

Sunday School Lesson

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The listeners were to be all the citizens and resident aliens—especially the children. The seventh year was also the sabbatical year of release from debt (Deuteronomy 15:1-6).

The Jews were greatly concerned about instructing their children in the religious heritage of their nation. Therefore, they read the Bible both publicly and privately. Religious education was a prime concern of the Hebrew people. (See Deuteronomy 4:6; 6:7, 20-25; 11:19; and 32:46). The wholesome influence of such Bible reading is hard to estimate.

This public reading of the

Law in ancient Palestine has been echoed in more recent times in our own British-American history. At the time when the Bible was first being translated into English, people were so eager to read it that six copies of the Great Bible were chained to lecterns in Saint Paule's Cathedral in London. Huge crowds gathered with eagerness to hear the reading of the Scriptures. So hungry were persons for this reading that the church authorities had to rule against it during sermon time because the congregation could not hear the preacher!

The impact of such reading has been estimated by the historian, John Richard Green, who said: "No greater moral change ever passed over a na-

tion than passed over England during the years which parted both from the meeting of the middle of the reign of Elizabeth Long Parliament. England be that book was the Bible. It was . . . read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words . . . kindled a stralirg enthusiasm."

Today's world is desperately in need of such regular and thoughtful exposure to the Scriptures.

LESSON PRAYER

Teach us to realize, O God, that laws, freedom, and truth come from thee and that we can enjoy true prosperity only as long as we are loyal to thy commands. Save us from compromise and from a weak and wav-

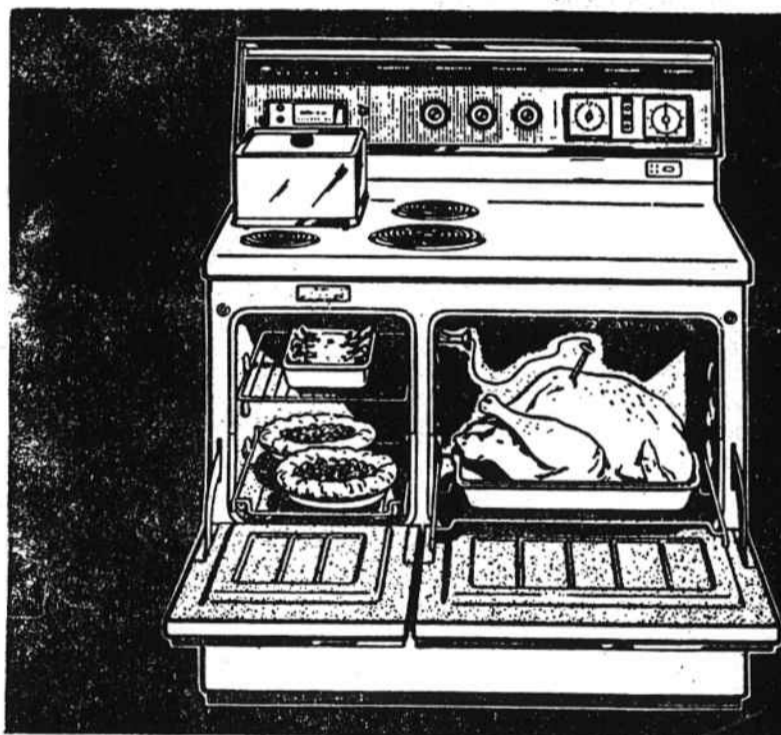
ering commitment. Grant us the courage to act in terms of great convictions. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

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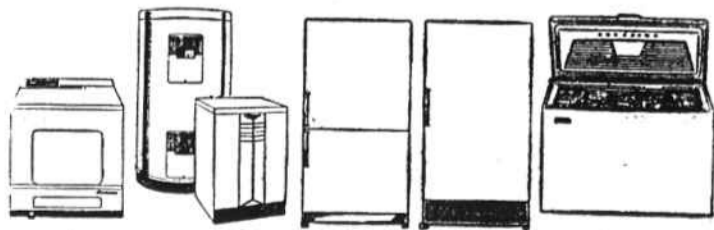


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