sword and slays all the idolaters, all those who had participated in the wicked revelry (188). God punishes Moses’ sister, Miriam directly. Miriam and Aaron had spoken against Moses because his wife was not an Israelite. God strikes Miriam with leprosy and banishes her for one week (215).

In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), Robert Davis investigates what God’s word says about truth because the “eternal destiny of men depends upon their finding and embracing the truth” (13). God has prepared a punishment for those men who do not, for they are without salvation.

In *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985), while visiting Ricca’s family in Assisi, Bishop Pelagius wonders aloud if the large number (three) of leprosariums around that city might be “God’s punishment” for some sin that must be present there (45). Ricca later ponders, in a letter to Francis Bernardone, whether the castration of Abelard in the story might have been God’s punishment for his treatment of Heloise (90). Believing that

man's wickedness stands between him and God, Francis Bernardone implores Egypt's Sultan, Malik-al-Kamil, to embrace Christ and escape God's punishment of eternal damnation (O'Dell 1985, 185-205).

In *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), Mr. Petroccini recommends that God take some immediate action for "all that messing around we do. We could use a flood, right about now, or some pestilence" (49).

God will work in His own time and His own way. He chose to give Nineveh an opportunity to escape His punishment. In *The Bible Story of Jonah* a story in *The Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories* (Robinson 1936), Uncle Charlie tells the children how God had planned the destruction of their city, but sent Jonah with a message to the people of Nineveh. When Jonah refused to go there, God punished his disobedience (28).

At times God chooses to allow men to suffer punishment on earth before they come to the final judgment. In *The Fallen Oak and the Fallen Man* (Robinson 1936), Uncle Charlie shows the children how, because of His anger, God allowed a man to be punished with incarceration for stealing (69). Charlie also warns the children in *The Wonderful House* (Robinson 1936) that God will punish anyone who destroys what God has created (80).

God's Judgment

At the time of God's judgment men must stand before God and pay for their sins. Nine incidents in six books address this aspect, ranging from one incident in four books

to three incidents in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984). When Christian arrives at his apartment with God, the members of WOW (Women of the World) have just voted God to be a woman and Christian becomes concerned that God will strike them on the spot. God reassures Christian of His patience, “I will judge and punish those people who are evil in my own time” (30). When God brings José’s murder to the attention of the authorities, Christian feels that some form of punishment is imminent for José’s parents (79-80).

The Jews of Jesus’ time looked toward that day of judgment as well in *The Forbidden Gate* (Williamson 1990). Nathan’s father has made his decision about where to stand, “In the day of God’s judgment, I want to stand with this man instead of with you...Can’t you see that you are fighting against God?” (120). Benjamin comes to believe that the recently martyred Stephen spoke the truth about Christ.

In *The Fallen Oak and the Fallen Man* (Robinson 1936), Ted, Beth, and Joe’s uncle tell them about a man who was incarcerated for stealing. That same man will then face God’s punishment, Uncle Charlie assures them, when “the angels of God will come forth and gather such men as he is...and will cast those men into the fire...Hell fire” (72).

Summary: God as Punisher

God as Punisher was evident in eighty-four incidents in seventeen of the books analyzed, predominant in two of these titles. Disobedience was the most frequent cause of punishment, appearing thirty-nine times in seven books. Fourteen books with a

predominant image of God as Provider also included sixty-one incidents of God as Punisher.

God as Passive Observer

God as Passive Observer is silent and non-interactive. He does not nurture. He does not hurt (except through lack of action). He sees all and does nothing. Three aspects of God as Passive Observer occurred throughout the books: the question of God's Inability and/or Unwillingness to Help, the Absence of God, and God's Refusal to Help in situations where His help is needed and/or sought.

Four books have a predominant image of God as Passive Observer with thirty-two incidents ranging from three incidents in *Dear God, HELP!!!!*, *Love Earl* (Park 1986) to fifteen incidents in *Are You There, God, It's Me Margaret* (Blume 1974). All four books contain other images of God as well. There were no books with God as Passive Observer as the sole image of God. Figure 9 shows these titles.

Title	God's Absence	Does Not Help	Inability / Unwillingness	Totals
<i>Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret</i>	5	6	4	15
<i>Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl</i>			3	3
<i>King Who Wanted to See God</i>	7			7
<i>Where Is God?</i>	5	2		7
Totals	17	8	7	32

Figure 9. God as Passive Observer as the predominant image of God.

Thirty-five other books with the predominant image of God as Provider include 109 incidents that were coded as God as Passive Observer. No books with the predominant image of God as Punisher included incidents that were coded as God as Passive Observer. Two books with no predominant image of God have an equal number of incidents coded as Provider and Passive Observer. Figure 10 shows these titles and a discussion of representative incidents from each book follows.

Title	Absence	Does Not Help	Inability Unwillingness	TOTALS
...And Then There Were Dinosaurs		1		1
Around Old Bethany: A Story of Robert and Mary Davis	1			1
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God	2	4	1	7
Better Tomorrow		2		2
Bridge to Cutter Gap	1			1
Carry and the Crazy Quilt		2	1	3
Daddy, Is There Really a God?			1	1
Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?		2		2
Dr. Drabble's Phenomenal Antigravity	2		1	3
Escape From Egypt	7	7	3	17
Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen	1			1
Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories		1		1

Figure 10. God as other than Passive Observer as the predominant image of God with some incidents of God as Passive Observer.

Title	God's Absence	Does Not Help	Inability Unwillingness	Totals
How God Got Christian into Trouble	5	2		7
I Like to Talk to God		2		2
In Your Dreams			1	1
Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle	1			1
Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain	1			1
Mayflower Secret		1		1
My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord	2		7	9
My Mom is Dying		3		3
Nothing Plus God			1	1
Old Turtle	4			4
Race For Freedom			3	3
Road to Damietta	1	1		2
Rustlers of Panther Gap		1	2	3
Shadows on Stoney Creek	2	6		8
Talk to God...I'll Get the Message		2		2
Tent, The			1	1
Too-soon Mr. Bear and Other Stories		3		3
Tree Tall to the Rescue	2	3	2	7
Unplanned Voyage			1	1
What a Truly Cool World	1			1
What is God's Name?	2			2
When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West			1	1
Wood Stork Named Warren	5			5
TOTALS	40	43	26	109

Figure 10 (continued). God as other than Passive Observer as the predominant image of God with some incidents of God as Passive Observer.

Margaret Simon has two situations for which she needs God's help in *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974). She is eleven years old, on the threshold of womanhood, but she is not blossoming fast enough. Her parents come from different religious backgrounds--Christian and Jewish--but they do not practice either and, therefore, Margaret is neither. She wants to develop physically and she wants to be part of some religion, she just does not know which one to choose. Margaret calls on God for help and experiences God in all aspects of Passive Observer.

In *Dear God, Help!!! Love, Earl* (Park 1993), Earl Wilber has an uncomfortable situation with a bully. He is the victim of a \$1.00 a week shakedown. He is running out of money and needs God's help. However, God has not been too quick to help him in the past.

A king in *The King Who Wanted to See God* (Matsuura 1995) and a young boy named Joe in *Where Is God?* (O'Leary and Dalton 1991) diligently seek God in all the places they know to look. The all-knowing God must know their desire to find Him. Why does He withhold Himself until the end?

God's Absence

Fifty-seven incidents in which characters seek God but cannot find any evidence of Him were identified in twenty books and coded as God as Passive Observer. The number of incidents ranged from one incident in eight books to seven in two books, *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994) and *The King Who Wanted to See God* (Matsuura and

Matsuura 1995). God may keep Himself separate and apart from characters, seeming disinterested in their daily affairs. Some characters may experience a sense of abandonment.

Margaret decides to look for the answer to her religious dilemma by visiting various churches and a synagogue in *Are You There, God? It's Me Margaret* (Blume 1974). She notes God's absence on one church visit and a later visit to a synagogue (Blume 1974, 63, 94). In another incident she says, "Are you there, God? It's me, Margaret. I did an awful thing today. Why did you let me do that? I've been looking for you God. I looked in temple. I looked in church...But you weren't there...Why God?" (119-120). Later, after banishing God from her life, Margaret expresses how much she misses God even though she is not willing to let Him know how much she needs Him (137).

The king in *The King Who Wanted to See God* (Matsuura 1995) "was a very religious man and had a great desire to see and hear the voice of God" (2). God does not reveal Himself through wise men, nor is He found under a Bodhi tree, in Jerusalem, or in Mecca. The king seeks God until he is old and dying and still God does not reveal Himself to the king (2-14). Later the king thinks he has found God through a little girl, but again he is disappointed that God is not visible to him. Finally, the king realizes that God will not be visible until a future time that God Himself will choose. Until that time, the king must be content to see God in His creation (22).

In *Where Is God?* (O'Leary 1991), Joe is seeking God in his own local environment, but with similar results. The children on the playground have not seen God, nor has the robin, the tree, the mountain, or the sea. Joseph encounters a doctor hurrying to the bedside of a dying child. Where can God be when a child is dying and He cannot be found (16)? As Joseph becomes "confused and lost [having searched] all day, far and wide" (17), the baker tells him of a voice that speaks of love (18).

God keeps Himself from man in *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925). Robert Davis receives a newspaper published by the Church of God denomination. He reads that "A man knows the things of a man because he is a man. Common experiences join him to his fellows, and he understands them. 'Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.... But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned'" (14). It seems that there is at least one aspect of God that He purposely keeps hidden from His created.

In *Forbidden Gates* (Williamson 1990), the followers of Jesus challenge Nathan's traditional Jewish beliefs about God. Stephen's suggestion that God's spirit might be in Nathan, stirring him to change, contradicts what Nathan has been taught. He objects vehemently, "'God's Spirit rests in the great Holy of Holies inside the Temple...How can you say that God moves in men's hearts?'" (85). For Nathan, God has always been separate and apart from man.

After Ricca secures passage aboard the *Mermaid* in the *Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985), she discovers that it is a brothel and that she is expected to participate in the ship's activities. Her shipmate, Rosanna, hides Ricca who observes from her cubbyhole that "the night was a hell of shrieks and drunkenness as God turned His face while the Devil frolicked" (167). God does not interfere with the revelers.

Sometimes, however, God may be present and yet unseen. In *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), Mrs. Murphy remarks that "some people" cannot see God in their lives (32). Even Father Brown "doesn't like to fool around with God" (52), but focuses all his energy on the devil. At other times, it is God who removes Himself from a situation.

God refuses to answer Mrs. Murphy's question about marriage in heaven and she seems doubtful about Christian's assessment of the situation, even though God has encouraged him to answer (40). When Christian loses track of God, who is still in the body of young José Martinez, in the park, he feels abandoned by God.

And right after our ride I lost him. One moment he was right near me, and the next he wasn't. I looked all over for him, and a few times I thought I saw him, but each time it was some other kid. I thought he went back to the merry-go-round and I hung around there for a while getting dizzy, and then I walked to the zoo and back to the merry-go-round.

It was like a nightmare. I'd call out to him:

"God, where are you?"....

But I was really scared by then. I couldn't find him anywhere. I began to cry. (58).

Christian is not the only one to feel abandoned by God. The morning after God creates them, the flowers are complaining in *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999)

about loneliness, how God placed them onto the earth and then abandoned them. They carry on until God rises up to address their situation (16-7).

Many others question why God is absent. In *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994), Egyptians Jennat and Shepset question this unseen God who makes Himself inaccessible. The young Egyptian women wonder how one would communicate with an entity that could not be seen (56). God's invisibility is apparently an issue for the Hebrew people as well. How can they be sure that Moses actually spoke with God or, more importantly, how could they know that it was truly God who spoke to Moses (96)? How could they truly know God's will for their lives? Could one man not lord over others and call it God's will (212)?

Where had God been all this time? He led them into Egypt where they were enslaved and then "this God who was supposed to protect them had been utterly silent and invisible for hundreds of years" (123). Now here they are finally out of Egypt only to wander in the desert, hungry and thirsty *and* God has left them to defend themselves against the Amalekites.

Where were God and His mercy for Devorah when her baby was murdered during the Amalekites' attack (195)? She had always been faithful to God, encouraging others in their faith. And Rimon had always thanked God no matter what had befallen him, ill or good. Yet God does not choose him to be His appointed one, nor does God even acknowledge Rimon's faithfulness (225). Where is this God the Israelites follow?

Sarah also wonders about God's lack of intercession in her life in *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Lutrell 1997). God allowed her pa to move the family away from all that is dear to Sarah, or so she had thought. God seemed very far away, "I used to think that God was just some remote being way up there beyond the stars" (122-3). Sarah later realizes that everything dear to her has moved with her—her family. Still, Sarah asks her pa why God doesn't make Himself known more in people's lives (126).

In *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997), Daniel's father has been calling out to God for a solution to the government's decision to relocate the Cherokee nation to Oklahoma. God has not answered Thomas and all he can do is move with the Cherokees (6).

In *My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord* (Myers 1993), Miguel is acutely aware of God's absence in his life. After his dad left the family, Miguel began to question the existence of a God who would allow that to happen (6, 54).

God's absence is the only Passive Observer image of God that appears in *A Wood Stork Named Warren* (Breslin 1991). God created all the earth and then abandoned it to the care of the humans. He has not prevented them from destroying everything they touch (17). The humans assure Warren that God does not care about what they do to the other creatures of the earth (31). Warren despairs after his encounter with the humans because, "at the moment God seemed very far away" (33).

In *Old Turtle* (Wood 1992), the people begin to forget about God in His absence. They begin to argue about "where God was, and was not and whether God was or was

not” (30). They begin to abuse the earth and each other because “they could not remember who they were or where God was” (32).

The religious leaders tell Warren that God’s absence causes the people to be apathetic and destructive. Some humans believe that God does not exist and others believe that He is not with them, but “somewhere else” (72). The humans and the animals have come together to share their unique experiences of God. They reach an understanding and then it is time to part. Warren finds it difficult to see all of God’s creatures leaving because “it meant the end of these unique moments of God’s nearness and love and the connection between His creatures” (79).

Kristine desires that closeness with God in *My Mom Is Dying* (McNamara 1994). She needs God’s help to make her mom better, but she is not sure that God is listening to her (2-4). Her concern is confirmed when God has not responded a month later in time for the “mother-daughter party at school” (11).

Chelsea and PJ fly *Dr. Drabble’s Phenomenal Antigravity Dust Machine* (Brouwer 1991) in search of God. When they start out they believe God wants to see them, but they cannot find Him anywhere. God does not make Himself available to them and Dr. Drabble finally tells them, “You’ll have to wait to see God” (21). Apparently, God is not available to them in this lifetime.

Harry does not know God in *God Is Everywhere: The Good News Kids Learn About Self-Control* (Mock 1993). He feels at liberty to litter the earth because he

can neither see nor hear Him (15). After Harry comes to know God, he confronts another boy who is littering and the boy responds with “God! Where is God? I don’t see Him. I don’t hear Him. Is He standing next to me? Is He sitting next to you?” (31).

In several situations God withholds Himself by not speaking what a character is waiting to hear. Kathy’s mom is wondering how to handle Megan’s imaginary friend, Natalie, in *Kathy’s Baby-sitting Hassle* (Stahl 1992, 106). Each person offers a different name for God in *What Is God’s Name?* (Sasso 1999), but God is silent (13). God has not answered Christy in *The Bridge to Cutter Gap* (Marshall 1995, 112-3). How will she know what God wants her to do if He does not tell her?

In some cases, it appears that God does not answer prayer because He is not listening. In *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987), Tree Tall believes that this must be the case when God does not arrange things for him to accompany his family to the great falls at Celilo (43). It had also seemed that way the previous year when Tree Tall had asked God for a horse of his own (87)—Thunder Hawk, the horse he now has. His adopted sister, Bright Sky wonders whether God hears their prayers as the two set off to find their grandmother, Many Songs, who has gone from camp to die alone (110).

Jimmy Harmon has discovered that God sometimes has left him waiting in *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995), “not malicious like Ben, but God kept you wondering” (98).

Does Not Help

In fifty-one incidents in nineteen books God does not help characters when He could have. These incidents, ranging from one incident in each of five books to six incidents in two books, were coded as God as Passive Observer. Characters may call on God for help and then in the absence of divine help, express impatience or exclude God from their lives. Some characters deny God in part and others deny His existence altogether.

In *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974), Margaret begins to express her impatience with God's lack of help. "I hate to remind you," she says, "I know you're busy, but...Isn't it time, God" (81). Eventually, Margaret gives up on God, deciding that she does not need Him and will, in fact, never speak to Him again (134). She hopes that God has realized how well she is doing without Him (137) and wants to ask Him if He knows she doesn't even believe in Him anymore, "But I wasn't talking to him" (140). Margaret denies God in her life because of her perception of His refusal to help her.

Wall Street is equally frustrated with God's lack of help in *My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord* (Myers 1993). Her pastor has told her repeatedly that God answers prayer if she is asking for "the right thing" (25) and believes that God will help her. For months Wall Street has prayed that her brother would come home so that they could be a family again. God has not complied and now she expresses her hatred for her mother, her brother and God (25).

Uncle Charlie explains to his young listeners in *A Visit from Mr. Freeze* and *The Fallen Oak and Fallen Man* (Robinson 1936), how God kept certain knowledge from man for a long time, knowledge of things that could have helped him. God revealed knowledge to man a little at a time, keeping him from making his own ice to preserve his food until recently. God also kept man from having stores and cars and from making gasoline to make the cars run until a time that He chose to reveal that knowledge (65).

God does not save the Hebrew people in from the attack of the Amalekites *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994). If He had, Shosa would still be alive and Devorah would not be eaten with grief and despair (142, 177). God does not cause the suffering, He merely allows it to overtake them. God tests faith (176); He wants all of the worship, but does not help with all things (181).

God does not help Charlie and Katie in *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997). He does not save their parents from death (122-3, 126) and after they become homeless orphans, God does not help them survive. Charlie takes care of them, finding them food and shelter the best way he knows how (124).

Daniel feels that God has let him down in *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997). He and his father, Thomas, worship this same God of the white men and yet this God does not help the Sweetwaters against the injustices of the whites (5). In frustration Daniel calls out, "I've tried to trust you, God, but every time I decide to put things into your hands, you've let me down" (8). On the Trail of Tears, the rain soaks

through Daniel. Will God ever help them (15)? The bible with the bullet hole through it is a testimony to God's refusal to help Daniel and his father (48).

In *My Mom Is Dying* (McNamara 1994) God could make Kristine's mom better if He wanted to help (12). Then Kristine would not have to go to day care (12) and nurses wouldn't have to be there all the time (19) and Kristine would not be so scared (12).

Robert is facing the death of his grandpa in *Talk to God...I'll Get the Message* (Geller 1983). They are both praying and believe that God will hear them, but are not sure that God will help Grandpa with a cure (10). When Grandpa comes home from the hospital in a wheelchair, Robert is concerned that "God's not paying attention to us" (12). He has not helped Robert's Grandpa get better and He does not help Alexander's grandpa in *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995). Alexander was angry with God for His refusal to save his "favorite grandpa" (26). Alexander is disappointed to learn that God does not do everything that people ask Him to do (26).

In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), Carrie wonders why God did not help Jesus to keep Him from being crucified (35). Could it be for the same reason that He has not helped her family and neighbors in their woody area of Wisconsin? God could make it rain and stop the fires raging in the woods (3). Why didn't He help them before the fires burned their homes and endangered their lives? Many did not survive the fires. Many did not survive the crossing from England to the colonies, either. In *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998), Elizabeth Tilley reflects on the fact that God did not extend His mercies to all who started the journey (102).

Barney assures the Leatherwoods that God will help them save their valuable hardwood trees from *The Rustlers of Panther Gap* (Morris 1994). One after one the trees have continued to disappear (110).

Three stories from *Too-soon Mr. Bear* (Runyon 1979) included incidents of God who does not help. In *The Special Supper*, mouse is perturbed that God provides so poorly for mice. “God should have made big pieces of food for mice to eat, so that I would not have to work for my supper” (13). In *The Pretend Friend*, God does not help the new kitten become Missy’s friend (22) and in *A Family of Four*, Randy Robin wonders why God doesn’t make robins the way He made eagles—only one baby per nest (26). Randy thinks it would have helped him to feel and eat better.

God feels for the hungry, homeless people, but there is no evidence of His helping them in *Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?* (Carlstrom 1993). Little Katrina offers Joe her mittens because he is cold, but her parents tell her only that God feels sad, not that He is doing something to help (10-11). (It is possible that God is acting through Katrina, but there is nothing in the text to indicate this.) God sees Joe and other homeless people and Janet’s mother says that God knows her family’s situation as well in *A Better Tomorrow?* (Harrison 1997). The depression has been hard on everyone they know, but they credit luck for the living quarters they were able to obtain (16). Janet wonders why God who knows everything “doesn’t make the depression go away” (67) wouldn’t that be the best way to help them all?

Awakening after a long sleep, God sees the terrible condition of the world in *Whaddayamean* (Burningham 1999, 2). Instead of taking direct action Himself, God sends two small children to correct the behavior of the world's inhabitants (21). When the dinosaurs go awry in *...And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993), God does not correct the dinosaurs or otherwise help them, but only agrees with the Land, that their time must come to an end (25).

When Tree Tall deceives his grandmother and allows her to believe he has become an Indian medicine man in *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987), Bright Sky fears that God will no longer help them (122). Their father would consider this a moot point; he believes that the God of the whites will never help Indians (128).

God's Inability/Unwillingness to Help

Characters facing difficult situations may not expect God to help them because they believe He is either unable or unwilling to do so. In thirty-three incidents in sixteen books, characters express doubt in God's ability and/or willingness to help them in situations. The range for such incidents was one to seven, with nine books containing one incident each and one book, *My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord* (Myers 1993a), containing seven. The desire for God's help may be present, but characters either count on luck, superstition, or their own abilities for deliverance from a difficult situation.

In *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974), Margaret Simon approaches God with doubt in every encounter. "Are you there, God," she asks each

time, not sure if He is listening. She forges ahead with her requests however, with varying degrees of faith and doubt. On some occasions, Margaret ends her request to God with a “Thank you,” indicating that she is already anticipating a helpful response from Him (Blume 1974, 16,50,65 109). (These incidents were coded God as Provider.) Margaret leaves other requests hanging, shrouded in doubt in four separate incidents (53,56-7, 61). When it comes to celebrating Christmas or Hanukkah, Margaret tries to achieve a solution on her own, “I’m really thinking hard, God...haven’t come up with any answers” (76). Margaret’s doubt deepens as the story progresses.

Earl Wilbur calls on God for help—as indicated in the title *Dear God HELP!!! Love, Earl* (Park 1986) but decides early in the book that he will have to rely on his own wits and those of his friends. When Earl decides that even Federal Express is faster and more reliable than God (12), he develops a “backup plan” for getting out of his P.E. class (13). He crosses his fingers for luck at the same time he asks God for help with a later situation and finally he says, “Can you see me through the roof? I’m lying down on the backseat...So do you think you could help me out a little here, God? Like could you just keep people away from the car for a few minutes, do you think? ‘Hey! Look!’ called a voice. ‘I see feet!’” (71). God does not help Earl as he had expected.

Moses is God’s chosen liaison to the Hebrew people in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin). God speaks to the people through Moses and makes His presence known in ways that are unfamiliar to them. “God in a cloud?” (98); they doubted Moses’ explanation of God’s appearance to him. The few Egyptians accompanying the Israelites

have even more difficulty believing God. Shepset wonders about the manna supposedly supplied by God each day for their sustenance, “Do you really believe that this is sent by their God? I hear from the shepherds who have known this land that the stuff is given out by an insect” (128). Furthermore, the diet is monotonous. Surely the true God would supply a variety of foods and tastes if He were the one responsible (128).

Is God able to deliver? In *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997), Daniel is unsure of God’s deliverance for the Cherokee people (31). Perhaps God will only deliver certain people as Many Songs and Grey Seal believe in *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987). Tree Tall’s grandmother is certain that God’s deliverance is not available to the Indian (37, 124). His father echoes Many Songs’ sentiments, “It is much better for Indians to possess spirits of their own people. The whiteskins’ God is not a god for Indians” (124).

God’s deliverance is restricted in *The Unplanned Voyage* (Davoll 1999). The narrator explains that “Christopher and Lukas as little mice could not experience God’s salvation” (22). God’s deliverance is only for humans.

In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996) Carrie thinks that her classmate Hans “probably didn’t even believe in God” (Liebig 1996, 8). Chelsea and PJ ask God for help when they are out flying in *Dr. Drabble’s Phenomenal Antigravity Dust Machine* (Brouwer 1991). They are not confident enough to trust in Him, however, and they close their eyes out of fear when the machine shifts in another direction (13).

In *The Rustlers of Panther Gap* (Morris 1994), Coach tells Barney that many people believe that they have to rely on common sense because they cannot count on God's help (117). Even though Barney knows that God will help the Leatherwoods save their trees, doubt starts to creep into his mind (117).

In *Race for Freedom* (Johnson 1996), Libby has never had a close relationship with God and she is not sure that she can count on Him. Even as she calls out to God she is wishing that her dog were there to distract and comfort her (61). She believes that God listens to Jordan and her pa, but He may not hear her. (120). Libby is almost certain that God will not answer her prayer to beat Caleb just to show him that she can (141).

In *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), Susie's faith stands against the doubt of the whole adult congregation when the lien holder calls in the loan on the church building (Brumfield 1945, 18). The adults speak faith and exhibit doubt; they only pray at Susie's earnest request. Moving west on a small wagon train, the adults fall down on their faith again when Indians attack. Susie wonders at the tears of despair, but is not concerned. Her mother, however, is convinced that their end is at hand. Susie queries, "'But isn't God here, Mommie'" (24). Her mother replies, "'But I'm afraid God can't help us now, honey'" (24).

Lack of belief in God's ability and/or willingness to help also surfaces on another wagon train in *When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West* (Graham 1997).

When their wagons carried the sick
The pioneers went on anyway,
Hoped for health,
Worried with faith,

And asked for God's help. (23)

"Worrying with faith" (23) implies an element of doubt that God will provide. He hears, but will He help?

Wally professes faith in God but speaks words of doubt, when he faces danger in *My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord* (Myers 1993). Instead of feeling protected by God, Wally expects to meet God soon because he is sure, on two separate occasions, that the hot-air balloon in which he is riding will crash (38, 50, 55). Miguel is unsure of God's existence, but assures Wally that, "if that bungee cord breaks, [Wally will] know before any of us if there really is a God" (99). In *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987), Tree Tall believes in God's saving grace, yet he sometimes finds that "fears grow so large in the darkness of night" (107).

Teenager Sierra Jensen wants to look to God as the provider of all her needs in the book *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996, 84). However, she's not sure if she does already or even if she can. Tracker John tells Joy in *Daddy, Is There Really a God?* (Morris 1997) that as children get older they may begin to question God's forgiveness and thereby His love (28).

In *Lassie, Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995), "Jimmy's heart still thudded and his breaths came fast and shallow" (93) even though he believed that God knew what was happening to Him. What Jimmy did not know was whether God would change Ben's heart for his and Uncle Cully's benefit (90).

Some of the female worshippers are not sure their faith in God is well placed in *The Tent* (Paulsen 1995). They seek assurance and certain physical comforts from Corey, the man they believe is God's representative here on earth (72).

In *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985), the abbess at Sao Paolo will do her best to keep Clare di Scifi at the monastery. She will call on God for help, but is not certain He will oblige since "He sometimes seems a bit contrary" (112).

Summary: God as Passive Observer

God as Passive Observer was evident in 141 incidents in thirty-nine books, predominant in four of these titles. God's Absence and God who Does Not Help were the most frequent Passive Observer images, with fifty-eight and fifty-one incidents respectively. Thirty-five books with God as Provider as the predominant image of God also had incidents of God as Passive Observer. Two books with no predominant image of God included God as Passive Observer incidents.

No Predominant Image of God

Four books in the study have no predominant image of God. One book, *Old Turtle* (Wood 1992), has an equal number of God as Provider and God as Passive Observer incidents and no indication of God as Punisher. All incidents in *Nicanor's Gate* (Kimmel 1979) were coded as Not Applicable (N/A) because they are merely descriptive. *Old Turtle* also contains several incidents that portray no identifiable image of God. The

book *Special Gifts: In Search of Love and Honor* (Olson 1999) was determined to have no predominate image of God because, although God is portrayed as Creator, He is never mentioned by name, but only as Creator throughout the entire text. Figure 11 shows these four books and all discernible images of God.

Title	God as Provider		God as Passive Observer		TOTALS
	God as Creator	God Loves	Absence	Inability/Unwillingness to Help	
Follow the King					0
Nicanor's Gate					0
Old Turtle	2	2	4		8
Special Gifts: In Search of Love and Honor					0
TOTALS	2	2	4		8

Figure 11. No predominant image of God with incidents of some image of God.

In *Old Turtle* (Wood 1992), the animals are trying to decide what God is like, each animal attributing his or her own attributes to God (9-23). Old Turtle tells them of God's new creation who will be a message from God (25-7). The animals continue to argue about God and His whereabouts (30) until God makes Himself known through His creation (34-43).

The Image of God as it Pertains to the Faith Development

Ernest Harms and Dr. James Fowler published the results of their research in 1944 and 1981, respectively, that identified certain stages of spiritual belief in children (see Figure 1). Children between the ages of two or three and six were described as being in

the Fairy-Tale Stage (Harms 1944) and the Intuitive-Projective Stage (Fowler 1995).

Children from the age of seven until the age of twelve or thirteen were considered in the Realistic Stage (Harms 1944) or the Mythic-Literal Stage (Fowler). The 103 books in this study were examined for evidence of characteristics that could be associated with the two bodies of research (see Appendix D).

According to Harms' research, children in the three to six years of age range consider God to be like a "king" or "Daddy of all children" (Harms 1944, 115). In the picture book, *The King Without a Shadow* (Sproul 1996), God is the King mentioned in the title (29). In the chapter book, *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996), God sits on His throne (9), suggesting a kingly image, as He interacts with His angels. Reference to God's throne is made throughout the text (19, 27, 35, 41, 47, 57).

God's role as Father is evident in the title and throughout the text of *Mama God, Papa God* (Keens-Douglas 1999). Waldo tells Michael that "God is Father to us all" in *Waldo, Tell Me About God* (Wilhelm 1988, 3). When Susie laments her lack of a dad in *My Mr. T Doll* (Graeber 1985), her Mr. T doll reminds her that she has a "Dad in heaven" (17). In *T-Bone Trouble* (Levene 1987c), Alex's dad compares his role as father to her and her siblings to God's role as Father to all of His children in the earth (114-15). In the only incident in *The Pumpkin Patch Parable* (Higgs 1995), God is the Father who wants to give good things to His children (25).

Older children, ages seven to twelve exhibit signs of organized religion and sometimes mention symbols of the church and religion. In the picture book, *A Special*

Gift to God (Breslin 1991), Spyro and his grandmother discuss and interact with symbols of their specific denomination—the Orthodox Eastern Church. Spyro smells the incense as he watches his grandmother cross herself and recite the “Jesus Prayer” near the icon dedicated to a certain saint (17). Together they bake a type of holy bread offering, a Prosfora (17-24), and offer it to God before the priest’s Liturgy (33). In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), nineteen incidents refer to the denomination and or specific doctrine of the Church of God. Several conversations in the text compare the doctrines of specific denominations.

Symbols of the Catholic (or Presbyterian) faith are mentioned when God accompanies Christian to mass in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984, 52-56). In *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985) Catholics are clearly the religious heroes while the Cathars are heretics (44). Characters in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994) and *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975) witness the ongoing battle the God of the Hebrews wages against the idols of the Egyptian religion. Margaret wages her own private battle in her attempts to decide between Christianity and Judaism in *Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret* (Blume 1977, 52, 56-57, 60, 63, 75-76, 94)). Tree Tall’s family members try to pull him back to the traditional Indian religion in *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987).

The age of the intended audience is not identified for any of these titles. Only two books for which the age of the audience is known involve incidents that pertain to the faith stages outlined by Harms and Fowler. In *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and

Jackson 1998) Elizabeth Tilley notices that the Separatists all have personal relationships with God, unlike herself and many of the other travelers to the New World (29). This becomes an issue when John Howland, a Separatist, asks for her hand in marriage (146).

The research conducted by Ernest Harms and James Fowler pertains to the chronological age of the child. The age of the intended reading or listening audience was available in the book and/or the bibliographic record of thirty-five books or thirty-four percent of the books studied. Based on these few incidents, it is not possible to identify a clear relationship to Harms' developmental stages. However, since Harms' stages of faith development are considered congruent with Fowler's stages of comparable ages, the following discussion will apply to Harms' research as well.

Through his detailed explanation of the role of the story, Fowler offers more material for examination and comparison. Fowler does not address the role of story as it pertains to infants and toddlers, but he considers the role of the story as different in the two stages that pertain to children ages three to twelve. Because the younger child's realistic experiences are limited, fantasy can be as real to the child as that which is real. In fact, books of fantasy that call more upon the imagination may coincide with the child's constructed reality (Fowler 1995, 129-136). The child in Harms' Fairy-tale Stage would also relate to books of fantasy.

The child in the Stage II is interested in "self-generated stories that make it possible to conserve, communicate and compare [his] experiences and meanings. Looking at the different genres identified in the books in this study, one might conclude that books of

fantasy relate more to the Stage I child's spiritual orientation and books of contemporary realistic fiction relate more to that of the Stage II child. The reader in Harms' Realistic Stage would therefore relate more to contemporary realistic fiction, as well.

CHAPTER V

INTERACTION WITH GOD

God interacts with book characters actively and passively by means of direct external and internal communication in a total of 147 incidents in fifty-nine books. One hundred forty-seven incidents in Figure 12 and sixty-six incidents in Figure 13 involve direct communication from God. One hundred sixty-two incidents involve characters speaking directly to God (Figure 13) and sixty-six incidents involve characters spending time in His presence (Figure 14). Christian's first encounter with God in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984) is one indication of the effect of direct interaction with God.

I began to cry. I just sat down, right there in the foyer, and started to bawl like a baby, and [God] sat down beside me. I knew that I'd never been happier in my life. I had this crazy thought that everything was going to turn out O.K. with the whole world. It felt as if a huge wave of something warm and wonderful hit me. It was like maybe I suddenly understood that God was real, and he was with me, holding my hand. (27)

Mode of Communication

Children have certain beliefs concerning modes of communicating with God. Children younger than eight years of age believe such communication to be audibly verbal like talking from "man-to-man" (Goldman 1964, 93). Older children believe that

only the person with whom God is communicating is capable of hearing God's voice; it is internal, for those "ears" only (94). God communicates with characters directly, through others, and through His written word, the Bible. However, only the direct—God to character—communication was considered in this study.

Some characters in fiction literature for children experience direct communication from God audibly or externally, others hear from Him mentally or internally. The twenty-six books in which story characters hear directly from God were examined for evidence of external and internal communication from God. Twelve books contain eighty-four external interactions where characters hear from God audibly where other characters could hear. Seven books contain thirty internal interactions in which communication from God is silent, either through thoughts, feelings, or other silent means. In these incidents only the characters in direct communication with God are aware of the content of that communication. The specific mode of communication with God is not clearly indicated through the text in thirty-three incidents in thirteen of the titles. These were coded as unknown. Figure 12 shows the titles and number of occurrences for each mode of divine communication.

Title	External	Internal	Unknown	TOTALS
...And Then There Were Dinosaurs			8	8
Around Old Bethany: A Story of Robert and Mary Davis		2		2
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God			1	1
Daniel and the Lion's Den	2			2
Escape from Egypt	4	5	1	10
Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories, The			2	2
Good Night, Little One			1	1
Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels, The	23			23
How God Got Christian into Trouble	20	18		38
I Like to Talk to God		2	1	3
Little Soul and the Sun, The	10			10
Mama God, Papa God	4	1		5
My Buddy God			2	2
Noah's Trees	2			2
Nothing Plus God			1	1
Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets			4	4
Princess of the Two Lands			3	3
Race for Freedom	1	1		2
Remember the Secret			2	2
Shadows on Stoney Creek			1	1
Stormy Night			6	6
Talk to God...I'll Get the Message	1			1
Uncle Noah's Big Boat	2			2
Whaddayamean	4			4
What a Truly Cool World	11			11
Where Is God?		1		1
TOTALS	84	30	33	147

Figure 12. Direct communication from God by mode of communication.

External Communication

In eighty-four incidents in twelve books characters experience direct, audible communication from God in situations in which other characters could hear. The number of incidents ranges from one in each of two books to twenty-three incidents in *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996). God's communication with heavenly beings is external. When God speaks in *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999), all the inhabitants of heaven hear Him. Bruce comes when God calls (4, 19), Shaniqua sings at God's request (22), and all the angels gather to hear God sing "like a choir of six million voices" (11-12). God communicates with a little soul before it is born into the earth in *The Little Soul and the Sun: A Children's Parable Adapted from Conversations with God* (Walsch 1998).

The angels also experience direct and external communication from God in twenty-three incidents in *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996). As God calls forth each angel, the other angels cheer (18) with a "roar of cheers" (13) accompanying God's call to His champion, Michael (13).

When God speaks to earthly beings from heaven all of His intended audience can hear. As the Hebrew people traverse the desert in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994), they all hear and recoil from the power in His voice (157). Jesse is shaken to the root of his very being and the people cry to Moses in anguish to remove them from the sound of God's voice. Only Efreem desires to repeat the experience (174).

God speaks to Noah in *Uncle Noah's Big Boat* (Tsurumi 1999), telling him to build a boat. Noah was not alone, for "Some animals also heard God speaking, and they gathered to help Noah make the big boat" (3).

God's visits to earth often include direct, external communication. All communication from God in *Whaddayamean* (Burningham 1999) was coded as external communication. Preferring to remain unseen, God puts the earth's humans to sleep so that He may avoid direct interaction with them during His upcoming visit (3). God does, however, encounter and interact verbally with two young children who have remained awake (5-21). The fact that God felt it necessary to put everyone to sleep during His visit implies that He would have been visible and audible to everyone as He was to the two children who escaped the sleep He caused to descend upon the earth.

Anna hears God calling her to accompany Him on a journey in *The Stormy Night* (Baker 1991). She rides with God (5), enters His house (13) and goes out into the universe with Him (15). The stars, earth, and hills also hear and respond to God's voice. God whispers to Anna in a "voice [that] was mellow as a yellow moon" (5, 19).

God speaks audibly thirty-eight times in twenty incidents during His two day visit with Christian in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984). Christian's dad (33-34), Mrs. Murphy (30-32, 39-40), Mr. Petroccini (46-50), and the congregation at Sunday Mass (55) all hear God and interact with Him. God speaks in Spanish to a startled woman He encounters on the way to Mr. Petroccini's (38-39).

God's direct communications with man are not exclusively verbal. In *Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986), the handwriting on the wall is a message for Belshazzar, but the guests at the banquet, including the three young visitors from a future time, are all able to see the visual message (26-28). Daniel is the only one who can interpret the message, but as he does, all that are present hear the message.

Internal Communication

Only the characters in direct communication with God are aware of the content of that communication in the thirty incidents in seven books in which communication from God is internal. The number of incidents ranges from one in each of three books to eighteen in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984). In *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995), Elizabeth explains her communications from God, "God talks to me in my thinking place in my head. I can't hear Him in my ears" (6). Danielle also hears from God internally. He speaks of His love for Danielle and assures her that He will handle all the issues and concerns that she has brought Him (16).

When Minister Monteith asks God for His will regarding the healing of Mary Davis in *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), he "felt an answer that God would raise her up" (85). Kate Newby feels God's spirit talking to her, warning her, "Yesterday...the good Spirit of God was talking to me" (102).

Before God inhabits a young boy's body at Christian's request to make Himself visible, God speaks to Christian eighteen times as a voice that no one else can hear in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984). Young Joseph hears God's voice in a dream assuring him of His omnipresence in *Where Is God?* (O'Leary and Dalton 1991, 21).

Except for the four incidents in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994) discussed earlier as external communications, only Moses hears the voice of God (157). Moses conveys God's word to Pharaoh and then to God's chosen people in the desert. Men who desire Moses' position with God question these communiqués because they cannot hear the word of God for themselves.

In *Race for Freedom* (Johnson 1996), God speaks words of comfort and assurance to Libby "from somewhere deep in her memory" (63). Jordan hears God's warning of danger in his heart.

When Jordan stopped for a minute, Libby wanted to know more. "You still haven't told me how you knew the men were behind us."

I just hear God say, 'Jordan, hold up now.'

"In words like that? He spoke out loud?"

"Not this time," Jordan said, as if he had no doubt that God could. "This time He keep it secret like, kind of deep inside." (145-6)

Waldo introduces Michael to God's love in *Waldo, Tell Me About God* (Wilhelm 1988). Michael understands when he "can see and feel and smell and hear God's love all around" (25).

Unknown Modes of Communication

The mode of communication from God is not discernible in thirty-three incidents in thirteen books. The number of incidents ranges from one in each of six books to eight incidents in ...*And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993). God speaks to Moses three times in *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975) and Moses relays His words to Pharaoh (54, 89, 92). The text does not specify whether or not anyone else was a witness or was able to hear God's voice. God's speaking to Moses formed the basis for Goldman's research regarding divine communication (Goldman 1964, 93-95). When God spoke to Moses could anyone else hear?

God converses with the Land in ...*And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993), but there is no direct communication between God and the dinosaurs. It is possible that only the Land could hear God (2, 21, 26, 29), but this point is not made clear. Robert's grandpa is expecting God to answer their prayers for his healing in *Talk to God...I'll Get the Message* (Geller 1983). Grandpa says, "God will answer 'yes' or 'no'" (10). He does not, however, specify whether he expects God to answer externally or internally.

As Uncle Charlie tells the children in *The Bible Story of Jonah* in *The Gnat's Lifeboat* (Robinson 1936), God spoke to Jonah twice, telling him to go to Nineveh. Jonah knew that God was speaking to him even though he chose to disobey the first time. Uncle Charlie does not explain to his niece and nephews whether or not anyone else was able to hear God's voice on either of those occasions (28-30).

Alex and her family also mention God's conversation with Jonah during their discussion about obedience in *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a, 62). They also discuss God's speaking to Moses (59), Noah (60), and Adam and Eve (62), without revealing the nature of these communications.

Willy and Theresa are visible only to Peter and Suzy in *Remember the Secret* (Kübler-Ross 1982). They tell Peter and Suzy that God created everybody and He will call all people back to Himself (20-21, 26). Peter and Suzy will each hear God's personal call when it comes, but they are not told whether they will hear God calling anyone else. Neither does Jeremy Justice mention the nature of God's call on his life in *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997, 94) or Margaret Muhlenberg on her parents' lives in *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997). Was God's voice audible for everyone to hear, or did Jeremy and the Muhlenbergs hear God calling from somewhere within themselves?

Encouraged by Susie's declaration of God's power in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), Mr. Thomas tells the congregation that God has given him a scripture that very morning (12-13). Mr. Thomas does not reveal, however, the nature of the communication in which God conveyed this scripture to him. Did God speak to the little bunny externally, internally or through His written word in *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999)? The narrator reminds the bunny that God has performed that which He said He would (3) but does not mention how God communicated His promise.

Active and Passive Interaction

Interactions between God and story characters, which can occur via prayer from a distance or take place in the presence of God, are either active or passive. Interactions that involve decisive action on God's behalf or at His direction, including obeying or disobeying God's command or commandment, fighting for or against God, and/or any other interactions that reflect God's power are considered as active. Interactions that are quiet and reflective and do not lead to action, such as talking to or listening to God in casual conversation, expressing love for and/or feeling love expressed by God are considered passive. Some books in the study include both active and passive interaction, some include one or the other and some include no direct interaction with God.

Fifty-seven books include some type of direct interaction between God and one or more other characters in the story. In one book, *Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale* (Keens-Douglas 1999), all interactions take place between two aspects—male and female--of God, the Creator. In *Heavenly Seven* (Forth 1996) and *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999), all interactions involve God and His angels. The remaining fifty-four books involve interaction between God and one or more mortal beings.

Active Interaction

Three basic types of interaction that occur frequently were counted as active. Prayers requesting that God take some action or exhibit some power were counted as active interaction. Prayers giving thanks for some action or power already taken or

exhibited by God were also considered active interaction. Commands that God gives, whether obeyed or not, were counted as active because they expected some type of action. Fifty-four books include active interaction with God. Representative incidents from each book are discussed below in Figure 13.

Prayers for Help

The most frequent specific prayer request was for God's help in a particular situation. In seventy-three incidents in twenty-six books characters call out to God for help. Characters request God's help with a myriad of problems and fearful situations including physical danger, financial ruin, family crises, and frustrated or unfulfilled desires.

Characters seek God's help when their lives are in danger. In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), Father Pernin asks for help when he and little Fritz encounter the raging fire in the woods (2) and he prays for God to help the fire fighters (14). In the midst of the blaze, Carrie calls to God as she "sucked in air. Oh, help me!~Please help me, God. Please—please help me!" (51) when a woman tries to climb onto her shoulders in the water and her weight brings Carrie down. In order to escape the flames, Carrie and the others stay in the water so long that they become too tired to stay afloat and the soot in the air is so heavy that it blinds them. Carrie cries to God for help again (67). Her teacher, Miss Moore, finally surrenders to God for His help during this all-night ordeal in the river and wakes up on the sand in the morning, safe and sound (71).

Active Interaction with God						
Title	Help	Healing	Other	Thanks	Commands	TOTALS
...And Then There Were Dinosaurs			1		3	4
Are You There God, It's Me, Margaret	7	1	3	1		12
Around Old Bethany	1	2	8	1		12
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God	2		2			4
Better Tomorrow?	2					2
Bridge to Cutter Gap	1			1		3
Carrie and the Crazy Quilt	2			2		4
Daddy, Is There Really a God?			1			1
Daniel and the Lion's Den				1	2	3
Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl	2					2
Dr. Drabble's Phenomenal Antigravity Dust Machine	1					1
Dream Quilt			1	1		1
Emma & Mommy Talk to God	1		1	2		4
Escape From Egypt			4	3	7	14
Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen	2		2	2		6
Gnat's Lifeboat & Other Stories			1		2	3
God Gives Us Beaches				1		1
God Gives Us Food				1		1
God is Never Too Busy To Listen!	2	1				3
Heavenly Seven: Mighty Archangels			1	2	15	18
How God got Christian into Trouble			7		3	10
I Like to Talk to God	1		3	1		5
I Love My Daddy!			1			1
I Wonder Who Hung the Moon in the Sky				1		1
Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle	2			2		4
Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain	7		1	4		12
Little Soul \$ the Sun: A Parable			4		1	5

Figure 13. Active interaction with God.

Active Interaction with God						
Title	Help	Healing	Other	Thanks	Commands	TOTALS
Mama God, Papa God					2	2
Mayflower Secret: Gov. Bradford			3	3		6
My Buddy God	1					1
My Life as a Smashed Burrito	3					3
My Mom is Dying	1	2	2	2		7
Noah's Trees					2	2
Nothing Plus God	5		1	2		8
Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets					3	3
Princess of the Two Lands	2			1	5	8
Race for Freedom	2				1	3
Remember the Secret					2	2
Road to Damietta	2		4	2	1	9
Roxie and the Red Rose Mystery				1		1
Rustlers of Panther Gap	2					2
Shadows on Stoney Creek	7			1	1	9
Special Gift to God			3	1		4
Stormy Night					5	5
T-Bone Trouble		1				1
Talk to God . . . I'll Get the Message		2	1			3
Thank God for Sunshine	1			1		2
Tree Tall to the Rescue	10					10
Uncle Noah's Big Boat					2	2
Waldo, Tell Me about God			1			1
Whaddayamean					5	5
What a Truly Cool World				1	7	8
When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West	4	1		1		6
Where Does God Live?				2		2
TOTALS	73	10	56	44	69	252

Figure 13 (continued). Active interaction with God.

Jimmy asks God for help in *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995), first to go on the camping trip (17) and then each time danger threatens the campers' safety (84, 88, 101, 106, 114). He also asks God to help him restrain their captor and not kill him when the opportunity presents itself (120).

In *The Rustlers of Panther Gap* (Morris 1994), Barney calls on God for help with "a simple prayer that sounded a little like a kid's: Lord, please get me off this mountain!" (23) when he falls onto a narrow ledge. Later, when resorting to another quick prayer, Barney realizes that the only times he does pray is when he needs help (96). In *The Bridge to Cutter Gap* (Marshall 1995), Christy prays for God's help when she falls from a crude, so-called bridge into an icy creek (62).

Susie calls on God for help on more than one occasion in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945). When the congregation is about to lose the church building because of lack of funds, Susie exhorts the members to call on God, which they do with positive results (12-15). Susie's family is paralyzed by fear when Indians attack the wagon train on which they are traveling, so Susie prays for God's help by herself. Again, God hears and delivers them (24-8). Finally, Susie asks God to help the missionary who has come to speak to her church (34).

In *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997), Sarah asks for God's help to fulfill her wish to teach and then prays for His protection and deliverance from the danger that arises when her dream comes true. She asks God for help to obtain permission to open a small school for the children from the nearby homesteads; she "want[s] to do more than

tend babies and scrub floors” (48). When the school is open Sarah asks God to help her handle situations that arise: soothe young Samuel’s ego (60), get rid of Trace Mackey who was making a nuisance of himself (72), take care of Charlie and Katie who are on their own (145), protect Ruthie from the wildcat (161), keep the children safe in school during a storm (168), and protect Trace out in the storm (172).

In *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975), Scota, one of Pharaoh’s daughters, declares the God of the Hebrews to be the one true God and asks for His help. She asks God to save Hesire’s son when the Angel of Death comes to claim the firstborn of Egypt (104) and to keep her own husband, Gathelos, safe when the Egyptians pursue the Hebrews into the desert (116).

In *Race for Freedom* (Johnson 1996), Libby is trapped in a secret hideaway below the ship’s deck (61-5). She cannot cry out or the secret will be discovered, so “Libby found herself praying as she had seldom prayed before” (61). In *A Better Tomorrow* (Harrison 1997), Janet asks God “to help her find out if Mrs. Cooper really did have a ‘best side’” (68) and then, later when she finds Mrs. Cooper unconscious on the floor, to help her keep Mrs. Cooper alive until help arrives (111).

In *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997), Harlan Smith gives his testimony by the campfire one night. Harlan tells how his parents and most of their wagon train were killed during an Indian attack and how, at a time in his adult life when he was angry and bitter and had killed a few Indians himself, he got caught in one of his own traps while he was hunting. He was alone, near death, and had given up and “done

some business with God” (21) when an Indian found him, brought him food, sprang him from the trap, and literally saved his life (21-3). Harlan’s advice to those gathered around the campfire on the Trail of Tears is to “keep prayin’ that God Almighty helps us find a way to live together” (23).

Daniel is touched by Harlan’s powerful testimony and cries out to God to help him when he has an opportunity to kill the white man who shot his father and whose carelessness and disregard for Indian life was later responsible for his father’s death (47). Daniel decides to let God help him achieve justice for Jake Crawford’s crime against Daniel, his father, and the Cherokee people (54).

In *When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West* (Graham 1997), the pioneers ask God for help throughout their journey, in five incidents (6,12,17, 23, 29). When Chelsea and PJ are caught in a storm while flying alone in *Dr. Drabble’s Phenomenal Antigravity Dust Machine* (Brouwer 1991), PJ prays to God for help (13). A little sparrow calls on God for protection because s/he is too small to protect her/himself in *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999, 5).

Characters seek God’s help with family and other personal situations and relationships. In *Kathy’s Baby-sitting Hassle* (Stahl 1992), Kathy needs God’s help to find her missing four-year-old sister, Megan, whom she is supposed to be baby-sitting (15-26). In the book *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996), Mrs. Jensen asks God’s help for her sister’s unhappy marriage (64). A very small boy calls on God for help when his parents fight in *God Is Never Too Busy to Listen* (Burgess 1987, 11).

In *Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr* (1990), Nathan cries out to God for help the night he flees his father's home and is robbed of his clothing and left homeless and in rags (78). In *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995), Justin and his dad ask God to help Uncle Ben by supplying all of his family's needs (17-19).

Fourteen-year-old Tree Tall calls on God for help in a total of eleven incidents in *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987). First, he prays to be allowed to accompany his family on their annual trek to the falls (43). When God makes a way for Tree Tall to go after his grandmother, Many Songs, and return her to the reservation, Tree Tall finds that he must repeatedly call on God for help.

As Tree Tall sets out on his own to find his grandmother, he recalls the time he ran away and called on "the Great God and his Son Jesus" for help (87). Later, Tree Tall is joined by his younger adopted sister, Bright Sky. Together, they set off for the unpopulated hills to find their grandmother as Tree Tall voices their need for God's help, "We need the Spirit of the Holy God to go with us—to help us find and bring Many Songs back to Little Pine" (109-10).

Sometimes characters seek God's help in dealing with their peers. As the title indicates, Earl is desperate for God to help him in *Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl* (Park 1993). Earl has been the victim of a school bully, Eddie McFee, and he wants to get out of the P.E. class he shares with Eddie (10-11). Earl calls out to God again later when he puts his own plan into action to rid himself of the weekly extortion that Eddie has been inflicting on him (51). In *Emma & Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996), Emma's

mommy tells her to pray for Peter because he must be very unhappy if he is doing mean things to her (19-20). Emma asks God to help Peter to be happy (22).

Characters seek God's help in the fulfillment of their personal desires. In *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985), Ricca prays that God will help her keep Clare di Scifi from Francis Bernardone because Ricca loves him and wants him for herself (74). She hopes that the abbess of Sao Paolo will keep Clare in the monastery and the abbess assures her that she will, "with a little of God's help" (112). Ricca's father punishes her for following Clare by banishing her to a convent in Venice and Ricca can tell by the bishop's smile that he played a part in her banishment. The bishop will pray for her, however, and God will help her (116-7). Ricca suggests they pass by Porziuncola—a chance to encounter Francis Bernardone—to pray that God will keep them safe as they travel to Venice (122).

In *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974), Margaret Simon asks God for help in several situations from moving to a new city (1) to getting a good grade on a school test (50). In five separate incidents, Margaret asks God to help her body grow and mature (14, 37, 81, 82, 101).

In *Thank God for Sunshine* (Williams 1998), when Sunshine's original owner threatens to take possession of the dog, Bobby prays.

'Please God, don't let Mr. Singh take Sunshine away from me. Sunshine is my best friend. I love him, and I don't want to lose him. The Sunday School teacher told us that you can help us with any problem. Amen, God.' (47-48)

Bobby remembers what he has been taught--that only God can help with a problem of this magnitude.

In *My Life as a Smashed Burrito with Extra Hot Sauce* (Myers 1993), Wally asks God to help him get permission to take his computer to camp by interceding with his parents (6). He pleads with God to help him when his counselor, Dale, is about to step into the trap set for Gary (58). He also says a quick prayer to solicit God's help before he engages Gary in a conversation about God (94).

Characters ask God for help when they are seeking God. In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), Robert prays for help in establishing a new church based on the truth of God's word (50, 65). Sierra asks for God's help to become closer to Him in the book, *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996, 84).

Prayers for Healing

The second most frequent prayer request was for healing. In ten incidents in seven books, characters pray asking God to heal someone from an illness or injury.

In *My Mom is Dying* (McNamara 1994), on three separate occasions Kristine asks God to heal her mother of an unspecified illness (2-4, 12,19). Two grandfathers are the objects of prayer requests in two different picture books. In *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995), Alexander prays for his grandpa (26) and in *Talk to God...I'll Get the Message* (Geller 1983), Robert makes a similar request for his grandpa as well (9).

When Alex's little brother falls from a tree in an incident of *T-Bone Trouble* (Levene 1987c), their mother prays there on the sidewalk and in the ambulance, "Please, Lord God...Place Your loving hand on Rudy. Heal his injuries and restore him to us. In the name of Jesus, we pray" (49). In *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974), Margaret has a "silent talk with God" (16) for healing on the way to the hospital with her father after he cuts his hand on his new lawn equipment. In *God Is Never Too Busy to Listen* (Burgess 1987), a little boy tells God before anyone when he is feeling ill (13). He looks to God for healing.

The pioneers pray for healing and continue on their journey when some of their party fall ill in *When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West* (Graham 1997). In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), Robert Davis sends to Sayersville for a minister, D.W. Monteith, to come and pray for his ailing wife, Mary (84). The minister anoints Mary with oil and prays to God, "'Send thy healing virtue. Destroy this disease and heal her for thy glory'" (85).

Other Prayer Requests

Several characters call on God with various other types of requests as well—mercy, forgiveness, wisdom and understanding, guidance, and for someone or something special for their lives. One character asks to be released from God's command.

According to Uncle Charlie's story in *The Bible Story of Jonah* in *The Gnat's Lifeboat* (Robinson 1936), when Jonah finally took God's message to the people of

Nineveh, “the king and the whole city began to fast and pray and cry to God for mercy” (35). In *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998), Elizabeth calls out to God for mercy when John Howland falls overboard (31) and, on his deathbed, Squanto asks for God’s mercy and entrance into heaven (128).

In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), Peter Newby tells the Bible study group that the fact that he has to ask God for forgiveness in every prayer is proof of the sinful nature of man (34). Later, when he asks for forgiveness for fighting the foundation of the new church, Robert and Mary embrace him and pray God’s blessings for his life (108). In *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997), Thomas tells his son how in 1782 their ancestor, Abraham, asked their captives for “one night to pray and repent of their sins and to make themselves right with God” (50).

In *Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr* (1990), Nathan asks God for forgiveness for listening to the followers of Jesus whom he considers to be blasphemous (57). As the mob hurls stones at him, Stephen prays that God will forgive them for his death (117). In *A Special Gift to God* (Theodore 1986), Spyro recalls how St. John the Baptist had prayed that God would forgive the people who were committing sins (9). In *Waldo, Tell Me About God* (Wilhelm 1988), Waldo tells young Michael about God’s forgiveness for those who are contrite; God’s love replaces pain (14).

In *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985), Bishop Pelagius prays for sanctification of olive branches during a service in the cathedral (95). Francis Bernardone blesses the

crusaders as they prepare to go forth to Egypt on this latest crusade (159) and then prays that God will forgive them as they loot Damietta after their victory (214).

Characters pray to God for guidance, wisdom, and understanding. Tracker John prays for wisdom in *Daddy, Is There Really a God?* (Morris 1997, 8). In *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997), Thomas prays that God will show him what to do about the forced relocation of the Cherokee (6). In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), Carrie and Hans discuss asking God what they should tell people about Hans' experience with Jesus (77). Before it is born, a little soul asks God for understanding and assurance regarding what lies ahead in *The Little Soul and the Sun: A Children's Parable Adapted from Conversations with God* (Walsch 1998).

In *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Lutrell 1997), the traveling minister, Jeremy Justice, asks God for guidance (94). In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), Robert and Mary ask God for truth and guidance in selecting a church to join (7) and for guidance for the weekly Bible study (44). In *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994), God punishes Pharaoh by sending relentless wind and sand and darkness. As Jesse, Avi, Talia, and Omar lie huddled together for protection from the elements, Omar cries out to God for understanding (79).

Some characters pray to God seeking answers to life's questions. In *My Mom Is Dying* (McNamara 1994), Kristine asks God for answers to her questions about life, death, and her mom's illness (5). She also seeks an answer and comfort from God concerning her own possible role in her mother's illness (13-14). In *How God Got*

Christian into Trouble (Wojciechowska 1984), Christian and Mr. Petroccini ask God for information, Christian about the future of his parents' marriage (35) and Mr. Petroccini about the permanence of death (47).

Some characters pray to God on behalf of others. In *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), Susie asks God to save Mr. Ebenezer and she continues to ask Him when it does not happen right away (19). In *Talk to God...I'll Get the Message* (Geller 1983), after his grandpa's death, Robert asks God to look after him in heaven (15). In *Emma & Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996), Emma asks God for happiness for her classmate, Peter (22).

In *...And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993), the Land calls out to God to do something about these dinosaurs He has created that are creating havoc on earth. God sees the good in His creatures and reassures the Land that they will do better (21).

Characters ask God for something special for their lives or for someone special with whom they can share their lives—a child, a friend. In *Where Does God Live?* (Holly 1997), Hope's grandma advises her to “tell God your wishes” (26). A father, in *I Love My Daddy!* (Rich 1995), tells his little son, “You are a special gift from God and I prayed for you before you were born” (108). In the book *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996), Christy tells Sierra that she is asking God to bring Sierra a good friend with whom she can share her time and interests (50).

Some prayers stem from a desire to give something to God, rather than receive something from Him. In *Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and*

Mary Davis (Berry 1925), Robert promises to do God's will (54) and "renew[s] his covenant to walk in all of God's light" (50). In *A Special Gift to God* (Theodore 1986), Spyro's fervent prayer is fueled by his desire to "give his whole body, soul, his life to God" (29). The whole congregation prays for God to accept their gift—Spyro's gift that has now become their gift—of Prosfora, holy bread (27).

In *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996), even as he declares his love for God, Lucifer asks Him to rescind His command for the angels to serve God's new creation—man. Lucifer considers himself superior to God's newly created beings who "can't even fly" (11).

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Praise

In forty-four incidents in twenty-eight books, characters thank and/or praise God for what He has done for them or given to them, ranging from one incident in eleven books to four incidents in *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995).

In *Emma & Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996), Emma thanks God for helping Peter to be happy (27-8). In *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975), Scota thanks Yahweh, God of the Hebrews, for saving her husband when the rest of Pharaoh's army drowns in the Red Sea (125).

In *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997), Sarah thanks God when she thinks Trace has returned safely through the storm (176). In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), Carrie thanks God for keeping her little brother, Fritz, safe during the fire (1-2). In

Roxie and the Red Rose Mystery (Stahl 1992), Roxie thanks God for helping her through all that has happened with the Harland family (120). In *Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle* (Stahl 1992), Kathy's dad praises God because Kathy found Megan when she disappeared from the park. Hannah gives Kathy a scripture that her mom has given her from the Book of Psalms, "I will praise God; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (63-4). Kathy is not certain that she can praise God for Megan and their brother, Duke (64).

In *Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr* (1990), John gives thanks to God for Jesus' resurrection (102). Stephen thanks God for the impact John's testimony has had on Nathan, causing him to commit his young life to Jesus (102-3). In *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985), Ricca and her traveling companions are unexpectedly joined by her former companion, Nicola Ascoli when they had feared bandits and marauders, "[j]oyful cries of 'Thanks be to God' rose from the camp, now that we were confronted not by a brigand but by a pretty girl with a travel-stained face" (130). After the daylong battle on the Nile with the Moslems near Damietta, Francis Bernardone offers God a prayer of thanksgiving for the safekeeping of the crusaders (175).

In *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain* (Bray 1995), Jimmy thanks God for protecting him and his uncle on their danger-filled camping trip (40) and for keeping Katie home where she was safe (100). When the ranger arrives to get Uncle Cully to a medical facility and Ben Dorn to a penal facility, Jimmy thanks God that the danger is

past (134). In *Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986), Daniel gives praise to God for saving him from the "jaws of the lion" (45).

In the book *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996), Mrs. Jensen tells Sierra that she should thank God for the "wonderful" father He gave her because other children have not been as blessed (64). In *I Wonder Who Hung the Moon in the Sky* (Hodgson 1999), a little boy thanks God for everything He has made and done (29). At mealtime, the cubs thank God for everything in *The Berenstain Bears and the Big Question* (Berenstain and Berenstain 1999, 5). Although it is a mere recitation without meaning for the cubs, it is the catalyst that begins their quest for an understanding of God.

In the board book entitled, *God Gives Us Food* (Fischer 1999b), a little girl gives God thanks for the food He supplies (9). In *Too-soon Mr. Bear* (Runyon 1979), the little mouse thanks God for apple seeds, the perfect meal for a little mouse (17). Jennat, in *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994), thanks God for the daily manna that He sends to sustain the people as they travel through the desert (128). Jesse thanks God that Jennat did not participate in the heathenish display that has just taken place (174).

In *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson and Jackson 1998), "the Separatists praised God for providing food for them in their time of need" (40) and thanked Him for continuing to show them mercy (102). The Pilgrims credit God with the safe passage of what they believe to be a ship full of fresh supplies from England (104).

One little boy thanks God for His love that keeps him safe in *The Dream Quilt* (Ryan 1999, 41). Another little boy thanks God for strawberry jam in *God Is Never Too*

Busy to Listen! (Burgess 1987, 19). In *Where Does God Live?* (Holly 1997), Hope's grandma tells her to "thank God for all [her] favorite things" (26) and Hope also thanks Him for the day she has just enjoyed (30). In *God Gives Us Beaches* (Fischer 1999a), a little boy thanks God for the beaches He has provided for his enjoyment (9).

Noah thanks God in *Uncle Noah's Big Boat* (Tsurumi 1999) for giving them back the earth after the flood (25). In *When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West* (Graham 1997), the pioneers thank God for his help on their wagon train journey (31).

In *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), Susie thanks God for the gift of Jesus Christ whom God sent to save the world from sin. She also thanks God for calling her and Jimmy to be missionaries in Africa (43). In *The Bridge to Cutter Gap* (Marshall 1995), Miss Alice thanks God for Christy's "humanness" (115) for it is the quality that will enable her to do God's work.

In *A Special Gift to God* (Theodore 1986), Spyro and his grandmother pray together, "Thank you, Lord, for all you have given us. Thank you for this chance to give something back to you" (19). In *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995), Samantha likes to sing her praises to God (20-2). And when God gives Shaniqua His approval in *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999), she thanks God with a "five" handclap (27-29).

In *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996), the angels thank God for the gifts He bestows upon them (24, 55). Michael also thanks God for placing His trust in him (24).

God Commands

God commands, directs, or requests certain actions of characters in sixty-six incidents in nineteen books, ranging from one incident in four books to seven incidents in each of two books, *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994) and *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999).

In *The Bible Story of Jonah* in *The Gnat's Lifeboat* (Robinson 1936), Uncle Charlie tells his three young listeners how God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and warn the people there to repent of their sins (28). After hearing about God's punishment for Jonah's disobedience, young Ted "suppose[s]...that the next time God told Jonah to do anything, Jonah went" (35).

In *Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets* (Levene 1987a), Alex realizes that she should listen to her heart since God made it (93). Her heart would tell her what God wants her to do in every circumstance. When Libby calls out to God in *Race for Freedom* (Johnson 1996), she hears God's voice telling her, "'Be not dismayed, for I am thy God'" (63). God warns Jordan when the slave catchers are nearby, telling him to "hold up now" (145).

God commands Pharaoh to let His people go into the desert to worship Him in *Escape from Egypt* and *Princess of the Two Lands* (Levitin 1994, 18, 63, Parker and Myers 1975, 54, 89). In the former book, God commands Moses to use his staff to cross the sea (103) and to "'write this as a reminder in the Book, and repeat it carefully to Joshua. I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens'" (138).

God further commands Moses to have His people prepare to receive Him (153) and He gives Moses His law to take to the people (168). Enraged by the wickedness of His people, God commands Moses to kill all those who participated in the wicked revelry and idolatry (183-8). God then commands Miriam to become a leper and to leave the camp for one week (215).

In *Uncle Noah's Big Boat* (Tsurumi 1999), God tells Noah to “build a big boat for you and your family. And bring two animals of every kind with you” (1). God gives the same command in *Noah's Trees* (Le Tord 1999, 15, 17). In *The Road to Damietta* (O'Dell 1985), Bishop Pelagius mentions in his prayer for sanctification that God once “commanded the dove to proclaim peace to the world” (95).

God calls Anna to “Come ride with me” in *The Stormy Night* (Baker 1991, 7). He bids her to come into His house (13) and through one of the windows to the universe (15). God calls the stars to dance and they do (7). He tells the earth to be green and it becomes “robed with grass” (17). In *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997) God calls Jeremy Justice to preach (94).

In *Remember the Secret* (Kübler-Ross 1982), God calls back to Him every living thing that He has created (20). He calls everyone to “a beautiful place...where no one ever gets punished for being bad, where no one knows any pain or grief or sorrow” (26). God spoke the world into being and He speaks its destruction in ...*And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993, 2, 26). He acts at the request of the Land because the dinosaurs of the Sixth World have become selfish and quarrelsome (21-25).

God visits the earth in *Whaddayamean* (Burningham 1999), He sends two children to go throughout the world and tell the adult inhabitants how to take better care of the world that He has entrusted to them (21). The children carry God's command to executive polluters (23-24), the religious community (25-26), the military leaders (27-28), and the apathetic general populace of the world (29-30).

God commands His angels and the rest of His creation in *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999). In *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996), He commands His angels to serve man whom He created in His own image (11). When Lucifer refuses (11), God commissions seven archangels to fight Lucifer's forces of darkness (17) and to serve and protect God's anointed creation (18).

In *Mama God and Papa God: A Caribbean Tale* (Keens-Douglas 1999), Papa God commands the light to be (5). In *The Little Soul and the Sun: A Children's Parable Adapted from Conversations with God* (Walsch 1998), God tells the Little Soul twice to remember what He has given (19, 23).

In *How God Got Christian Into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), God requests that Christian's dad demonstrate his trade by cutting a diamond (34) and suggests that Christian answer Mrs. Murphy's question to encourage and test Christian's understanding and spiritual growth (40). God tells Christian not to fear (60).

Passive Interaction

Incidents coded as passive interaction involve three different types of interaction. In sixty-six incidents characters engage in conversational interaction with God, discussing personal thoughts, ideas, and situations. Thirty-four incidents involve God's willingness to listen to a character. Twenty incidents pertain to a character's expressions of love toward and/or from God. Thirty-three books include passive interaction with God. Representative incidents from each book are discussed in Figure 14.

Conversational Interaction

Characters engage in everyday conversation with God in sixty-six incidents in twenty books, ranging from one incident in twelve books to eight incidents in two books, *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974) and *How God Got Christian Into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984).

Passive Interaction with	God			Totals
Title	Conversation	Listens	Loving	
...And Then There Were Dinosaurs	5	1		6
Are You There God, It's Me, Margaret	8			8
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God	1			1
Carrie and the Crazy Quilt	1			1
Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl	1			1
Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?		1		1
Dream Quilt			2	2
Emma & Mommy Talk to God		1		1
Escape From Egypt	3			3
God is Never Too Busy To Listen!	2	8		10
Heavenly Seven: Mighty Archangels	9		1	10
How God got Christian into Trouble	8	6	9	23
I Like to Talk to God	5	4	1	9
Little Soul & the Sun: A Parable	5			5
Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale	3			3
Mayflower Secret: Gov. Bradford	1			1
My Buddy God		1		1
My Mom is Dying	1	3		3
Nothing Plus God	1	1		2
Road to Damietta	1			1
Shadows on Stoney Creek		1		1
Special Gift to God			1	1
Stormy Night	1			1
Talk to God . . . I'll Get the Message		3		3
Tent: A Parable in One Sitting	1		1	2
Tree Tall to the Rescue		1		1
Uncle Noah's Big Boat	1			
Waldo, Tell Me about God			1	1
Whaddayamean	1	1		2
What a Truly Cool World	6	1		7
Where Does God Live?		1		1
Where is God?			1	1
Wood Stork Named Warren: A Fable	1		3	4
TOTALS	66	34	20	120

Figure 14. Passive interaction with God .

In *Carrie and the Crazy Quilt* (Liebig 1996), Carrie tells Hans that praying is “just talking to God. Like we’re talking here now” (78). That is exactly how Elizabeth Tilley views the Separatists’ interactions with God in *The Mayflower Secret* (Jackson 1998) because they “talked to God as if He was in charge of everyday things” (29). God whispers Anna to sleep in *The Stormy Night* (Baker 1991, 19). In *Beneath the Sky of an Angry God* (Jenkins 1997), Daniel goes to the roof of the cabin he shares with his father so that he can be alone “to think or sometimes talk to God” (8).

Seven characters in *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995) share everyday thoughts and events with God. Elizabeth tells God about her feelings and her pets (5). Katie talks to God in “prayer pictures” about the happiness in her life (7-8) and Danielle uses a “prayer phone” (15). Samantha also talks to God about her happy feelings (20-2), while Joel talks about his angry feelings (11) and Miguel about the things that matter to him (12). Amy talks to God about the love they feel for one another (29-31).

Margaret in *Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974) and Kristine in *My Mom Is Dying* (McNamara 1994) have running monologues with God throughout their respective books. In addition to making requests for help and expressing impatience and dissatisfaction with the way God responds to those requests, both girls also discuss some everyday situations and feelings. Margaret discusses her school project on religion (53) and her thoughts on whether she should join the Y or the Jewish Community Center (61). In *My Mom Is Dying* (McNamara 1994), Kristine shares with God how her mom

liked the cards her classmates made (15) and her disappointment about not being able to attend a school program with her mother (11).

Corey expresses his thoughts to God in “a kind of prayer” in *The Tent* (Paulsen 1995, 58). He believes that he has just witnessed a miracle, performed by God through Corey’s own hand.

God converses with the Land in ...*And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993). They discuss what God should create (2, 29), how His creation looks (6), how it is behaving (21), and what should be done in the future (29). After destroying the overwhelming majority of another creation in *Uncle Noah’s Big Boat* (Tsurumi 1999), God makes a promise to restore happiness (23).

Francis Bernardone tells Ricca a little about his conversations with God in *The Road to Damietta* (O’Dell 1985).

“You seem to know all about God and what He does. Does He speak to you as you speak to the sparrows?

“Yes, and how fortunate for me, humble sparrow that I am.”

In the failing light I couldn’t see his face, hidden as it was by the heavy folds of his hood, yet I felt that he was serious. Yes, Francis Bernardone spoke directly to God in the voice of a sparrow. Perhaps he talked to God in the voice of the poor little donkey that was now waiting beside the gate. (56)

God converses with His angels as He presents His new creation to them and as He bestows gifts, powers, and responsibilities upon them in *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996). He discusses light and being with a little soul about to be born in *The Little Soul and the Sun: A Children’s Parable Adapted from Conversations with God* (Walsch 1998).

God Listens

God listens to His creatures in thirty-four incidents in fourteen books, ranging from one incident in nine books to eight incidents in *God Is Never Too Busy to Listen!* (Burgess 1987). This act of listening implies an expectation on the part of the character and a commitment on the part of God. Characters in two books, *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell, 1997) and *Talk to God...I'll Get the Message* (Geller 1983) questioned God's commitment to listen to their requests.

The book, *God is Never Too Busy to Listen!* (Burgess 1987) is centered on God's desire to listen to a little boy who has a variety of things to tell Him. God hears about his feelings (3), his upsets (11), his fears (13), his joys (19). In *Shadows on Stoney Creek* (Luttrell 1997), Charlie accuses God of never listening to their prayers (122). And in *Race for Freedom* (Johnson 1996), Libby is not sure, "I hear Pa pray, and I hear you and Caleb pray. But I don't know if God listens to me" (120). Nor is the congregation sure that God will listen to little Susie's prayers in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945,18). Susie, however, is certain (19).

In *Emma & Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996), Emma's mommy tells her that "God always hears you" (11). In *Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?* (Carlstrom 1993), Katrina's mama tells her that God likes for His people to talk to Him (18). In *Where Does God Live* (Holly 1997), Hope wants to know how to pray so that God will hear her (25).

In *Good Night, Little One* (Bjorkman 1999), the little mouse is encouraged to speak to God because, “every prayer that you tell Him, I know He will hear” (27). In the book *I Like to Talk to God* (Nicola 1995), Katie and Michael are certain that God listens to them (8-11, 12).

God listens to the Land when she recommends what kind of creatures God should create in ...*And Then There Were Dinosaurs* (Steinberg 1993, 2, 29). He listens again when the Land recommends destroying the dinosaurs that are becoming progressively selfish and destructive (25).

Some characters question God’s commitment to listen to them. In *Talk to God...I’ll Get the Message* (Geller 1983), Robert looks to his grandpa for confirmation that God is listening and will hear their prayers to heal Grandpa (10). Grandpa assures Robert that “God always listens to the prayers of people who are sincere (10).

Tree Tall tells Bright Sky that he is counting on God’s hearing their prayer, because God is their only hope in *Tree Tall to the Rescue* (Evans 1987, 110). God is annoyed as He listens to the flowers complain about their loneliness in *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999, 16)

God’s Love

Twenty incidents in eight books pertain to interactions that represent God’s love. Every night a little boy prays in *The Dream Quilt* (Ryan 1999), “Thank You for Your strong and mighty love that makes me feel warm and safe!” (41). In *I Like to Talk to God*

(Nicola 1995), Amy likes to talk to God about “how Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit love [her]” (29). In *Where Is God?* (O’Leary and Dalton 1991), the baker tells Joseph that he hears God’s voice expressing love for him (18).

In *Waldo, Tell Me About God* (Wilhelm 1988), Waldo encourages Michael to feel God’s love (21), which He sends to strengthen and to help him (15). Spyro already feels God’s love for him and offers himself to God as a love offering in *A Special Gift to God* (Theodore 1986, 29). God speaks with great love as He offers His newly created man to the angels for admiration and protection in *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996, 11). God has a “face of light and love” (5).

God tells Christian that He was the only one who ever loved José Martinez in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984). God demonstrates His love to a homeless person (38) and two junkies in the park (58-59) and to all the parishioners during Mass (55). In *A Wood Stork Named Warren* (Breslin 1996) God speaks to Warren of His love for him and for the humans who are destroying the earth with their carelessness and their thoughtlessness (33-36).

God’s Presence

One hundred twenty interactions in twenty-four books take place in the presence of God, ranging from one in fourteen books to twenty-seven interactions in the presence of God in *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996). His presence can be either active or passive. It can mean that He is there ready to actively

protect, give, command, or guide. God's presence can also mean that He is there for company and assurance, to comfort and listen. These interactions are depicted in Figure 15.

Interaction in God's Presence			
Title	God's Presence		Totals
	Active	Passive	
Carrie and the Crazy Quilt		1	1
Daniel and the Lion's Den	2		2
Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?		1	1
Emma & Mommy Talk to God		1	1
Escape From Egypt	1		1
Forbidden Gates: A First Story of Stephen		1	1
Go Away, Dark Night		1	1
God and Joseph and Me		1	1
God Is Everywhere		1	1
God Is Near		4	4
Heavenly Seven: Mighty Archangels	18	9	27
How God got Christian into Trouble	10	16	26
In Your Dreams		1	1
Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle		1	1
King Who Wanted to See God		1	1
Little Soul & the Sun: A Parable	5	5	10
Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale	2	3	5
My Buddy God	3	5	8
No Friends for Hannah	1		1
Nothing Plus God		1	1
Stormy Night	3	1	4
Waldo, Tell Me about God		2	2
Whaddayamean	1	2	3
What a Truly Cool World	8	6	14
Where is God?		1	1
Wood Stork Named Warren		1	1
TOTALS	54	66	120

Figure 15. Interaction with God in God's Presence

In *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996), God has both active and passive interactions with several of His angels. God speaks to His angels and presents His latest creation—man—to them, charging them to serve this new creation (11). When Lucifer refuses to do as God has commanded, he is stripped of God's glory and banished from heaven (13) and God's presence. God then commissions seven of His archangels to serve man and battle Lucifer and the army he is raising. God equips them with the necessary gifts and skills that they will need to do His will (19-60).

The book, *The Little Soul and the Sun: A Children's Parable Adapted from Conversations with God* (Walsh 1998) depicts an encounter between God and a young soul who is about to be born. Their conversation centers on the essence of the little soul, what it is (2-4) and what it is called to do when God sends it into the earth (10-19, 23). The interactions are both active—God sending the little soul, and passive—conversing with God.

In *Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale* (Keens-Douglas 1999), the two aspects of God engage in active and passive interaction to create the world together. In *What a Truly Cool World* (Lester 1999), God interacts actively and passively with some of the other inhabitants of heaven including His wife, Irene, and His secretary, Bruce. God sits on the porch with His wife (19) and keeps Bruce running errands (4-6, 16, 19,

21-2). God also requests that “Shaniqua, the angel in charge of everybody’s business” (2), sing for Him (23). When Shaniqua sings, “it could be heard all over heaven. The angels stopped what they were doing to listen. The sound was so beautiful that water began to flow from their eyes” (23). God hugs Shaniqua for her contribution to His creation (29).

In *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), God speaks to Christian as part of his heritage and then, at Christian’s request makes Himself visible by means of a recently deceased seven-year-old boy. God goes home (27-37) with Christian and to the park (56-59), the movies (50-51), church (52-56), school (59-79), and to visit a friend, Mr. Petroccini (42-50). God helps Christian’s parents (33-37) and agrees to attend Mrs. Murphy’s and Mr. Petroccini’s wedding (51). God and Christian discuss movies (51), beatitude (28), and death (40); they eat together (30, 37, 49). Through God’s visit, Christian comes to a better understanding of God and himself and their relationship to one another.

In *Whaddayamean* (Burningham 1999), God spends active and passive time with two young children. After voicing His disappointment regarding the condition of the earth, God picnics with the children and then sends them to speak to the people of the world to make changes in the way they treat the earth (21). Upon their return they look for God to show Him how things are changing (45). In *My Buddy God* (Conte 1996), God walks the beach with a young boy through his youth and adulthood--sometimes

holding his hand (4) and other times carrying him (21). God stays with him until the boy becomes an old man (26-9). In *The Stormy Night* (Baker 1991), Anna flies throughout the universe with God, visiting different aspects of His created world (17, 9, 11, 17, 19) including His house (13).

God is actively present in two books that recount Biblical events. In *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994), Moses has been chosen of God to stand in His presence. The Hebrew people cannot bear to be in God's presence. Even His spoken voice is too much for them to bear (157). God makes His presence known in *Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986) when His handwriting appears on the wall to pronounce a death sentence for Belshazzar (26-8).

In more contemporary times, Hannah uses God's presence to encourage herself in *No Friends for Hannah* (Stahl 1992b). God is with her and will go with her as she takes action (113).

Fourteen books include incidents that depict only God's passive presence. In *Emma and Mommy Talk to God* (Williamson 1996), Emma's mommy assures her of God's constant presence (10). A similar incident in *Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?* (Carlstrom 1993), depicts another mother assuring her daughter of God's constant presence (24). In *Waldo, Tell Me About God* (Wilhelm 1988), Waldo explains to his young charge, "God is with us wherever we are...God is even in you and me!" (16). Susie knows that God is with her family wherever they may go in *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945, 25).

Winston and Amanda know that God lives in their hearts in *God is Everywhere* (Mock 1993, 15). One day a little girl will sit on God's lap in *God and Joseph and Me* (Carlyle 1992). Kathy derives comfort from God's presence all through *God is Near* (Long 1992, 7, 13, 21, 30).

In the *King Who Wanted to See God* (Matsuura 1995) the king's tombstone declares that God is "in every good person" (23). At the conclusion of his frantic search for God in *Where Is God?* (O'Leary and Dalton 1991), Joseph hears God in a dream, telling him that He is "everywhere" (21). Joseph then understands that God has been with him all along.

Warren is surprised to learn that humans feel God's presence just as all God's other creatures do in *A Wood Stork Named Warren* (Breslin 1991, 57). Hannah assures Kathy of that presence of God as they search for Kathy's missing little sister in *Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle* (Stahl 1992, 15).

An interaction can also be the expression of a character's desire to be in God's presence. In *Go Away, Dark Night* (Higgs 1998), Griffin is afraid of the dark night. His mother assures him that God will stay with him all night (20). When he calls out, "God? Are you still there?" (30), he no longer feels afraid and knows that God is there as a comfort to him through the night.

In *Escape from Egypt* (Levitin 1994), Rimon desires the relationship with God that Moses now has. Even "Jesse knew, by the look on Rimon's face and the tears in his eyes, and by the way he prayed, that his uncle's heart was full of longing. Rimon yearned

to be chosen in the manner of Moses, to lead the people and speak with God” (171).

Sierra also desires a closer relationship with God in the book, *In Your Dreams* (Gunn 1996). She pours out her heart to God, knowing that He is listening, “...*Father God, I want you in my whole life...I want you in my dreams*” (84).

Nathan denies the possibility of God residing or being present in man in *Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen, the First Martyr* (Williamson 1990, 85). Stephen assures him that God has given man His Spirit, “the Spirit of Truth...for he lives in you and will be in you” (85).

Interaction with God as it Pertains to the Research

Ronald Goldman identified certain concepts of Divine Communication during his study of children from toddlers to young adults (Goldman 1964). Children under the age of eight believe that anyone standing nearby will be able to hear God’s voice because He speaks as a man does, externally. Older children, ages eight to twelve or thirteen, believe that God speaks internally, to the inward being and/or to holy people.

Of the thirty-five books for which the intended audience is known, seven books include direct communication from God. The type of interaction—external or internal—is known in four of the books. Two of the three books intended for children under the age of eight include external communication from God. The one book for older readers in which the type of communication is known includes both external and internal communication from God.

David Heller's research with children included an examination of interaction with God. Gender proved to be a significant indicator of a child's perception of God and the nature of interaction with Him, passivity being associated with girls and activity with boys (Heller 1986, 57-70).

Interaction between God and story characters occurs in fifty-seven books in the study. There are twenty-three of the books with female protagonists, twenty-two books with male protagonists, eleven books with both male and female main characters, and one book in which the main character has no gender.

There are ninety-four incidents of active interaction and twenty-seven incidents of passive interaction in the books with female protagonists. There are more than three times as many active interactions with female protagonists than there are passive interactions. This is in direct opposition to Heller's findings of passivity among girls and their interactions with God.

In the books with male protagonists there are eighty-two incidents of active interaction with God and forty-two incidents of passive interaction, almost twice as many active interactions than passive. This complies with Heller's findings regarding male activity and interaction with God.

In the eleven books that feature both male and female main characters, active interactions outnumber passive interactions two to one. However, one book that has an equal number of male and female main characters is almost two to one in favor of passive interactions. The single book for which there is no main character gender—the main

character is an unborn soul called “it”—has an equal number of active and passive interactions with God.

In those incidents in which characters come into God’s presence, active interactions outnumber passive interactions in books with female protagonists and male protagonists. This is also the case in books with both male and female main characters. In the single book that does not identify the gender of the protagonist, there are an equal number of active and passive interactions in God’s presence.

Summary

God interacts with man, animal and heavenly beings actively and passively, through external and internal means of communication. The most frequent of the 228 active communications—prayer requests and thanksgiving offerings--from characters to God are pleas for help occurring in seventy-two incidents. The fifty-two conversational interactions with God outnumber the other types of the total 108 incidents of passive interaction. God is present in characters’ lives in a passive capacity in more than half (57%) of the incidents involving this type of interaction.

The book, *How God Got Christian Into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), contains the highest number of incidents involving interaction with God, with thirty-eight involving direct communication from God and fifty-nine involving a combination of active and passive interactions. Fifty-seven percent of direct communications from God were coded as external, using evidence given in the text to determine that any character

could hear God's voice or in the case of *Daniel in the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986), see His handwriting.

CHAPTER VI

CENTRALITY TO THE STORY

Centrality is a tool that is used as a measure of the importance of some aspect in a study as it pertains to a particular discipline, including astrophysics, economic geography, medical sociology, or others. It serves a similar purpose in the case of literature concerning how important an aspect is to a particular story. Centrality can foster retention and greater recall of a story (Omanson 1980). The centrality of God to a story conveying a particular image of God may, therefore, have an impact on the reader through incidental learning. For each book in the study, the ratio of the number of times God was mentioned to the number of pages in the story was calculated to determine centrality to the story. This decimal was then multiplied by 100 to obtain the centrality score. Book titles and corresponding centrality scores are listed in Appendix E.

Through a preliminary examination of a sampling of 5% of the total number of books in this study, benchmarks were established to measure the centrality of God to the story. The small sample included board books, chapter books, and picture books. Based on the ratio of the number of times God was mentioned compared to the number of pages in the books, it was determined that one to three—one mention of God in every three pages-- would be considered marginally central to the story. Two to three –two mentions of God in every three pages--would be considered central to the story and three to three—

three mentions of God in every three pages—would be considered highly central to the story. Centrality scores ranged from 0 in two books to 96 in one book. However, six books produced scores over 100 with a surprising score of 294 in *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984). In books with a centrality score of 0 to 33, God was considered not central to the story; 34 to 66, God was marginally central to the story; 67 to 100, God was central to the story. Rather than eliminate the high scoring books as outliers, they were included in the study and God was considered extremely critical to the story in these books. In 51% of the books, God was at least marginally central to the story, in 13% God was central to the story, and in 15% of the books God was extremely critical to the story.

Although page length varies from book to book, it has been deemed reasonable to assume that the number of words will be somewhat consistent from book to book within the same format. Therefore, data were organized and analyzed according to book format in order to standardize the measurement and reduce the impact of page length. Figure 16 depicts the centrality scores for each format. Since word count has not been considered here, basing decisions on centrality scores alone should be done with care. For example, a centrality score of 66 is considered marginal while a score of 67 is considered central. If word count had been considered, however, these scores might have been reversed—or wider apart.

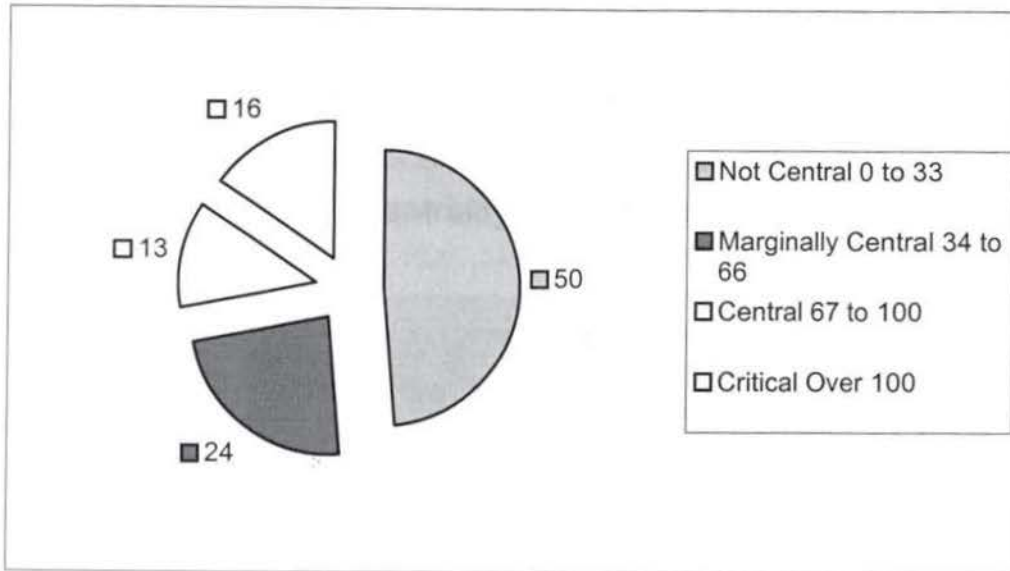


Figure 16. Centrality by number of books.

Picture books comprise the largest group of books studied with a total of sixty-three or 60% of the books. The second largest group is that of chapter books with thirty-four or 33% of the books. The two smallest groups are board books and short stories with five and two books or 5% and 2% respectively.

In a little more than half of the picture books and chapter books, 51% and 53% respectively, the presence of God was deemed not central to the story, with fewer than thirty-four mentions of God per 100 pages. In 60% of the board books and both or 100% of the short stories, God was considered central to the story. Short stories exhibit the highest centrality as a format with one book, *The Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories* (Robinson 1936), exhibiting a score of 191. God was deemed to be critically central in

this book, even though the word "God" is mentioned in only one field of the OCLC bibliographic record, the subject field (see Appendix F).

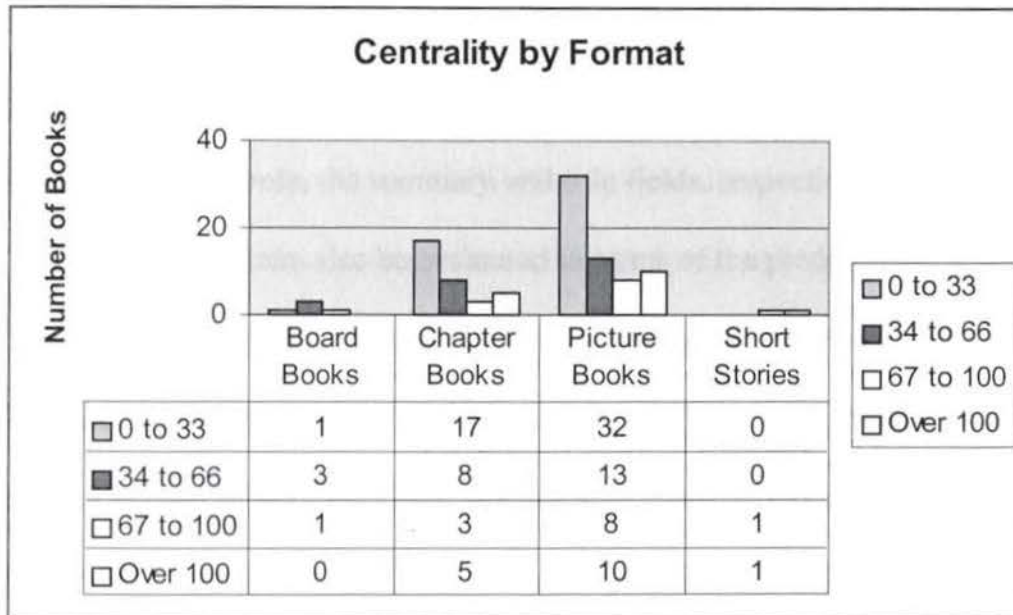


Figure 17. Centrality arranged by format.

God is mentioned in all bibliographic fields—subject, title, and summary—of *How God Got Christian into Trouble* (Wojciechowska 1984), the book with the highest centrality score. This did not, however, prove to be a clear indicator of level of centrality. The bibliographic records of seven other books mention the name God in the subject, title, and summary fields. The centrality scores for these books range from 17 for *God Is Near* (Long 1992) to 129 for *The Little Soul and the Sun: A Parable* (Walsch 1998). The centrality score for two of these books are in the 0 to 33 range, below the level of centrality. One book scores as marginally central, two books score as central, and two books as critically central.

The books with the three highest centrality scores—294, 258, 219--are chapter books with seventy-two, fifty-six, and thirty-six pages respectively. For two of the books, *The Heavenly Seven: Stories of the Mighty Archangels* (Forth 1996) and *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945), the name God was mentioned in only one field of the bibliographic records, the summary and title fields, respectively.

Centrality can also be evaluated in terms of the predominant image of God. Both books with a predominant image of God as Punisher scored 35 in the centrality analysis. The book, *Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986), is a picture book and the other book, *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975), is a chapter book. The four books with God as Passive Observer as the predominant image of God are equally divided between picture books and chapter books. The two picture books, *Where Is God?* (O'Leary and Dalton 1991) and *The King Who Wanted to See God* (Matsuura 1995), have centrality scores of 69 and 84 respectively. The two God as Passive Observer chapter books scored lower with regard to centrality. The book, *Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl* (Park 1986) has a centrality score of 14 and *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974) has a score of 48.

There is a wide range of centrality scores--0 to 163--in picture books with God as Provider as the predominant image of God. In the thirty books with scores below 34, God is not considered central to the story. The scores for eleven books measure in the 34-66 range or marginally central to the story. Seven books scored in the 67 to 100 range

and God is considered central to the story, while twelve books scored over 100 and God is critically central to the story.

Chapter books in which God as Provider is the predominant image of God exhibit a similar breakdown of levels of centrality. God is considered not central to the story in sixteen books, marginally central in five, central in three and critically central in five books. The predominant image of God in the three chapter books mentioned earlier as having the three highest centrality scores is God as Provider.

For all the board books with a predominant image of God, that image is God as Provider. These four centrality scores range from 40 to 80; in three books God is marginally central to the story and He is critically central in one book, *What Is God's Name?* (Sasso 1999). God is Provider in both books of short stories, central to the story in *Too-soon Mr. Bear, and Other Stories* (Runyon 1979) and critically central in *The Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories* (Robinson 1936).

God is at least marginally central to the story in 51% of the 103 books in the study. However, in just over one half of the picture books and chapter books, the centrality scores are below 33 and God is considered not central to the story. God is central to the story in 60% of the board books and 100% of the short stories. In all of the picture books that depict God as Provider, God is central to the story to some degree. In 57% of the chapter books with some image of God, that image is of God as Provider. In 100% of the board books and short stories with a predominant image of God as Provider, God is central or critically central to the story. The appearance of the word "God" in a

specific field of a bibliographic record does not accurately predict the level of centrality for that book.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Summary

Experts on children and childhood have determined through research that children develop a concept of and form relationships with God. The development of the God concept has its foundation in the child/parent relationship (Rizzuto 1979) and develops through various stages as the child ages and matures in thinking (Harms 1944, Fowler 1995). The infant is in a pre-stage of "Undifferentiated Faith." The child, ages two to six is in the "Intuitive-Projective" stage and the seven to thirteen-year-old is in the "Mythic-Literal" stage (Fowler 1995).

The child's concept of God is anthropomorphic. Children believe that He has attributes, behaviors, and physical features like a human (Harms 1944, Fowler 1995, Tamminen et al 1979, Vianello et al 1992, Arago-Mitjans 1965, Goldman 1964, Piaget 1969). This anthropomorphic understanding of God is also evident in the research pertaining to children's interaction with God. As the child's thinking develops, his beliefs about "divine communication [change from] material, physical and external [First

Stage]...to...non-material, non-physical and based upon an inner experience [Second Stage]” (Goldman 1964).

The God relationship is one of power/authority over the child and is linked with the child’s self esteem (Saussy 1991, 11). In fact, “Self esteem is related to all three levels of God imagery: unconscious God representations formed through the child’s interaction with her parents, ideas about God learned through socialization, and the experience of God in one’s life” (52).

Although no one may be able to determine to what extent literature might influence a particular child’s concept of God and thereby impact his self esteem, it has been proven that stories can have an impact on the reader. Children often identify with characters in the stories they read or those that are read to them (Holland 1968, Coles 1989), younger children believing that fiction characters are real (Applebee 1978). Some stories are written and/or used with the purpose of influencing children’s attitudes, beliefs, and behavior (Fuchs 1984, McColskey 1999, Tatar 1992, Rollin 1992).

Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a thematic content analysis, this study examined 103 books of fiction written for children and published from 1900 to 1999 to determine what image of God children might encounter most often in stories that are represented as having something to do with God. Titles retrieved in a search of the WorldCat database using the keywords *God*, *juvenile*, and *fiction* were combined with titles retrieved using the subject terms *God* and *fiction* to produce a possible pool of titles to be studied. All stories, available from libraries, that were

designated as fiction for children ages birth through twelve were considered for the study, including contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, and science fiction in board book, picture book, chapter book or short story format. Stories that did not refer to the Judeo-Christian God retellings of stories from the Bible, considered nonfiction, were eliminated, but fictionalized accounts of Bible stories were included. Based on the predominant operating images of God identified in research with children and adults, this study examined the image of God in stories for children as it pertained to God as (a) Provider, (b) Punisher, and (c) Passive Observer. The study also explored interaction between God and the fictional characters in these titles to determine the nature of that interaction and the centrality of God to the story.

The researcher made note of all passages that included a mention of God to identify the image or images of God. Each interaction between God and a character in a title was noted. The researcher also recorded and counted each incidence of the mention of God by name to calculate centrality of God to the story. The dates of publication were used to determine whether one or more shifts in the image of God occurred throughout the time period of the study. To test for intercoder reliability, another expert in children's literature read ten percent of the titles and recorded data to establish consistency in data collection and coding. Answers to the questions posed in Chapter I are presented here.

Research Question 1

What is the image of God that appears in the fiction literature for children? Is there a predominant image of God and, if so, what is it? Have the image or images changed throughout the time period in the study? How do the image or images of God relate to the child's developmental stage of faith development as outlined by Harms and Fowler?

Three specific images of God were identified and analyzed in this study of 103 books of children's fiction: God as Provider, God as Punisher, and God as Passive Observer. God as Provider creates, gives life, feeds and otherwise nurtures the child. He loves the child unconditionally. God as Punisher is critical, harsh, and exacting. He judges, chastises, and hurts the child. God as Passive Observer is silent and non-interactive. He does not nurture. He does not hurt (except through lack of action). He sees all and does nothing.

Predominant Image of God

According to the data analyzed, the image of God as Provider is the predominant image of God in ninety-one or 88% of the books. Some aspect of God as Provider was evident in every book that identified an image of God, even if another image of God was the predominant image. Eleven aspects of God as Provider were identified, including God as Giver, God as Creator, God Who Loves, and God as Helper, Protector, and Healer. Other aspects of God identified in the books studied were: God's Forgiveness,

God Who Requires Obedience, and God's Mercy, Grace, and Goodness. The most frequent aspect of God that appears throughout the books is God as Giver, appearing in 456 incidents in seventy-five books. In seventy-one of the books in which God as Giver appears, the predominant image of God is God as Provider. God as Giver is also present in four incidents in one book in which the predominant image of God is Punisher and in three incidents in two books in which the predominant image of God is God as Passive Observer. God as Giver is present in one incident in one book in which no predominant image of God could be identified.

God as Creator is the second most frequent image of God to appear in the books studied, appearing in 272 incidents in fifty-four books. God as Creator also appears in three incidents in one book in which God as Punisher was the predominant image of God and in four incidents in two books in which God as Passive Observer was the predominant image of God. God as Creator appears in one incident in one book in which no predominant image of God could be identified.

A young reader selecting a fiction book about God that is available from a library has a 79% chance of encountering an aspect of God as Provider somewhere in that book and an 88% chance of encountering a predominant image of God as Provider. Under the same circumstances, that reader also has a 9% chance of encountering God as Punisher and a 13% chance of encountering God as Passive Observer.

Changes in Image of God Through the Twentieth Century

As stated in Chapter 3 of this study, cataloging practices before 1986 did not allow for the distinction between fiction and nonfiction in the cataloging of juvenile literature. Only three books published before 1950 were available for the study (see Appendix F). The predominant image of God in all three of these books—*Around Old Bethany: A Story of the Adventures of Robert and Mary Davis* (Berry 1925), *The Gnat's Lifeboat and Other Stories* (Robinson 1936), and *Nothing Plus God* (Brumfield 1945)—is God as Provider.

Four of the books, or one-half of the books for which the image of God is an image other than Provider, were published in the 1970s and 1980s. Two of the four books, or fifty percent (50%) of the books published in the 1970s—*Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1974) and *Princess of the Two Lands* (Parker and Myers 1975)--have predominant images of God as Passive Observer and Punisher, respectively. Two of the sixteen books or approximately thirteen percent (13%) of the books from the 1980s—*Daniel and the Lion's Den* (Benagh 1986) and *Dear God, HELP!!!! Love, Earl* (Park 1986)--have predominant images of God as Punisher and Passive Observer, respectively.

The two other books for which the image of God is an image other than Provider—*Where Is God?* (O'Leary 1991) and *The King Who Wanted to See God* (Matsuura 1995)--were both published in the 1990s, two of the eighty or three percent

(3%) of the books published during that decade, and both have a predominant image of God as Passive Observer.

A child choosing a book about God from the books published in the 1970s and identified for this study has a fifty-fifty chance of finding a book that presents an image of God as Provider and a twenty-five percent chance of locating a book that presents God predominantly as either Punisher or Passive Observer. If selecting a book published in the 1980s, a child has an eighty-eight (88%) percent chance of locating a book about God for which the image of God is Provider. A child also has a six percent (6%) chance of locating a book about God for which the image of God presented is Punisher or Passive Observer.

Seventy- eight percent of the books analyzed in the study were published during the 1990s, the end of the twentieth century. Seventy-five of these eighty books have a predominant image of God as Provider. For thirty-two books God as Provider is the only image of God present. For another twelve books God as Provider was the only image of God identified, but there were incidents for which no image of God was evident. Therefore, in forty-four books no image other than God as Provider is evident. In thirty-one books God as provider is the predominant image of God and other images of God are also present.

In the early part of the twentieth century, the predominant image of God presented in fiction books for children was that of God as Provider with other images of God present. During the late middle period of the twentieth century God as Punisher and God

as Passive Observer emerge as predominant images in a small percentage of the books. At the end of the twentieth century, God as Provider with no other images of God present prevails in fifty-five percent of the books published in the 1990s.

The Image of God as it Pertains to the Research of Harms and Fowler

The research of Ernest Harms and James Fowler pertains to the chronological age of the child. The age of the intended reading or listening audience was available in the book and/or the bibliographic record of thirty-five books or thirty-four percent of the books studied. Based on these few incidents, it is not possible to identify a clear relationship to Harms' developmental stages. However, since Harms' stages of faith development are considered congruent with Fowler's stages of comparable ages, the following discussion applies to Harms' research as well.

Using genre as a measure of suitability for children of a particular stage of spiritual development, one can make a determination regarding compliance with Dr. Fowler's findings. Appendix D lists, by ascending age level, the books for which age level was available. The genre is also listed for each book for which a specific genre could be determined. Of the nineteen books suitable for children aged six and younger, five books or twenty-six percent are books of fantasy and thirteen or sixty-eight percent are contemporary realistic fiction or historical (realistic) fiction. Eleven of the books with a minimum age in Stage I have a maximum age in Stage II. Eight of these eleven books are also contemporary fiction.

All of the remaining sixteen books, which are for children in Stage II or above, are either contemporary realistic fiction—ten--or historical (realistic) fiction. If, in fact, genre can be used as a factor to determine how well the twentieth century fiction books about God correspond with Fowler's stages of development, then correspondence can be confirmed. Books for readers in Stage II correspond exactly in that there are no books of fantasy at this age level and readers might be able to identify with the realistic situations and relationships in the realistic fiction. There is, however, only twenty-six percent correspondence with the books for Stage I readers.

Research Question 2

How does God interact with characters in the fiction literature for children? Does the interaction coincide with Goldman's stages of Divine communication? Is this interaction active or passive in compliance with Heller's findings?

Interaction with God

In the books studied, God interacts with book characters actively and passively by means of direct external and internal communication, including both communication to and from God and spending time in God's presence. Interaction involves prayer requests, praise and thanksgiving for prayers answered, commands from God, and casual conversations. Characters spend time in God's presence conversing, traveling, visiting, eating, and attending church and school.

Divine Communication

Ronald Goldman identified certain concepts of Divine Communication during his study of children from toddlers to young adults (Goldman 1964). Children under the age of eight believe that anyone standing nearby will be able to hear God's voice because He speaks as a man does, externally. Older children, ages eight to twelve or thirteen, believe that God speaks internally, to the inward being and/or to holy people. The paucity of data eliminates the possibility of a reasonable conclusion concerning the degree to which the books about God coincide with Goldman's findings.

Active and Passive Interaction

David Heller's research with children included an examination of interaction with God. Gender proved to be a significant indicator of a child's perception of God and the nature of interaction with Him, passivity being associated with girls and activity with boys (Heller 1986, 57-70). Interaction with God in books with male protagonists complies with Heller's research regarding male activity and interaction with God by two to one. Interaction with God in books with female protagonists does not comply with Heller's research and is, in fact, in direct opposition with more than three times as many active interactions as passive interactions with God.

Research Question 3

How central is God to the story? God is central to the story to some degree in half

of the 103 books in the study. The level of centrality of God to the story is greatest in the board books and short stories, especially those in which the predominant image of God is Provider. This is logical since board books and short stories would have a smaller scope and would more likely focus on a single subject, while chapter books are much more complex and could have several topics that would be considered central to the story.

Conclusions

The research of three experts on children--Dr. Coles, Dr Rizzuto, and Carroll Saussy, cited earlier in this study, suggest that a child's image of God might be associated with a child's emotional well-being. Saussy goes so far as to relate the child's self esteem to the child's image of God on all levels (Saussy 1991, 18, 47, 52). Her concern was for a God who punished or passively observed characters in stories considering the possibility that children might identify themselves with the story characters and thereby with the actions of God towards those characters. Saussy specifically expressed concern regarding the desecration of a loving God (Saussy 1991, 3).

The predominant image of God identified in the 103 books in this study is that of God as Provider. In fact, except for a few titles published in the 1970s and 1980s, the overwhelming image of God identified in these books was God as Provider. One aspect of God as Provider that was evident was that of God Who Loves. One might argue that the image of God as Giver, Helper and Protector is consistent with the image of God Who Loves, i.e. He gives, helps, and protects because of His love for the individual story

characters. The results of this study indicate that the fictional literature of the twentieth century affirms the God of Love that experts deem so crucial to the child's self esteem and general well-being.

The fiction literature for children, as represented by the titles in this study, does not confirm all of the research findings pertaining to the child's perception of interaction with God. Although the data collected confirms David Heller's research concerning the male protagonists and boys' perceptions of active interaction, the data concerning females and passive interaction does not. Girls reading the books in this study will not see reflected in the female characters the type of passive interaction that Heller claims they associate with their own interactions with God. If Heller's findings are still accurate, young female readers may be confused or disappointed by the types of interactions they encounter in the literature. Several sociological changes regarding gender roles and expectations have occurred since 1986 and Heller's findings may not be valid for female readers in the twenty-first century.

According to the results of this study, children and adults selecting books about God written for children may be misled by the appearance of the word "God" in the bibliographic records of the books they select. The appearance of the word "God" in a specific field of a bibliographic record did not accurately predict the level of centrality for that book.

Implications for Parents, Teachers, and Librarians

Parents, teachers, and librarians seeking to build collections of children's materials that pertain to God will most likely be hindered by the fact that cataloging practices did not differentiate between fiction and nonfiction for children's literature through most of the twentieth century. Furthermore, the bibliographic records cannot be relied upon as accurate indicators of the centrality of God to a particular story. Selecting materials in which God is an integral part of the story will not be possible using bibliographic records as a guide.

The figures and appendices included in this study can be used as aids for collection development. Specific aspects of God's image have been identified by number of occurrences per title. The centrality of God to the story and the nature of the interaction between God and story characters have been identified. The format, genre and age of the intended audience have been included whenever that information was available. Also, the large number of books that bear publication dates from the late 1990s increases the probability of locating these materials for purchase as well as for loan from the appropriate institutions.

Recommendations for Further Research

Before 1986, books for children were cataloged as juvenile literature without differentiation between fiction and nonfiction. The initial search for titles uncovered over 1700 books published during the 1900s that had to do with God. A close and in-depth

examination of the 1700 titles indexed under God and juvenile literature should identify more titles published before 1986. A study of a larger sample of books will unearth new information just as a study involving child readers and their analysis of these books might identify different attributes and aspects of God's character reflected in other images of God.

The focus of this study has been on books for children ages birth to twelve, based upon research pertaining to the child's concept of and personal relationship with God. According to scientists and theologians alike, the adolescent's concept of God and his resulting relationship with God differ from those of the child. Confusion, doubt, and unbelief often beset the adolescent faith (Stewart 1967, 61-63). The adolescent's maturation and identity issues can greatly impact his childhood beliefs and prior relationship with God and may cause the adolescent to question God's very existence (Shelton 1983, 164). A study of young adult fiction that pertains to God and subsequent comparison of findings to those of this study might prove to be enlightening. Is there a predominant image of God that emerges in the fiction for young adults? Does it coincide with the image of God identified for children? Are the same aspects and attributes of God identified?

For centuries Christian theologians have debated the nature of God as it pertains to the Godhead. Is God one entity--God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit? Perhaps God is an absolute Trinity consisting of three separate entities, each with a different role and responsibility--God as Father and Creator, greatest of the three; Jesus as

His Son, separate, subordinate, and subject to the Father; and the Holy Spirit, one who comforts God's creation and protects Jesus' works and words in the earth. Some Christian denominations teach that God is like a family unit comprised of a father, a son, and two others--the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mother (Armstrong 1994, Johnstone 1968, 253-4).

In his field research with children Dr. Robert Coles found that children have different ways of understanding as well (Coles 1990). Some children believe that God and Jesus are separate and that God sent Jesus to earth to save man from his sin. Others believe that, through His desire to save His creation, God became Jesus so that He could come to earth Himself. Dr. Coles quotes one nine-year-old girl, "'I don't understand how God can be God, and then He's Jesus. I know He wanted to come here and visit, and He wanted to show us that you can be saved if you follow Him, where He wants you to go. But then He became God again and I don't know how'" (Coles 1990, 205).

At times story characters in the books analyzed in this study speak of God and Jesus in the same context and/or interchangeably. How is Jesus, called the "image of God" in II Corinthians 4:4, portrayed in the fiction literature for children and young adults? Does Jesus possess the same or similar attributes as God or does Jesus fulfill a different role and function in the literature, such as the role of friend that Coles identified (Coles 1990, 117-119, 204-205)? A study of the image or role of Jesus in the fiction literature for children and young adults might help to complete the portrait of God that was begun in the current study.

One way that God communicates and otherwise interacts with His earthly creation is through angels. Angels have appeared as messengers, guardians, guides, and protectors in several of the books in this study and, even though they travel to earth to perform God's commands, angels reside in heaven with God. Heaven has been mentioned in at least ten percent of the books studied. The framework and activities of heaven, as God's place of residence, might shed some insight on the nature of God in stories for children. David Elkind suggested a need for further research on children's images of angels, heaven and the devil (Elkind 1971). Further research on these images in literature for children and young adults might also prove to be a worthwhile endeavor.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF BOOKS STUDIED

ARRANGED BY TITLE

List of Books Studied by Title		
Title	Author	Date
All the Way to God	Giuliano, Katie	1999
And Then There Were Dinosaurs	Steinberg, Sari	1993
Are You There God, It's Me, Margaret	Blume, Judy	1974
Around Old Bethany	Berry, R. L.	1925
Baby in the Laundry Basket: A Christmas	Carlyle, Linda	1994
Before I Was a Kid	Spears-Stewart, Reta	1991
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God	Jenkins, John	1997
Berenstain Bears and the Big Question	Berenstain, Stan & Jan	1999
Berries for the Queen: A Book About Patience	Noonan, Janet and Jacque	1993
Better Tomorrow	Harrison, Dorothy Lilja	1997
Bridge to Cutter Gap	Marshall, Catherine	1995
Bright Christmas: An Angel Remembers	Clements, Andrew	1996
Can We See God?	Ter Pooten, Carolyn	1992
Carrie and the Crazy Quilt	Liebig, Nelda Johnson	1996
Daddy, Is There Really a God?	Morris, John David	1997
Daddy, Where Is God?	Barsch, Jim	1997
Daniel and the Lion's Den	Benagh, Christine L.	1986
Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl	Park, Barbara	1986
Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?	Carlstrom, Nancy White	1993
Dr. Drabble's Phenomenal Antigravity Dust machine	Brouwer, Sigmund	1991
Dream Quilt	Ryan, Celeste	1999
Emma & Mommy Talk to God	Williamson, Marianne	1996
Escape From Egypt	Levitin, Sonia	1994
Families of God	Swartz, Susan Swanson	1994
Follow the King	Keane, Glen	1995
Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen	Williamson, Denise J.	1990
Gnat's Lifeboat & Other Stories	Robinson, Charles E.	1936
Go Away, Dark Night	Higgs, Liz Curtis	1998
God and Joseph and Me	Carlyle, Linda Porter	1992
God Gives Me Everything	Hubbard, Patricia	1994
God Gives Us Beaches	Fischer, Jean	1999
God Gives Us Food	Fischer, Jean	1999
God is Everywhere: The Good News	Mock, Dorothy	1993
God is Near	Long, Kathy	1992
God is Never Too Busy To Listen!	Burgess, Beverly Capps	1987
God Made Everything Just Right	Bigler, Karen	1990
God Made Hugs	Conan, Sally Anne	1994
Good Night, Little One	Bjorkman, Steve	1999

Title	Author	Date
Heavenly Seven: Stories of The Mighty Archangels	Forth, Melissa Deal	1996
How God got Christian into Trouble	Wojciechowska, Maia	1984
Humpy Grumpy Camel	Tangvald, Christine H.	1995
I Like to Talk to God	Nicola, Karen	1995
I Love My Daddy!	Rich, Scharlotte	1995
I Wonder Who Hung the Moon in the Sky	Hodgson, Mona Gansberg	1999
In Your Dreams (Sierra Jensen Series #2)	Gunn, Robin Jones	1996
Jessica Giraffe's Long Neck	Tangvald, Christine H.	1998
Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle	Stahl, Hilda	1992
King Who Wanted to See God	Matsuura, Richard & Ruth	1995
King Without a Shadow	Sproul, R. C.	1996
Lassie: Treasure At Eagle Mountain	Bray, Marian Flamdrick	1995
Little Soul & the Sun: A Parable	Walsch, Neale Donald	1998
Making Memories	Oke, Janette	1999
Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale	Keens-Douglas, Richardo	1999
Mayflower Secret: Gov. Bradford	Jackson, Dave & Neta	1998
Miracle of the Potato Latkes	Penn, Malka	1994
My Angel Named Herman	Towns, Elmer L.	1998
My Buddy God	Conte, Michael	1996
My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord	Myers, Bill	1993
My Life as a Smashed Burrito	Myers, Bill	1993
My Mom is Dying	McNamara, Jill W.	1994
My Mr. T Doll	Graeber, Charlotte	1985
Nicanor's Gate	Kimmel, Eric A.	1979
No Friends for Hannah	Stahl, Hilda	1992
Noah's Trees	Le Tord, Bijou	1999
Nothing Plus God	Brumfield, J. C.	1945
Old Turtle	Wood, Douglas	1994
Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets	Levene, Nancy Simpson	1987
Perfect Hiding Place	Campion, Mike & Kathy	1982
Polka Dots, Stripes, Humps 'n Hatracks	Hollingsworth, Mary	1990
Princess of the Two Lands	Parker, Lois M. and Bill Myers	1975
Pumpkin Patch Parable	Higgs, Liz Curtis	1995
Race for Freedom	Johnson, Lois Walfrid	1996
Remember the Secret	Kubler-Ross, Elizabeth	1982
Road to Damietta	O'Dell, Scott	1985
Roxie and the Red Rose Mystery	Stahl, Hilda	1992
Rustlers of Panther Gap	Morris, Gilbert	1994
Shadows and Shining Lights	Hibbard, Ann	1990
Shadows on Stoney Creek	Luttrell, Wanda	1997

Title	Author	Date
Shoelaces & Brussell Sprouts	Levene, Nancy Simpson	1987
Special Gift to God	Theodore, Iakovina	1986
Special Gifts: In Search of Love	Olson, Dennis L.	1999
Stormy Night	Baker, Sanna Anderson	1991
Talk to God . . . I'll Get the Message	Geller, Norman	1983
T-Bone Trouble	Levene, Nancy Simpson	1990
Tent: A Parable in One Sitting	Paulsen, Gary	1995
Thank God for Sunshine	Williams, Vereca R.	1998
Too-soon Mr. Bear, and other Stories	Runyon, Catherine	1979
Tree Tall to the Rescue	Evans, Shirlee	1987
Uncle Noah's Big Boat	Tsurumi, Yuki	1999
Unplanned Voyage	Davoll, Barbara	1999
Waldo, Tell Me About God	Wilhelm, Hans	1988
Whaddayamean	Burningham, John	1999
What a Truly Cool World	Lester, Julius	1999
What is God's Name?	Sasso, Sandy Eisenberg	1999
When God first Made the Animals	Subramanyan, K. G.	1985
When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West	Graham, Christine	1997
Where Does God Live?	Bea, Holly	1997
Where Does God Sleep, Momma?	Bestmann, Nancy	1996
Where is God?	O'Leary, Daniel	1991
White Pony: A Tale of Great Love	Byrd, Sandra	1999
Who Made the Wild Woods?	Rich, Scharlotte	1999
Whose Nose? Whose Toes?	Reinertson, Debbie	1999
Wood Stork Named Warren: A Fable	Breslin, Nancy S.	1991

APPENDIX B

LIST OF BOOKS STUDIED ARRANGED BY AUTHOR

- Baker, Sanna Anderson. 1991. *Stormy night*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
- Barsch, Jim. 1997. *Daddy, where is God?* St. Petersburg, FL: TrueLove Publishing.
- Bea, Holly. 1997. *Where does God live?* Tiburion, CA: H.J. Kramer: Starseed.
- Benagh, Christine L. 1986. *Daniel and the lion's den*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Berenstain, Stan, and Jan Berenstain. 1999. *The Berenstain bears and the big question*. New York: Random House.
- Berry, R. L. 1925. *Around Old Bethany: A story of the adventures of Robert and Mary Davis*. Anderson, IN: Gospel Trumpet Company.
- Bestmann, Nancy. 1996. *Where does God sleep, Momma?* [United States]: College Press.
- Bigler, Karen. 1990. *God made everything just right*. Elgin, IL: Chariot Books.
- Bjorkman, Steve. 1999. *Good night, little one*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press.
- Blume, Judy. 1974. *Are you there, God? It's me, Margaret*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Bradbury Press.
- Bray, Marian Flamdrick. 1995. *Lassie: Treasure at Eagle Mountain*. Elgin, IL: Chariot Books.
- Breslin, Nancy S. 1991. *A wood stork named Warren: A fable*. ST. Petersburg Beach, FL: Prokaryote.
- Brouwer, Sigmund, and Wayne Davidson. 1991. *Dr. Drabble's Antigravity Dust Machine*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- Brumfield, J. C. 1945. *Nothing plus God*. Napparene, IN: Evangel Press.
- Burgess, Beverly Capps. 1987. *God is never too busy to listen!* Broken Arrow, OK: Burgess Publishing.
- Burningham, John. 1999 *Whaddayamean*. New York: Crown.
- Byrd, Sandra. 1999. *The white pony: A tale of great love*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press.
- Campion, Mike, and Kathy Campion. 1982. *The perfect hiding place*. Chicago: Moody Press.

- Carlstrom, Nancy White. 1993. *Does God know how to tie shoes?* Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans.
- Carlyle, Linda. 1994. *Baby in the laundry basket: A Christmas story.* Boise ID: Pacific Press Pub. Association.
- Carlyle, Linda Porter. 1992. *God and Joseph and me.* Boise ID: Pacific Press Pub. Association.
- Clements, Andrew. 1996. *Bright Christmas: An angel remembers.* New York: Clarion Books.
- Conan, Sally Anne. 1994. *God made hugs.* Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.
- Conte, Michael. 1996. *My buddy God.* Smock, PA: ConVoy.
- Davoll, Barbara. 1999. *The unplanned voyage.* Chicago: Moody Press.
- Evans, Shirlee. 1987. *Tree Tall to the Rescue.* Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.
- Fischer, Jean. 1999a. *God gives us beaches.* Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing.
- _____. 1999b. *God gives us food.* Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing.
- Forth, Melissa Deal. 1996. *The heavenly seven: Stories of the mighty Archangels.* Kansas City, MO: Andrews & McMeel.
- Geller, Norman. 1983. *Talk to God...I'll get the message.* Norman Geller.
- Giuliano, Katie. 1999. *All the way to God.* New York: Golden Books.
- Graeber, Charlotte. 1985. *My Mr. T doll.* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Graham, Christine. 1997. *When pioneer wagons rumbled west.* Salt Lake City, UT: Shadow Mountain.
- Gunn, Robin Jones. 1996. *In your dreams.* Sierra Jensen Series #2. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House.
- Harrison, Dorothy Lilja. 1997. *A better tomorrow?* Colorado Springs, CO: ChariotVictor Books.
- Hibbard, Ann. 1990. *Shadows and Shining Lights.* St. Louis, MO: Focus on the Family.
- Higgs, Liz Curtis. 1998. *Go away, dark night.* Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press.

- _____. 1995. *The pumpkin patch parable*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Hodgson, Mona Gansberg. 1999. *I wonder who hung the moon in the sky*. Concordia Pub. House.
- Hollingsworth, Mary. 1990. *Polka dots, stripes, humps 'n hatracks*. Ft. Worth, TX: Brownlow.
- Hubbard, Patricia. 1994. *God gives me everything*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.
- Jackson, Dave and Neta Jackson. 1998. *The Mayflower secret: Governor Bradford*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House.
- Jenkins, John. 1997. *Beneath the sky of an angry God*. Manassas, VA: Reconciliation Press.
- Johnson, Lois Walfrid. 1996. *Race for freedom*. The Riverboat Adventures #2 Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House.
- Keane, Glen. 1995. *Follow the king: A first lesson in trust*. First Adam Raccoon series. [Elgin, IL]: Chariot Books.
- Keens-Douglas, Richardo. 1999. *Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean tale*. New York: Crocodile Books.
- Kimmel, Eric A. 1979. *Nicanor's Gate*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America.
- Kübler-Ross, Elizabeth. 1982. *Remember the Secret*. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts.
- Le Tord, Bijou. 1999. *Noah's trees*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Lester, Julius. 1999. *What a truly cool world*. New York: Scholastic.
- Levene, Nancy Simpson. 1987a. *Peanut butter and jelly secrets*. Elgin, IL: ChariotVictor Books.
- _____. 1987b. *Shoelaces & brussell sprouts*. Elgin, IL: ChariotVictor Books.
- _____. 1987c. *T-Bone trouble*. Elgin, IL: ChariotVictor Books.
- Levitin, Sonia. 1994. *Escape from Egypt*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Liebig, Nelda Johnson. 1996. *Carrie and the crazy quilt*. Mount Horeb, WI: Midwest Traditions.

- Long, Kathy. 1992. *God is near*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.
- Luttrell, Wanda. 1997. *Shadows on Stoney Creek*. Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Books.
- Marshall, Catherine. 1995. *The bridge to Cutter Gap*. Dallas: Word Kids.
- Matsuura, Richard, and Ruth Matsuura. 1995. *The king who wanted to see God*. Hilo, HI: Orchid Isle Pub.
- McNamara, Jill W. 1994. *My mom is dying*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.
- Mock, Dorothy. 1993. *God is everywhere: The good news kids learn about self-control*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publications.
- Morris, Gilbert. 1994. *The rustlers of Panther Gap*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
- Morris, John David. 1997. *Daddy, is there really a God?* Master Books.
- Myers, Bill. 1993a. *My Life as a broken bungee cord*. Dallas: Word.
- _____. 1993a. *My Life as a smashed burrito with extra hot sauce*. Dallas: Word.
- Nicola, Karen. 1995. *I like to talk to God*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association.
- Noonan, Janet, and Jacquelyn Calvert. 1993. *Berries for the queen: A book about patience*. Elgin, IL: Chariot Books.
- O'Dell, Scott. 1985. *The road to Damietta*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Oke, Janette. 1999. *Making memories*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Backyard.
- O'Leary, Daniel, and Kathleen Dalton. 1991. *Where is God?* New York: Paulist Press.
- Olson, Dennis L. 1999. *Special gifts: In search of love*. NorthWord Press.
- Park, Barbara. 1986. *Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl*. New York, Knopf.
- Parker, Lois M., and Bill Myers. 1975. *Princess of the two lands*. Nashville: Southern Pub. Association

- Paulsen, Gary. 1995. *The tent: A parable in one sitting*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Penn, Malka. 1994. *The miracle of the potato latkes: A Hanukkah story*. New York: Holiday House.
- Reinertson, Debbie. 1999. *Whose nose? Whose toes?*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.
- Rich, Scharlotte. 1995. *I love my daddy!* Sisters, OR: Gold 'n Honey.
- _____. 1999. *Who made the wild woods?* Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press.
- Robinson, Charles Elmo, and Daisy K. Robinson. 1936. *The gnat's lifeboat & other stories*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House.
- Runyon, Catherine. 1979. *Too-soon, Mr. Bear, and other stories*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Ryan, Celeste. 1999. *The dream quilt*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press.
- Sasso, Sandy Eisenberg. 1999. *What is God's name?* Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Pub.
- Spears-Stewart, Reta. 1991. *Before I was a kid*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press.
- Sproul, R. C. 1996. *The king without a shadow*. Elgin, IL: Chariot Books.
- Stahl, Hilda. 1992a. *Kathy's babysitting hassle*. Wheaton, IL: Crossways Books.
- _____. 1992b. *No friends for Hannah*. Wheaton, IL: Crossways Books.
- _____. 1992c. *Roxie and the red rose mystery*. Wheaton, IL: Crossways Books.
- Steinberg, Sari. 1993. *...And then there were dinosaurs*. [St. Helier, Jersey]: Yellow Brick Road.
- Subramanyan, K. G. 1985. *When God first made the animals*. Calcutta: Seagull Books.
- Swartz, Susan Swanson. 1994. *Families of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.
- Tangvald, Christine Harder. 1995. *The humpy grumpy camel*. Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing Co.
- _____. 1998. *Jessica Giraffe's long neck*. Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing Co.

- Ter Pooten, Carolyn. 1992. *Can we see God?* Nashville, TN: Winston-Derek.
- Theodore, Iakovina. 1986. *A special gift to God.* Westchester, IL: Amnos Ministries.
- Towns, Elmer L. 1998. *My angel named Herman.* Nashville: Tommy Nelson.
- Tsurumi, Yuki. 1999. *Uncle Noah's big boat.* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press.
- Walsch, Neale Donald, and Frank Walsch. 1998. *The little soul & the sun: A children's parable adapted from conversations with God.* Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Pub.
- Wilhelm, Hans. 1988. *Waldo, tell me about God.* New York: The Regina Press.
- Williams, Vereca R. 1998. *Thank God for Sunshine.* Springfield, MO: Barnabas Publishing Services.
- Williamson, Denise J. 1990. *The forbidden gates: A story of Stephen, the first martyr.* Brentwood, TN: Wolgewuth & Hyatt.
- Williamson, Marianne. 1996. *Emma and mommy talk to God.* New York: HarperCollins.
- Wojciechowska, Maia. 1984. *How God got Christian into trouble.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Wood, Douglas. 1994. *Old Turtle.* Duluth, MN: Pfeifer-Hamilton.

APPENDIX C

DATA COLLECTION SHEET

Image of God Book Data Collection Sheet

Title _____	Image of God _____
Author(s) _____	
Publisher _____	Copyright date _____
Subject headings _____	Number of pages _____
Genre _____	Format _____
Interaction: Active ___/Passive ___/None ___	
Gender of protagonist _____	Reading interest/ level _____
Centrality to story _____	

Incident # 1	Page # _____	Incident # 2	Page # _____
Text _____		Text _____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
Image of God _____		Image of God _____	
Rationale _____		Rationale _____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	

Incident # 3	Page # _____	Incident # 4	Page # _____
Text _____		Text _____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
Image of God _____		Image of God _____	
Rationale _____		Rationale _____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	

Image of God Book Data Collection Sheet
continued

Title of Book _____	
Author(s) _____	
Publisher _____	Copyright date _____

Incident # _____ Page # _____	Incident # _____ Page # _____
Text _____	Text _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Image of God _____	Image of God _____
Rationale _____	Rationale _____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Incident # _____ Page # _____	Incident # _____ Page # _____
Text _____	Text _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Image of God _____	Image of God _____
Rationale _____	Rationale _____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Image of God Data Collection Sheet
Centrality to Story

Title of Book _____
Author(s) _____
Publisher _____ Copyright date _____ Centrality _____

[illegible]

APPENDIX D

AGE OF AUDIENCE BY GENRE

Age of Audience by Genre		Interest	Level	Reading
Title	Genre	From age	To age	Level
I Like to Talk to God	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	1	5	
Polka Dots, Stripes, Humps 'n Hatracks	Fantasy	2	7	
Baby in the Laundry Basket: A Christmas	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	3	5	
God Gives Us Beaches	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	3	5	Preschool
God Gives Us Food	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	3	5	Preschool
Humpy Grumpy Camel	Fantasy	3	5	
Jessica's Giraffe's Long Neck	Fantasy	3	5	
What is God's Name?		3	5	Preschool
Emma & Mommy Talk to God	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	3	7	
Noah's Trees	Historical Fiction	4	6	
Berries for the Queen: A Book About Patience	Fantasy	4	7	
Families of God	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	4	7	
God Gives Me Everything	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	4	7	
God is Near	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	4	7	
God Made Hugs	Cont Real Fiction	4	7	
I Wonder Who Hung the Moon in the Sky	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	4	7	
Miracle of the Potato Latkes	Historical Fiction	4	8	

Age of Audience by Genre		Interest	Level	Reading
Title	Genre	From age	To age	Level
Shadows and Shining Lights	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	5	9	
Little Soul & the Sun: A Parable	Fantasy	6	12	
Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	7	10	Grade 3
Shoelaces & Brussell Sprouts	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	7	10	Grade 3
T-Bone Trouble	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	7	10	Grade 3
Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	7	11	
Lassie: Treasure At Eagle Mountain	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	8	12	
Mayflower Secret: Gov. Bradford	Historical Fiction	8	12	
Nothing Plus God	Historical Fiction	8	12	
Race for Freedom	Historical Fiction	8	13	
No Friends for Hannah	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	9	12	
Roxie and the Red Rose Mystery	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	9	12	
Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	9	12	
Better Tomorrow	Historical Fiction	10		
Shadows on Stoney Creek	Historical Fiction	10		

Age of Audience by Genre		Interest	Level	Reading
Title	Genre	From age	To age	Level
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God	Historical Fiction	10	13	5 to 8
Rustlers of Panther Gap	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	10	14	
In Your Dreams (Sierra Jensen Series #2)	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	12	16	

APPENDIX E

CENTRALITY BY FORMAT

Title	Image	Centrality	God Mentioned In		
		Score	Subject	Title	Sum
Board Books					
Follow the King	None	0	No	Yes	No
God Gives Us Beaches	Provider	40	No	Yes	Yes
God Gives Us Food	Provider	40	No	Yes	Yes
Whose Nose? Whose Toes?	Provider	50	Yes	No	Yes
What is God's Name?	Provider	80	Yes	Yes	No
Chapter Books					
Shoelaces & Brussell Sprouts	Provider	3	No	No	Yes
Roxie and the Red Rose Mystery	Provider	5	No	No	Yes
T-Bone Trouble	Provider	7	No	No	Yes
Better Tomorrow	Provider	8	No	No	Yes
In Your Dreams (Sierra Jensen Series #2)	Provider	9	No	No	Yes
Thank God for Sunshine	Provider	9	No	Yes	No
No Friends for Hannah	Provider	9	No	No	Yes
My Life as a Smashed Burrito	Provider	10	No	No	Yes
Rustlers of Panther Gap	Provider	10	No	No	Yes
Bridge to Cutter Gap	Provider	12	No	No	Yes
Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle	Provider	12	No	No	Yes
Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl	Passive Ob	14	No	Yes	No
Race for Freedom	Provider	22	No	No	Yes
Lassie: Treasure At Eagle Mountain	Provider	23	No	No	Yes
Mayflower Secret: Gov. Bradford	Provider	24	No	No	Yes
My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord	Provider	26	No	No	Yes
Shadows on Stoney Creek	Provider	33	No	No	Yes
Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets	Provider	34	No	No	Yes
Princess of the Two Lands	Punisher	35	No	No	Yes
Road to Damietta	Provider	38	No	No	Yes
Carrie and the Crazy Quilt	Provider	47	No	No	Yes
Are You There God, It's Me, Margaret	Passive Ob	48	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tent: A Parable in One Sitting	Provider	55	No	No	Yes
Escape From Egypt	Provider	57	No	No	Yes
Tree Tall to the Rescue	Provider	66	No	No	Yes
Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen	Provider	69	No	No	Yes
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God	Provider	77	No	Yes	No
My Angel Named Herman	Provider	93	Yes	No	Yes
Wood Stork Named Warren: A Fable	Provider	131	No	Yes	No
Around Old Bethany	Provider	156	Yes	No	No

		Centrality	God Mentioned In		
Title	Image	Score	Subject	Title	Sum
Nothing Plus God	Provider	219	No	Yes	No
Heavenly Seven: Mighty Archangels	Provider	258	No	No	Yes
How God got Christian into Trouble	Provider	294	Yes	Yes	Yes
Picture Books					
Special Gifts: In Search of Love	None	0	Yes	No	No
Shadows and Shining Lights	Provider	3	No	No	Yes
Bright Christmas: An Angel Remembers	Provider	4	No	No	Yes
Pumpkin Patch Parable	Provider	4	No	No	Yes
Baby in the Laundry Basket: A Christmas	Provider	4	Yes	No	No
My Mr. T Doll	Provider	4	No	No	Yes
Berries for the Queen: A Book About Patience	Provider	7	No	No	Yes
White Pony: A Tale of Great Love	Provider	7	No	No	Yes
When God first Made the Animals	Provider	8	No	Yes	No
I Love My Daddy!	Provider	9	Yes	No	No
All the Way to God	Provider	13	Yes	Yes	No
Unplanned Voyage	Provider	14	No	No	Yes
Noah's Trees	Provider	14	No	No	Yes
Making Memories	Provider	16	No	No	Yes
Dream Quilt	Provider	16	Yes	No	Yes
God is Near	Provider	17	Yes	Yes	Yes
Polka Dots, Stripes, Humps 'n Hatracks	Provider	17	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jessica's Giraffe's Long Neck	Provider	17	No	No	Yes
Nicanor's Gate	None	18	No	No	Yes
Can We See God?	Provider	18	Yes	Yes	No
Where Does God Sleep, Momma?	Provider	19	Yes	Yes	No
When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West	Provider	19	No	No	Yes
Uncle Noah's Big Boat	Provider	20	No	No	Yes
Families of God	Provider	24	No	Yes	No
King Without a Shadow	Provider	24	Yes	No	Yes
Humpy Grumpy Camel	Provider	26	No	No	Yes
Before I Was a Kid	Provider	27	Yes	No	No
God Gives Me Everything	Provider	28	Yes	Yes	Yes
God Made Hugs	Provider	29	No	Yes	No
Miracle of the Potato Latkes	Provider	30	No	No	Yes
Perfect Hiding Place	Provider	30	Yes	No	Yes
My Buddy God	Provider	32	Yes	Yes	No
Daniel and the Lion's Den	Punisher	35	No	No	Yes
Remember the Secret	Provider	37	No	No	Yes
Berenstain Bears and the Big Question	Provider	38	Yes	No	Yes

Title	Image	Centrality Score	God Mentioned In		
			Subject	Title	Sum
And Then There Were Dinosaurs	Provider	43	No	No	Yes
God is Never Too Busy To Listen!	Provider	48	Yes	Yes	No
God is Everywhere: The Good News	Provider	48	No	Yes	Yes
Go Away, Dark Night	Provider	50	Yes	No	Yes
Stormy Night	Provider	50	Yes	No	No
Good Night, Little One	Provider	53	Yes	No	No
Old Turtle	None	56	Yes	No	Yes
God and Joseph and Me	Provider	59	Yes	Yes	No
Whaddayamean	Provider	62	Yes	No	Yes
Dr. Drabble's Phenomenal Antigravity Dust Machine	Provider	65	Yes	Yes	No
My Mom is Dying	Provider	67	No	No	Yes
Where is God?	Passive Ob	69	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emma & Mommy Talk to God	Provider	71	Yes	Yes	Yes
Who Made the Wild Woods?	Provider	78	Yes	No	No
King Who Wanted to See God	Passive Ob	84	Yes	Yes	No
Waldo, Tell Me About God	Provider	86			
Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale	Provider	90	No	Yes	No
Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?	Provider	96	Yes	Yes	Yes
Daddy, Where Is God?	Provider	106	Yes	Yes	No
Talk to God . . . I'll Get the Message	Provider	109	No	Yes	No
I Wonder Who Hung the Moon in the Sky	Provider	113	Yes	No	Yes
Daddy, Is There Really a God?	Provider	119	Yes	Yes	No
God Made Everything Just Right	Provider	120	Yes	Yes	No
Where Does God Live?	Provider	123	Yes	Yes	Yes
Little Soul & the Sun: A Parable	Provider	129	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special Gift to God	Provider	144	No	Yes	Yes
What a Truly Cool World	Provider	162	Yes	No	Yes
I Like to Talk to God	Provider	163	No	Yes	No
Short Stories					
Gnat's Lifeboat & Other Stories	Provider	191	No	No	Yes
Too-soon Mr. Bear, and other Stories	Provider	71	Yes	No	Yes

APPENDIX F

IMAGE OF GOD BY YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Image of God by Year		
Title	Image	Date
Around Old Bethany	Provider w/ Others	1925
Gnat's Lifeboat & Other Stories	Provider w/ Others	1936
Nothing Plus God	Provider w/ Others	1945
Are You There God, It's Me, Margaret	Passive Observer	1974
Princess of the Two Lands	Punisher	1975
Nicanor's Gate	None	1979
Too-soon Mr. Bear, and other Stories	Provider w/ Others	1979
Perfect Hiding Place	Provider	1982
Remember the Secret	Provider w/ NA	1982
Talk to God . . . I'll Get the Message	Provider w/ Others	1983
How God got Christian into Trouble	Provider w/ Others	1984
My Mr. T Doll	Provider	1985
Road to Damietta	Provider w/ Others	1985
When God first Made the Animals	Provider	1985
Daniel and the Lion's Den	Punisher	1986
Dear God, HELP!!! Love, Earl	Passive Ob	1986
Special Gift to God	Provider w/ NA	1986
God is Never Too Busy To Listen!	Provider w/ NA	1987
Peanut Butter and Jelly Secrets	Provider w/ Others	1987
Shoelaces & Brussell Sprouts	Provider w/ Others	1987
T-Bone Trouble	Provider	1987
Tree Tall to the Rescue	Provider w/ Others	1987
Waldo, Tell Me About God	Provider w/ NA	1988
Forbidden Gates: A Story of Stephen	Provider w/ Others	1990
God Made Everything Just Right	Provider	1990
Polka Dots, Stripes, Humps 'n Hatracks	Provider	1990
Shadows and Shining Lights	Provider	1990

Image of God by Year		
Title	Image	Date
Dr. Drabble's Phenomenal Antigravity Dust Machine	Provider w/ Others	1991
Stormy Night	Provider w/ NA	1991
Where is God?	Passive Observer	1991
Wood Stork Named Warren: A Fable	Provider w/ Others	1991
Can We See God?	Provider w/ NA	1992
God and Joseph and Me	Provider w/ NA	1992
God is Near	Provider	1992
Kathy's Baby-sitting Hassle	Provider w/ Others	1992
No Friends for Hannah	Provider	1992
Roxie and the Red Rose Mystery	Provider	1992
And Then There Were Dinosaurs	Provider w/ Others	1993
Berries for the Queen: A Book About Patience	Provider	1993
Does God Know How to Tie Shoes?	Provider w/ Others	1993
God is Everywhere: The Good News	Provider w/ Others	1993
My Life as a Broken Bungee Cord	Provider w/ Others	1993
My Life as a Smashed Burrito	Provider	1993
Baby in the Laundry Basket: A Christmas	Provider	1994
Escape From Egypt	Provider w/ Others	1994
Families of God	Provider w/ NA	1994
God Gives Me Everything	Provider	1994
God Made Hugs	Provider	1994
Miracle of the Potato Latkes	Provider	1994
My Mom is Dying	Provider w/ Others	1994
Old Turtle	None	1994
Rustlers of Panther Gap	Provider w/ Others	1994
Bridge to Cutter Gap	Provider w/ Others	1995
Follow the King	None	1995
Humpy Grumpy Camel	Provider	1995
I Like to Talk to God	Provider w/ Others	1995

Image of God by Year		
Title	Image	Date
King Who Wanted to See God	Passive Observer	1995
Lassie: Treasure At Eagle Mountain	Provider w/ Others	1995
Pumpkin Patch Parable	Provider	1995
Tent: A Parable in One Sitting	Provider w/ Others	1995
Bright Christmas: An Angel Remembers	Provider	1996
Carrie and the Crazy Quilt	Provider w/Others	1996
Emma & Mommy Talk to God	Provider	1996
Heavenly Seven: Mighty Archangels	Provider w/ Others	1996
In Your Dreams (Sierra Jensen Series #2)	Provider w/Others	1996
King Without a Shadow	Provider	1996
My Buddy God	Provider w/Others	1996
Race for Freedom	Provider w/Others	1996
Where Does God Sleep, Momma?	Provider w/ NA	1996
Beneath the Sky of an Angry God	Provider w/Others	1997
Better Tomorrow	Provider w/Others	1997
Daddy, Is There Really a God?	Provider w/Others	1997
Daddy, Where Is God?	Provider	1997
Shadows on Stoney Creek	Provider w/Others	1997
When Pioneer Wagons Rumbled West	Provider w/Others	1997
Where Does God Live?	Provider w/NA	1997
Go Away, Dark Night	Provider	1998
Jessica's Giraffe's Long Neck	Provider	1998
Little Soul & the Sun: A Parable	Provider w/NA	1998
Mayflower Secret: Gov. Bradford	Provider w/Others	1998
My Angel Named Herman	Provider w/NA	1998
Thank God for Sunshine	Provider w/NA	1998
All the Way to God	Provider	1999

Image of God by Year		
Title	Image	Date
Dream Quilt	Provider	1999
God Gives Us Beaches	Provider	1999
God Gives Us Food	Provider	1999
Good Night, Little One	Provider	1999
I Wonder Who Hung the Moon in the Sky	Provider	1999
Making Memories	Provider	1999
Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale	Provider w/NA	1999
Noah's Trees	Provider w/NA	1999
Special Gifts: In Search of Love	N/A	1999
Uncle Noah's Big Boat	Provider w/Others	1999
Unplanned Voyage	Provider w/Others	1999
Whaddayamean	Provider w/Others	1999
What a Truly Cool World	Provider w/Others	1999
What is God's Name?	Provider w/Others	1999
White Pony: A Tale of Great Love	Provider	1999
Who Made the Wild Woods?	Provider	1999
Whose Nose? Whose Toes?	Provider	1999