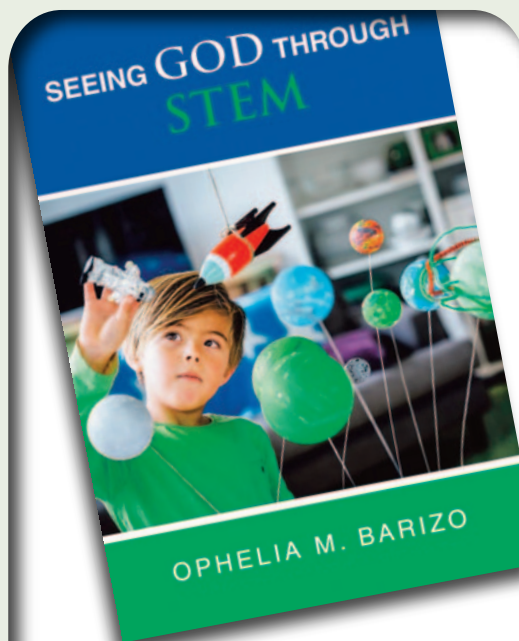




Bianca Loss

Seeing *GOD Through STEM* is a collection of short devotionals written by Ophelia M. Barizo, a retired science educator and consultant. Nationally certified in all areas of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) through the National Institute of STEM Education (NISE), Barizo has served as STEM coordinator for the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Columbia, Maryland, U.S.A., and in several other roles. In addition to being the recipient of numerous awards, she also served as an Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow at the National Science Foundation (NSF) headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, U.S.A. This collection of 35 devotionals interweaves lessons from the STEM fields with messages about God and lessons we can learn about Him. Students and educators alike will find their faith strengthened through these short and compelling readings.

The 35 devotionals follow a similar pattern throughout the book. Each has an attention-grabbing title like “Biobullies: Alien Invaders” and “Mind Controlled Prosthetics.” Next is a Bible verse, which outlines and sets the tone for the entry. The verse is followed by the devotional. Devotionals include personal stories, historical events, scientific facts, and biblical stories. This initial story flows seamlessly into a religious message and ends with Barizo’s main takeaway. The devotionals conclude with a prayer connected to the main topic. Each devotional includes at least one picture and is under three pages.



Ophelia M. Barizo,
Seeing GOD Through STEM

(Bloomington, Indiana: WestBow Press, 2023). ISBN 9798385002801 (Print), 9798385002818 (Ebook). 100 pages. Softcover, US\$14.99; E-book, US\$5.99.

To order this book, visit <https://www.westbowpress.com/en/bookstore/bookdetails/852212-seeing-god-through-stem>.

Barizo explains her goal in the preface: The devotionals will integrate faith and learning with the goal that they will draw students closer to their Creator. I felt my faith strengthened, and I believe that students and teachers will find themselves similarly affected. Barizo is incredibly successful in her connections between science and religion. Too often, people believe that science and religion are different sides of a battle, whereas, in reality, science points to the existence and love of God. Barizo’s smooth transitions and choice of lessons from science will open the eyes of students and reveal new wonders about the Creator.

Seeing GOD Through STEM is most successful when the author tells personal stories.

Barizo pairs her personal stories with personal pictures. They connect with the story and offer a deeper understanding of the message. An excellent example is the devotional “The Wondrous Proton.” Here, Barizo tells the story of her battle with sarcoma cancer and explains the scientific procedures that helped eradicate her cancer. The devotional is accompanied by a picture of Barizo at her treatment, which leads to the concluding point of the power of God’s healing. The author is an excellent storyteller, and at times, you feel you are seeing her inner thoughts or reading her diary. The personal connection elevates this book above like devotionals.

I recommend this book to educators across all our elementary, middle, and high schools.

Elementary school teachers will find this book to be an excellent opening devotional for a science or religion class. The devotionals are short enough to retain a stu-

dent's attention span, while also being long enough to teach a lesson. With the older grades, students could even be asked to read the prayer, in order to promote student involvement and personal connections. For middle and high school students, this book is also excellent for devotionals and a good book to recommend to students to read on their own time. The devotionals encourage students to pursue STEM, which is an important tool at a time when students may struggle with self-esteem in different subjects and start to brainstorm future career choices. This book will be valuable in any of our Seventh-day Adventist classrooms.

Educators will also find that this book makes an excellent choice for their own devotions.

Some of the stories are tailored more toward an educator audience. "The Science of Crime" and "Origami Magic" are chapters with messages directly aimed at encouraging and supporting teachers of all levels.

This book is excellent for educators and classrooms as it applies to many curriculum areas. Many different STEM paths are mentioned, including geometry, aerospace engineering, robotics, and physics, to name a few. Subjects outside of STEM are also applied, such as history, art, and religion. This book could serve to make cross-curriculum connections. For example, science and art classes can be connected through devotionals like "Origami Magic." The book also lends itself to combining science and art projects. For example, students can learn about, and then test, building robots or creating slime while strengthening their walk with God.

While this book is an asset in the classroom, there are points that educators should know before using this book as an educational tool. Barizo, in most devotionals, provides definitions for the scientific terms included. Some terms are missed, however, so teachers would be wise to read ahead and prepare definitions for terms they believe may be unfamiliar to their students. I recommend that teachers pre-read for any content that

Some Content Examples:

Devotionals:

Learning From Nature
Barbie in Space!
Bee Engineering
Biobullies: Alien Invaders
Caring is Sharing
Child's Play
Finding Fakes
From Trash to Music
Garbage Gobblers
In Praise of Slime
Getting Lost
Have Winglets, Will Soar!
The Science of Crime
Making Things New

Chapters:

Horseshoe Crabs Save Lives
Let It Snow!
Magnetic Moments
Mind-Controlled Prosthetics
Mushroom Engineering
Plug in the Power!
Robotic Realities
Seeing God Through Our Senses
These Shoes Help the Blind "See"
The James Webb Telescope
The Lost Is Found
The Wondrous Proton
The Science of Scent
Windy Wonders
You May Eat Your Food Wrapper!

may not be appropriate for their specific audience. The book is, at the moment, culturally relevant. For example, Barizo makes references to the COVID-19 pandemic and *Barbie* (the movie). However, as the years go on, these references may be less prevalent, and teachers must re-evaluate their effectiveness.

Seeing God Through STEM is a compelling, well-written book by a respected and successful Adventist educator. It holds a deep value for educators at all levels and subjects. This book has heart and knowledge and will draw readers into a deeper relationship with their Creator. While there is always room for improvements, such as including STEM activities or an index sorting devotionals by their inclusion of different STEM topics, the author accomplishes and exceeds the goals she sets out. Considering all this, I highly recommend this book to educators for use in their classrooms. In a world where science and religion seem to be frequently placed at odds, *Seeing GOD Through STEM* shows educators and students how

God's greatness and love are shown in the world around us and that STEM subjects are a vital part of God's plan.

Bianca Loss is an elementary education major at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A. She currently serves as co-pastor for the Education, Learning, and Teaching Club at Andrews. On school breaks, she works as a substitute teacher, teacher's aide (general population and special education), and a 1:1 (one-on-one aide) in the Sutton Public Schools system in Sutton, Massachusetts, U.S.A..

Recommended citation:

Bianca Loss, "Book Review of *Seeing GOD Through STEM*," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 85:3 (2023): 43, 44. <https://doi.org/10.55668/jae0045>.

The articles in this issue are a collection of reflections on topics that speak to wholistic education: the mental, physical, social, and spiritual. The rise of generative Artificial Intelligence has impacted education globally. It has forced educators to think about how best to navigate this technological advancement's moral, ethical, and practical use. JAE will be publishing throughout the year several articles on the topic (see "Generative AI in Adventist Education" by David P. Harris and Fred Armstrong in the previous issue [<https://www.journalofadventisteducation.org/2023.8.5.2.2>]). In this current issue, Lorin Koch addresses "ChatGPT in the Classroom: Recommendations for Use, Limitations, and Student and Teacher Experiences" and provides helpful recommendations for practical use by educators as they shape the learning environment for all learners. Shondell DeVelde takes an evidence-based approach to teaching students about healthful food choices in "Promoting Plant-based Diets in Seventh-day Adventist Schools." We are excited to share a reprint of an article by Wilf Rieger, first published in *TEACH Journal of Christian Education*, on character development as a hallmark of Christian education titled "Rick Warren and Ellen G. White on Christian Character Development: An Unexpected Meeting of the Minds?" Our Perspectives section shares an adapted transcript of a presentation by Siroj Sorajjakool to the Seventh International Scholars Conference in Bandung, Indonesia (October 19, 2019) titled "Academia, the Sabbath, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution" in which he reflects on the challenges of navigating technological change within the context of Adventist education.

The remaining articles address resources for improving instruction: "The Geoscience Research Institute: A Resource for Teaching a Biblical Understanding of Earth History" by Emeraude Victorin Tobias; "Best Practice Approaches for Multigrade Education" by Andrea Gray; and Bianca Loss' review of Ophelia Barizo's book, *Seeing GOD Through STEM*.

We hope these articles stimulate your thoughts as

you make curriculum decisions, plan instruction, and seek ways to cultivate a learning environment that leads and nurtures learners as they develop a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Lord is in our Adventist schools, and we are sometimes unaware of it. Every Adventist school ought to be a "house of God . . . the gate of heaven,"⁴ where every child, man, and woman, can come face to face with God through the Ladder who has been sent down from heaven, Jesus Christ Himself.

Andrew Mutero, PhD, is the Education Director for the East-Central Africa Division, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. This division includes the countries of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania. He also serves as a consultant on THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION® Advisory Board.

Recommended citation:

Andrew Mutero, "Guest Editorial: House of God and Gate of Heaven," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 85:3 (2023): 3, 45. <https://doi.org/10.55668/jae0051>.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Mission Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (October 13, 2014): <https://www.adventist.org/official-statements/mission-statement-of-the-seventh-day-adventist-church/>.

2. Scripture references in this editorial are quoted from the *New International Version of the Bible*. Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

3. Allusions to verse 4 of "Amazing Grace" a hymn credited to hymnwriter John Newton. See Hymnary.org: <https://hymnary.org/hymn/LUYH2013/691>.

4. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1949), 5:491.