



# Partners

*Partners* is published quarterly by the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship to assist those in Sunday school ministry.

## *Come and See!*

*“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. (John 1:39)*

The word *come* is an evangelical word. It has a beautiful gospel sound to it. What a beautiful invitation Jesus extends to us when he says, “Come.” In another invitation to sinners he said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). The word *come* promises rest for our souls as well as comfort and help in life.

Is your Sunday school inviting children with the gospel invitation, “Come?” Does your school reverberate with the message, “Come and see?” Do your children see Jesus taught in every lesson? Is the message of Jesus’ life and death taught clearly? Do the children leave class with the peace of knowing that Jesus lived and died for them? Do they see Jesus modeled by you as you follow his example? Are you kind toward your students? Are you applying truths from God’s Word to the lives of your young listeners? Are you teaching willingly and putting forth your best effort?

If you can say yes to these questions, you are echoing Jesus’ gospel invitation, “Come.” And you can go out into your community and invite children to “Come and see,” confi-



dent that in your Sunday school God’s message will come through loudly and clearly.

The last part of the verse above says, “So they went and saw where he was staying.” Be thankful that Jesus wants us to know where he can be found! Thank Jesus for the children who come to your Sunday school and find him there.

### Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for inviting us to “Come and see.” Your Word has told us about your love. You have reconciled us to God. You have revealed your name to us. Lead us to invite our children to come and see their Savior in our Sunday school. In your name we pray. Amen.

### Teacher Talk

1. Tell about a time when one of your students asked a friend to “Come and see.”
2. Discuss this question: Does the message and example of your Sunday school inspire you to tell the community, “Come and see”?
3. What more can your church do to invite others to see Jesus at your Sunday school?

The above is from a resource called *New Life for Your Sunday School*, posted at [www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship](http://www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship) in the “Consultation and Resources” collection. Look in the “Sunday School Ministry Resources” folder. Working through the lessons in *New Life for Your Sunday School* would assist your staff greatly.

# Help Your Staff Become a Team

How about doing the following to enhance the “team spirit” on your Sunday school staff:

- ◆ Determine and discuss the learning styles and teaching styles of your staff members using the simple tests available for download at [www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship](http://www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship) in the “Consultation and Resources” collection, “Sunday School Ministry” folder.
- ◆ Determine and discuss the spiritual gifts of your staff members by taking the test at [www.wels.net/adultdiscipleship](http://www.wels.net/adultdiscipleship). Click on the “Discovering Spiritual Gifts” collection and follow the links.
- ◆ Begin each staff meeting with a “check-in” time, asking team members to share highs/lows, good news/bad news that happened in their lives since the last meeting. Use what’s shared as items to include in your meeting prayers.
- ◆ Begin your meetings with thought-provoking questions that will help you to get to know each other better, i.e. “If someone wrote the book about your life, what would be the title?” “What would you do if you suddenly had a whole lot of free time and a whole lot of money?” “What historical or Biblical person would you like to have as your neighbor, and why?”
- ◆ Have your meetings in different, fun, or unique places. No one says you have to meet at church all the time.
- ◆ Plan for your spiritual growth by agreeing on a series of spiritual growth topics you will all study in the months ahead.
- ◆ Pray for each other, as a group and individually. Consider assigning prayer partners who will make it their task to pray for their assigned staff member every day for a week or month.
- ◆ Have fun together socially. Do things outside of meetings to build your friendships and team spirit: retreats, nights out for dinner, ball games, progressive meals, etc.

## THINK ABOUT THIS!

*Students recognize genuine, unconditional, Christ-like love. In fact, they seek it out! Teachers who love their students with a Christ-like love, change their students’ lives forever.*



## Only At Sunday School!



When the pastor asked the class, “Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem?” a boy raised his hand and replied, “Because his mother was there.”

A Sunday school teacher asked her class: “Who decreed that all the world should be taxed?” “The Democrats,” a young girl answered.

“If you are not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don’t want to go there!”

~ Martin Luther

## New Face, Fresh Perspective



The Commission on Youth Discipleship gives praise to our God for bringing a new member to the Administrative Assistant position, which was vacant for several months after the resignation of Bob Mateske last July. Jeremy Bakken, a 2004 Wisconsin Lutheran College graduate, joined the CYD team in October, 2006. He graduated with a double major in Mathematics and Music Composition. Prior to

joining CYD, Jeremy was store manager at the Wauwatosa location of Beihoff Music, a Wisconsin-based music company. While there, he assisted in multiple areas such as Internet development and web design, marketing, customer service, and administrative duties. This background has prepared him well to assume the duties and responsibilities that are his as part of the CYD team.

Jeremy was born in Columbus, WI in May, 1981 to WELS grade school instructors James and Debra Bakken. In 1990, he and his family moved to St. Peter, MN. While there he was an active participant in Sunday school, youth group, Lutheran Boy Pioneers, handbells, junior and senior choirs, AV recording, Bible class and other activities. He attended Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School in New Ulm, MN, before continuing to Milwaukee for his undergraduate training at WLC.

Jeremy's true gift and passion is in the area of music and worship. For several years now, he has been involved in the senior choir at St. John's in Wauwatosa, WI and with the *Lutheran Chorale* of Milwaukee. Jeremy directs the WLC music ministry *Revelation*, a twelve-voice group that assists the campus as well as WELS and ELS congregations with worship and outreach through music. He is also the director and member of the WELS men's quartet *Cross Harmony*, which is available for worship assistance or event entertainment. He was commissioned to set Psalm 119:41-48 to music for the *2005 WELS Conference on Music, Worship and the Arts* and has a Christmas piece published through NPH.

God-willing, Jeremy will prove to be a valuable asset to the ministry of CYD. He is pleased to be working in a Christ-centered environment with people that are devoted to God's Word and dedicated to serving the Great Commission. His prayer is that all grow in faith and the knowledge of God's love and grace, and that we are invigorated with the Spirit's zeal to share God's peace and promises with others.

You can contact Jeremy at:

414-256-3274 or [jeremy.bakken@sab.wels.net](mailto:jeremy.bakken@sab.wels.net)

## Building from the Ground Up: After the Fact

If you were not able to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial WELS Youth Ministry Conference last September 15-17 in Scottsdale, AZ, check out some of the presentations that were given. Got to [www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship](http://www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship). Click on the "National, District, and Local Training" collection and then the "National Youth Ministry Conferences" folder to see various presentation materials. We are still waiting to receive additional files to post, so check back often.

79 participants attended the YMC held in Scottsdale, AZ, at the exclusive Chaparral Suites Resort. The following list shows a state-by-state breakdown of participants: 24-WI, 12-AZ, 10-MN, 5-MI, 4-AK, 4-IL, 3-CO, 2-CA, 2-NM, 2-WA, 2-LA, 2-Canada, 1-NE, 1-OH, 1-FL, 1-NC, 1-TX, 1-IN, 1-MD.

Online evaluation of the YMC is currently underway. The Commission on Youth Discipleship thanks everyone who attended.

## Children Love It and You Will, Too!

Children love to sing, and singing spiritual songs can be a great way to teach important Bible truths as well as liven up your lessons. Northwestern Publishing House has many wonderful books and CDs to use. Go to [www.nph.net](http://www.nph.net) and type "children's songs" into the search box. Make sure you have selected, "Entire online catalog." Then scroll down the pages until you see something you'd like. The items are listed 20 to a page.



# Website Review: Children's Ministry Today

[www.childrensministry.org](http://www.childrensministry.org)

by Jeremy S. Bakken, Administrative Assistant – WELS Youth Discipleship

Deuteronomy 4:9 strongly encourages, “Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.” Ministry to children in churches is a vast and diverse field with an equally vast and diverse array of resources available to use. One such resource for children’s ministries is [www.childrensministry.org](http://www.childrensministry.org). The website offers a collection of devotionals, information, networking, resources, and links to assist a wide range of children’s ministry objectives and programs.

Most of the site’s content is corralled from other online resources. Six daily devotionals are available from various sources, accessed by clicking the “Daily Devotional” link under “Quick Links.” These devotionals are geared toward children’s ministry leaders and vary in their applications and style, from Elisabeth Elliot’s devotions focusing on our daily lives and the examples from Scripture that guide and apply, to the topical devotionals from Worthy Devotionals (the series recently featured focused on Jewish holidays as they can relate to a fulfilled New Testament), to devotional thoughts from Max Lucado’s collection of publications. As with all devotionals, it is important to appreciate them in the context of the written Word, though most seemed quite in line with the Spirit of Scripture.

Resources for use with kids’ ministry are also available for leaders. The most notable are the daily Bible story and daily Bible quiz (not topically related), along with “Keys for Kids” – a series of dialogue oriented kids’ devotionals. These could be particularly useful in getting kids interactively involved in learning about Jesus. Links and an online store offer a variety of ministry tools, such as puppets and puppet shows, magic tricks, music, juggling props, and the like. Links allow ministry leaders to network and draw on further resources outside the site, most of which are independent of *Children’s Ministry Today* and must be viewed with Biblical discretion. The “Your Favorite Places” looked quite promising for new and helpful ideas.

The website itself can serve as a means to direct children and parents to family-friendly games, music and movie reviews, and links. These resources are not always directly Biblically based, but did seem (from random sampling) to be in the spirit of enjoying the blessings of fun and joy without indulging the sinful nature.

Ads by Google™ play a prominent role on [childrensministry.org](http://childrensministry.org) and, as cited above, must be viewed with Scriptural discretion. This service is powered by site administrators specifying a Google™ search on certain words or phrases and scrolling the results in various places on the website. As you can imagine, some of the links listed in the search take you to entities that are not in agreement with God’s Word and the doctrinal position of WELS. So again, use discretion, and if in doubt about something, ask your pastor.

That said, this site contains a wealth of useful children’s ministry information and resources, much in line with Scriptural principal. Visit the website at [www.childrensministry.org](http://www.childrensministry.org), and may God bless you as you carry out, in your home and your church, Christ’s command:

**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”**

~ Matthew 19:14



## WELS Youth Ministry Resource Lending Library

The Southeastern Wisconsin District Committee on Youth Discipleship has established a lending library through Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee. As of fall, 2006, the library contains 44 resources covering a variety of ministry areas such as teen, parenting, Sunday school, VBS, and youth Bible studies. More titles will be added in the future. Called and lay servants from congregations and ministries in the Southeastern Wisconsin District have permission to check out the resources. We sincerely thank Wisconsin Lutheran College for housing the library and providing borrow-and-return services. For details about viewing and borrowing procedures, check out the CYD website link at [www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship](http://www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship). Look in the "National, District, and Local Training" collection and then in the "WELS District Lending Libraries" folder.

## Great Ideas From Great Teachers

Claudia Kressen, a veteran WELS Sunday school teacher (15 years) from St. Paul's in Bloomer, Wisconsin, is putting together a collection of great ideas for preparing the Sunday school lesson, teaching the story, using interactive classroom activities, making memory work fun, sharing creative crafts, putting up bulletin boards, and presenting special Sunday services. She has already contacted 200 WELS congregations, but would like to hear from more of you.

### **Please contact Claudia if you have something to share!**

E-mail: [claudi@citizens-tel.net](mailto:claudi@citizens-tel.net)  
Phone: 715-568-2290  
Mail: Claudia Kressen  
918 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Bloomer, WI 54724

Include your name, address, e-mail address, and congregation name/location. When completed, Claudia plans to share the entire collection with others for free, via e-mail or on the CYD Web site.

**Your great ideas need to be submitted to Claudia by January 1, 2007.**

If you'd like to have one of your ideas considered for publishing in *Partners*, send it to us via e-mail: [cyd@sab.wels.net](mailto:cyd@sab.wels.net) or by surface mail: WELS-CYD, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398.

## Max Your Knowledge Through a Mini Course

Want to become a better Sunday school teacher? Want to expand your knowledge on Sunday school related topics? Would you love to do this on your own time and from your own home? Then WNU (WELS.net University) is for you!

Several Sunday school staff mini-courses are now available at WNU. Go to [www.wels.net/jump/wnustraining](http://www.wels.net/jump/wnustraining) and login or create an account. For new accounts, you will be prompted to complete your account profile and "enroll". Do not let that scare you off, however. It is simply how the online environment works for these mini-courses. You are under no obligation to complete a course if enrolled, or to take any additional courses. And no one checks up on you. You are totally on your own once "inside."

After enrollment, simply work your way through each mini-course, reading the content, doing the exercises, and following the related links. Course evaluations and forums to discuss each topic are also a part of the WNU experience.

### **Courses currently ready:**

- ♦ Teaching Sunday School: A Wonderful Calling!
- ♦ Teaching the Way Children Actually Learn
- ♦ What Kind of Teacher Are You Anyway?
- ♦ Recruiting Staff: I Thought You'd Never Ask!
- ♦ Shaping a Better Sunday School Culture
- ♦ The Dynamics of Dynamic Staff Meetings

### **Courses coming soon:**

- ♦ The Sunday School's Mission: Totally Possible!
- ♦ Teaching Law and Gospel: A Real Balancing Act
- ♦ Partnering with Parents: From "Us/Them" to "We"
- ♦ Developing a Sunday School That Reaches Out

At the WNU Sunday school mini-course location, you will also be able to access other Sunday school ministry resources and archives.



Address Correction Requested

# Partners

## We Need Your Help . . . Fast!

*Partners* comes to WELS Sunday school staff members in one of two ways: either in direct mailing to individual homes, or in bulk to a congregation where the individual copies are then distributed. Currently, 4,600 *Partners* are direct mailed each quarter and 5,100 are bulk mailed, totaling 9,700 copies. As you can imagine, printing and postage costs for this are quite high. With the 2005 WELS statistical report showing only 5,004 Sunday school teachers in all of WELS, we thought it good stewardship to work at updating our database to eliminate any duplication.

This is where you come in. As individual teachers and as entire Sunday school staffs, please help us with the following: if you are receiving a direct mail copy and one passed out via your congregation; a direct mail copy, but really no longer care to; multiple, direct mail copies; more bulk copies than you have Sunday school staff members or need

for distributing to others like Board of Education members, etc.; or some other scenario leaving you with more copies than you need, then e-mail your updated information/numbers/wishes to Karen Kulow (daskk@charter.net). She will make the database corrections.

If, however, your congregation needs to receive additional bulk mail copies to distribute or needs to add new Sunday school staff members to the direct mailing database, then let Karen know that, too.

We'd love to have more people reading *Partners*! We also want to make sure we are being good stewards of the precious resources we have. If we don't hear from you, we'll leave things the way they currently are in the database. If there are changes, get them to us ASAP, and thanks so much for being such good "partners" with us.

*Please contact us with any questions or for further information.*

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