



Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011

Volume 9 | Number 1

Article 17

1997

Michael R. Todd, Ted E. Van Horn, and Mark Van Horn. *Book of Mormon Stories* CD-ROM

Charles D. Bush

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Bush, Charles D. (1997) "Michael R. Todd, Ted E. Van Horn, and Mark Van Horn. *Book of Mormon Stories* CD-ROM," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011*: Vol. 9 : No. 1 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol9/iss1/17>

This Publication for Children is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011 by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.



NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Title

Author(s) Charles D. Bush

Reference *FARMS Review of Books* 9/1 (1997): 159-60.

ISSN 1099-9450 (print), 2168-3123 (online)

Abstract Review of *Book of Mormon Stories* (CD-ROM, 1995), by Michael R. Todd, Ted E. Van Horn, and Mark Van Horn.

Michael R. Todd, Ted E. Van Horn, and Mark Van Horn. *Book of Mormon Stories*. CD-ROM for Macintosh and Windows. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995. \$24.95.

Reviewed by Charles D. Bush

In an out-of-the-way corner of the computer software market is found the class of “computerized story” programs. These programs target an audience of preschool and young elementary school students with stories often adapted from popular printed books, supplemented with animation, sound, and interactivity. It’s a small niche, though still large enough to have some established conventions, classic titles, and respected publishers. *Book of Mormon Stories* is a Latter-day Saint entry in this category—it presents events from the Book of Mormon in computerized story fashion.

The essence of the story is threaded through a series of pictures accompanied by a simple, brief narration. The narration appears in written form on each frame, as it would in a printed book, but is also spoken aloud for children who cannot yet read. Going straight through the story, the pictures seem mostly static, with only occasional bits of animation as you go from frame to frame. The fun comes by clicking on things in the picture before moving on. Something different happens for almost each part of the picture. Occasionally the story is fleshed out—when you click on the people listening to Lehi preach in Jerusalem, you discover their reactions to his message. Usually the interaction fits the scene, such as clicking on a tree and seeing a bird fly out. Often something fun or even silly happens, such as a hut roof that turns into a pinwheel and flies away. Adhering to one of the conventions of computerized stories, a common element can be found in each frame—in this case a gray rabbit—to encourage children to keep clicking on things until they find it.

The artwork is simple and colorful without being too “cartoony”—people have four fingers, not three. The settings are

reasonable and consistent even if they don't match everyone's mental picture of Book of Mormon lands—no borrowing from Friberg here. The voices, although not professional (the authors' family and friends, from the look of the credits), are clear, distinctive and appropriate—Laman's slightly nasal whine is just right! The musical interludes between frames are mostly arrangements of hymn tunes and Primary songs that serve to set the mood for the next frame and nicely fill the delay while the program loads from disk.

Book of Mormon Stories is clearly no substitute for the real scriptural text, nor even for most printed adaptations of the Book of Mormon for children. The stories are greatly simplified—one section covers the move to Zarahemla, King Benjamin, Zeniff, King Noah, Abinadi, and even Alma at the waters of Mormon in only nine frames! But an icon of the gold plates at the bottom of each picture links to the underlying scriptural text passage, which a parent can then expand into the whole story when the child is ready. *Book of Mormon Stories* comes on a self-contained CD-ROM disk that will run on either a Macintosh or Windows system without installation. The publisher recommends a 2x or faster CD-ROM drive, but I successfully ran it on slower hardware with only occasional sound glitches. The user interface is straightforward, with spoken prompts as well as text labels in most places. Even preschool children will learn to use it quickly.