



P Partners

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

You Care As Much As I Do!

by Dr. Joel A. Nelson – Administrator, WELS Youth Discipleship



Last May, my youngest child, Lindsay, was confirmed. It was an awesome service and very emotional for me. These kinds of things have always moved me, but now in middle age, I find myself melting in the moment even faster, especially for “my baby.” Worship services and ceremonies like this have as much or more impact on the parents and adults as

they do on the youth. And that’s how it’s supposed to be, I think.

For my daughter’s confirmation service, some additional “emotional enhancements” were provided. A booklet was put together containing each confirmand’s name, Bible verse, parents’ names, sponsors’ names, and the essay each wrote on a question assigned by the pastors. Really cool was how during the actual laying on of hands by the pastor, our church’s closed circuit TV system was used to project on our large, left screen the live picture of the confirmand and pastor, but from a more frontal angle, so everyone could see things better. At the same time, on the large, right screen a digital head shot of my white-gowned daughter, taken the day before at rehearsal, was displayed with her name and confirmation Bible verse. It was one of the most tastefully done and moving experiences I have ever had in a worship setting. Nothing could top this!

But then we went home and my daughter opened a confirmation card she was given by Mrs. B., a Sunday school teacher she had in fourth grade. In the beautiful card was a Sunday school worksheet this teacher had given and collected from my daughter almost five years earlier. On the worksheet my young daughter wrote answers to questions about herself, her favorites, and what she felt God’s blessings to her were. On the back, Mrs. B. wrote, “God’s continued blessings, Lindsay. My prayer is the same for you since we studied his truths in 4th grade SS and learned how much God loves us: That you will always stay close to your ‘Life Savior.’” When we passed this around, I melted some more.

Can you believe it? This Sunday school teacher kept something from my daughter (and other students, too) for five years, in order to present it to her on her confirmation day as a token and remembrance of Godly beliefs expressed earlier and now confirmed today. What a great way to connect formative Christian education past with ongoing Christian education present and future. What a way for Mrs. B. to demonstrate to my daughter and my family that she cares as much about my child’s spiritual walk as I do.

I thank the Lord for Mrs. B., for all the Sunday school teachers my daughter has ever had or will have, for all the Sunday school teachers at my congregation, and for all of you. You touch lives, both student and parent, with the Word and your witness. By the power of the Holy Spirit, you help keep our children committed to Christ. Thanks so very, very much for caring as much as you do!

Increase Adult Numbers First

Research indicates that total Sunday school attendance is strongly influenced by the number of adult classes offered. Congregations that increase the number of adult classes see increases in overall Sunday school attendance. The more adult classes, the more children and youth attend Sunday school.

The old axiom, “*Get the kids there and you get the parents,*” is less true than its opposite: “*Get the parents there and the kids come.*” Adults who attend Sunday morning Bible classes seldom hire Sunday morning babysitters for their children.

The Parish Paper, Herb Miller & Lyle Schaller, 2006.



Attitude Check

As a teacher, who you are is often more important than what you do.

- **Be teachable.** Learn along with your children. Keep a journal of methods that work for you. Learn from other teachers. Read helpful books about becoming a better teacher. Pray that the Lord keep your mind and heart open to his leading.
- **Polish your listening skills.** Know when to be all ears and when to let it go in one ear and out the other. Follow the encouragement of James 1:19 “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...”
- **Value parents.** Let them know about your curriculum and what you’re teaching. Tell parents how much you appreciate their partnership and them bringing their children to Sunday school. Remember that parents’ influence on the spiritual life of their children is second only to that of the Holy Spirit.
- **Realize that anything you say can make a lasting impression.** Gently guide children. Let Christian love be the language you speak to students and parents.
- **Be proud of being a teacher.** Know that your job of teaching children God’s love and forgiveness is eternally important and an awesome privilege.

2005 Data on WELS Sunday Schools

Total Enrollment: 32,614 students (33,500 for 2004) / 5,004 teachers (5,110 for 2004)

Congregations having Sunday school: 1,173 (1,182 for 2004)

District Breakdowns: # of Sunday schools / # of congregations

Arizona/California = 104 / 108 (96%)

Dakota/Montana = 68 / 76 (89%)

Michigan = 145 / 150 (97%)

Minnesota = 159 / 164 (97%)

Nebraska = 77 / 88 (88%)

North Atlantic = 43 / 45 (96%)

Northern Wisconsin = 144 / 155 (93%)

Pacific Northwest = 42 / 47 (89%)

South Atlantic = 64 / 68 (94%)

South Central = 37 / 44 (84%)

Southeastern Wisconsin = 130 / 146 (89%)

Western Wisconsin = 160 / 172 (93%)

All data is from the WELS Statistical Report for 2005

Stacking Up Against Standards

As you may know, we have started a discussion on the SST (Sunday School Talk) discussion board on the CYD Web site (www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship). The discussion is called "Sunday School (or similar ministry) Standards" and has threads called Atmosphere, Curriculum, Staff/Teachers, Staff Training/Development, Facilities, Pastoral Involvement, Congregational Support, Budget, Parental Involvement, Outreach, Publicity/Promotion, etc. Under each thread, you can share your opinion for what the "standards" should be or look like. Based on these comments, CYD will work toward further developing and enhancing standards Sunday schools (or similar ministries) could use to make themselves better.

You can also find great evaluation helps in the Evaluation/Planning Section of CYD's 1999 resource, *Sunday School for Today and Tomorrow (SSTT)*. The "Sunday School Organizational Check Up" would be very helpful. It is a listing of what is generally regarded as important for organizing and implementing a strong Sunday school ministry. The listed statements suggest ways to improve and ways to stimulate thinking about improvement. The *SSTT* Evaluation/Planning section also includes a set of recognized standards under these headings: 1) Mission and Objectives of the Sunday School, 2) Congregation and the Sunday School, 3) Family Partnership, 4) Sunday School Ministry and the Community, 5) Interaction Among Staff and Children, 6) Curriculum, 7) Staffing, 8) Administration and Organization, 9) Facilities and Equipment, and 10) Evaluation.

Sharing the Savior through the best Sunday school (or related ministry) you can offer should be the goal of every WELS congregation. Evaluating and planning your Sunday school ministry according to recognized standards can help you reach that goal. Check with your pastor or SS Superintendent to see if your congregation already has the *SSTT* resource binder and video. If not, you can obtain it from CYD. One copy is free to every WELS congregation. You just pay the shipping.

WNU Is for You!

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 and login or create an account. For new accounts, you'll be prompted to complete your account profile and "enroll". After enrollment, simply work your way through each mini-course, reading the content, doing the exercises, 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

Courses coming soon:

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

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



Only At Sunday School!



Six year old Angie and her four year old brother Sean were sitting together in church. Sean giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in church!"

"Why? Whose going to stop me?" Sean asked.

Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those men standing by the door? They're the hushers!"

Could the WoRM Be for You?

WoRM stands for Workshop Rotation Model and here it is in a nutshell: Teach major Bible stories and concepts through kid-friendly multimedia workshops: an Art workshop, Drama, Music, Games, A-V, Puppets, Storytelling, Computers, and any other educational media you can get your hands on. Teach the same Bible story in all of the workshops for four or five weeks rotating the kids to a different workshop each week. And here comes the extremely teacher friendly part: Keep the same teacher in each workshop for all five weeks—teaching the same lesson *week after week* (with some age appropriate adjustments) to each new class coming in. Here's how one teacher assessed it: "The kids love it, the teachers love it, and we can't ever imagine going back to the old way." You can learn more about the Workshop Rotation Model at www.rotation.org. NOTE: This is not a WELS Web site, nor a model developed by WELS. Be discerning, and see if the Workshop Rotation Model concept might help in your setting.

Good Training May Be Closer Than You Think

Staff development and training is crucial if your Sunday school (or related ministry) is going to improve. And this development need not always be something created within the congregation or at 2929 North Mayfair Road. When it comes to developing better teaching methods, approaches, and ideas, consider...

- Workshops in the community that may offer training for teachers.
- Classes offered by the public library.
- Seminars offered by youth organizations, colleges, or corporations.
- Teachers, counselors, professional trainers, or parent educators within your own congregation.
- Sunday school teachers and youth workers from WELS and non-WELS Christian congregations in your area.
- Local Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA or YWCA may offer helpful sessions.
- Creating your own shared learning team within your own staff. Have each person investigate a new topic or approach and train the other members of the staff.
- Having each staff member present a lesson to the rest of the Sunday school teaching team. Have team members share what was good, bad, and ugly about the lesson.

If you are discerning, you can learn a lot about becoming a better teacher from others around you. Always consult your pastor first, especially if the learning experience is associated with a Christian church or group not in fellowship with WELS.

Great Ideas From Great Teachers

Hand-made Comic Books

When I taught Sunday school for the 3rd-4th grade level, we made "comic books" to go with the stories for that year. Many stories/lessons from Scripture lend themselves well to this medium. I divided an 8.5 by 11 piece of paper into 8 rectangles. Then I added a short phrase in the bottom of each box to tell the story.

Example: The Youth of Nain

1. Jesus and His disciples went to the town of Nain.
2. Large crowds went with them
3. At the town gate, they saw a young man being taken to his burial
4. His mother was very sad
5. Jesus said to her, "Don't cry."
6. Jesus touched the coffin and told the young man to get up
7. The young man sat up and began to talk
8. Jesus led the young man back to his mother

The students were then to draw pictures in each box to illustrate the story.

The pages can be bound into a book with cardstock used to make front and back covers. A binding machine is great, but if your church doesn't have one, the pages can be punched and yarn or string used to bind the pages. The story sheets from *Christ-Light*® can also be included in the book.

*Submitted by: Beth Walsh
Christ the Lord Lutheran Church, Clearwater, FL*

Editor's Note: CYD and the Board for World Missions have updated William F. Beck's *Bible Stories in Pictures* – the Bible in "comic book" format. Check this series out at www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship. Look in the "Consultation and Resources" collection and then in the "Children's Ministry Resources" folder.

Send your ideas to us via email
cyd@sab.wels.net or by surface mail
(WELS-CYD, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd,
Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398).

RESOURCES

Safety Tips On A Sensitive Subject

Safety Tips On A Sensitive Subject: Child Sexual Abuse is a 15-minute look at steps you and your congregation should take to help prevent an incident and how your organization should react if there is an allegation.

Noted attorneys and psychologists who specialize in sexual abuse cases share their knowledge and will help you to learn:

- Screening steps when recruiting employees and volunteers
- Physical changes to your facility that discourage abuse
- Supervisory policies for employees and volunteers, particularly those in direct contact with children
- Steps to protect your ministry, staff, and volunteers against lawsuits resulting from these crimes

The video is designed as an aid to worship centers, camps, and schools. It's yours FREE simply for asking. To request your copy of the *Safety Tips On A Sensitive Subject: Child Sexual Abuse* video, please fill out Church Mutual's E-mail Contact Form at www.churchmutual.com. Church Mutual will mail the video to you free of charge.



You also can order the video by phone by calling Doris Neubauer at (800) 554-2642. Select menu Option "4" and then enter her extension, 4205, followed by the # key. If you receive voice mail, leave your name, the name of your organization, and mailing address.

Hands On Is Hands Down Best!



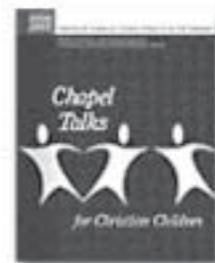
Group Inc. www.grouppublishing.com / Price: \$19.99 paperback or \$26.99 hard cover

Obtain ideas for applying the Bible to your students' lives. Get kids into God's Word through active learning—the way kids learn best! The *Hands-On Bible*, published by Group Incorporated, contains hundreds of fun experiences, science experiments, snacks, games, crafts, discussions, life application, and more. It can provide very usable ideas for any Sunday school curriculum. The *Hands-On Bible* is written in The New Living Translation of God's Word.

Chapel Talks for Christian Children

Northwestern Publishing House (www.nph.net) / Catalog Item Number: OL-065006 / Price: \$26.00

43 adaptable children's sermons and services for every week of the 2006-2007 school year, including two devotions for the week of Ash Wednesday. *Chapel Talks* can be adapted to fit a variety of settings, including Christian elementary schools, Sunday schools, vacation Bible schools, and children's sermons. Each talk is based on the Old Testament reading for the corresponding Sunday (according to the three-year lectionary, Years B and C, in *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*). In the lessons, children will hear about the gospel in the Old Testament. The foreshadows of the Savior will move them to anticipate the arrival of Jesus in the New Testament. Includes a preface, table of contents, and cross-references to various hymnals (*Christian Worship, The Lutheran Hymnal, Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, Lutheran Worship, and Lutheran Book of Worship*). Copy masters are provided for short worship services (these include psalm and hymn text selections). Available by subscription or for individual purchase. Size, 8 1/2" x 11". 98 pages. Paper cover. Published 2006. You can also subscribe to Chapel Talks and view sample pages at www.nph.net. Receive the annual edition when it becomes available, without having to place an order.



Teaching Law and Gospel



Northwestern Publishing House (www.nph.net) / Catalog Item Number: OL-121764 / Price: \$6.75

This new and improved guide written with the Christian teacher in mind, sets forth scriptural principles and practical examples of both the incorrect and correct ways of applying the law and gospel. This resource will better equip you for your high calling of teaching God's Word to the lambs of Christ. Papercover. Size, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches. 92 pages. Published 1996.

Address Correction Requested

Partners

Are You Coming to...



The 2nd Biennial WELS Youth Ministry Conference
Friday-Sunday, September 15-17, 2006
Chaparral Suites Resort – Scottsdale, AZ

Registration details were sent to your pastor and church office last spring. You can also get them as a PDF file at www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship in the “National, District, and Local Training” collection.

Connecting Our Webs

Connect your congregation’s Web site to the various CYD Web sites by going to www.wels.net/youthdiscipleship and obtaining the html code snippets to add to your Web site. It’s easy and will bring more content to your congregation’s site.



Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

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