

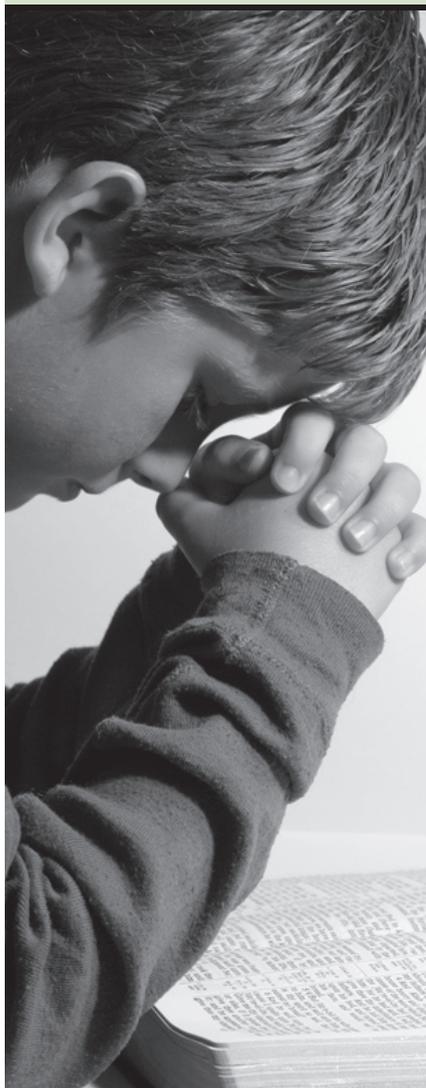
Partners



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

10 P's to Help Your Students Share Jesus with a Friend—Spring, Summer, & Always

by WELS Commission on Evangelism



PRAY

Pray regularly for people who do not believe in Jesus and also for those who do believe but are struggling in their spiritual life.

Pray specifically for your friends who need Jesus. Ask God to work in their hearts with his powerful gospel to bring them to saving faith in the Savior.

Pray that God will give you opportunities to tell your friends about Jesus, and pray that he will help you at those times to speak about the love of the Lord.

PREPARE

The Bible says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15). People will notice that you are a Christian, and they will ask about it. “Why are you so kind to people, even to those who aren’t very nice to you?” “Why do you pray before you eat?” “Why do you wear cross jewelry?” “Why do you read your Bible and attend worship services?” Think through beforehand what you will say. Ask yourself the question, “What does it mean for me to believe in Jesus?”

PRACTICE

Just like a lot of things, the more you practice, the better you can do it. The same is true of sharing your faith. Practice with a friend or family member who already believes in Jesus. This will help you overcome nervousness and make you more confident. It will also help you to be better prepared to answer questions and concerns that people may raise as you talk to them about Jesus.

PROJECT YOUR LIGHT

There’s an old saying, “You might be the only Bible someone ever reads.” While our actions will never bring someone to faith, they may open a door to telling someone the gos-

Continued on page 2.

GROW IN WHAT YOU KNOW

Law and Gospel:

What's the Big Difference?

Properly teaching the two main doctrines of the Bible—the **Law** and the **Gospel**—is perhaps the most important task of any Sunday school teacher. The WELS.net University mini-course, *Law and Gospel: What's the Big Difference?*, explores the major differences between the Law and the Gospel: their... REVELATION, MESSAGE, PURPOSE, and EFFECT.

Recruiting Staff:

I Thought You'd Never Ask!

As long as the earth stands, there will be Sunday school staff turnover. People move, life changes, and things happen. But isn't it sad when recruiting Sunday school staff becomes such a regular and stressful situation? Isn't it unfortunate that some Sunday school ministries seem to be recruiting teachers all the time, and it's not because the enrollment is busting through the belfry? Why is it that some Sunday schools have so much turnover? Most of the time it's not because of anything they do, but more so because of things they don't do. The WELS.net University mini-course, *Recruiting Staff: I Thought You'd Never Ask!* discusses how to help staff members remain positive and committed to Sunday school ministry and how to entice others to want to join the Sunday school team.

Find these and 18 other mini-courses for Sunday school staff members at www.wels.net/jump/wnustraining. Log in, select the course, follow the links, and grow! All courses are free.

"10 P's" . . . continued from page 1

pel which can bring a person to faith. Let your light shine! Just asking someone "How's it going?" can lead to an opportunity that you never expected. On the other hand, you can't tease someone about the color of their hair one day (or something else that you think is strange) and expect the person to take you seriously the next day when you try to talk about the importance of Jesus.

PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS

The good news about Jesus is the power that the Holy Spirit uses to work faith in the hearts of people. So when you have the opportunity (and God will give you those times), proclaim Jesus. Tell people about Jesus – that he is our loving Friend who saved us from being separated from God and his spiritual blessings. He died to give us life with God right now and forever in heaven. Just tell people from your heart what the Bible has convinced you to be true about Jesus our Savior.

PACE YOURSELF

You don't have to tell a person everything that you know about the Bible all at once. Take your time and as your relationship with a friend grows share more and more about Jesus.

PERSIST

Sometimes people won't listen or accept what you say. But don't be discouraged. As you have opportunity, keep reminding your friend about Jesus and share what you believe. God loves your friend, too, even more than you do, and God wants him or her to experience the joy and hope of being one of his children by faith in Jesus. Pray that God's will be done for your friend and that God will keep using you and others to share Jesus.

PROMISES

Confidently trust the promises of Jesus that he will always be with you (Matthew 28:20), that you have the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), and that God's Word will always accomplish what he wants it to. (Isaiah 55:11).

PATIENCE!

Don't give up on people too soon. Remember how patient our God is with us! God's loving patience is an example for us to follow as we introduce people to Jesus.

Be PROUD

Be proud of your Christian faith! You have been given a gift that is more precious than all worldly wealth. Your Savior is honored that you believe in him, and he is pleased that you are willing to share his name with others.





10 Reasons to “Dive In” with NPH VBS



by Lynn Groth — Assistant Curriculum Editor, Northwestern Publishing House

Grab your swim goggles and flippers. Get ready to *Dive In!* to God’s saving Word with an exciting journey to the ocean! As you visit the deep waters, you will learn interesting new things about some of God’s incredible sea creatures, including the black dragonfish, porcupine fish, sand dollar, sea anemone, and dolphin. The characteristics of these fantastic creatures will help students make visual connections to the main points of the Bible lessons. Interactive activities, theme-related crafts, and music are also part of this exciting five-day program. Four VBS levels are available based on an ocean theme, containing Bible stories, full-color teaching pictures, memory treasures, and student activities. Order at www.nph.net/vbs or call 800-662-6022.

It may not look that way out your window, but summer is coming. For many congregations, that means vacation Bible school. Because your congregation may be thinking about VBS already, it is a good time to review why so many congregations choose VBS resources from Northwestern Publishing House (NPH).

- 1.** First of all, NPH materials remind children that Jesus came into the world to live a perfect life, die on the cross to forgive their sins, and rise from the dead to give them homes in heaven. They also teach the children to love and obey the Lord, to thank him for what he has done to save them. This is very different from what many companies bring out in their VBS lessons. While NPH VBS lessons teach children to obey and do good things for others, they also provide them the correct motivation for doing so: love for the Savior. Many other publishing companies merely state that God is loving and powerful and that he wants us to be nice to others. Period.
- 2.** NPH VBS materials are very straightforward and easy to use. Also, you don’t have to purchase a lot of expensive accessory items to make the materials work. The leader’s CD-ROM has all the information a leader would need, including art for making T-shirts, banners, bulletins, invitations, door hangers, posters, etc.
- 3.** Two student lesson choices—printed or reproducible—are offered with NPH VBS. Many VBS coordinators love the reproducible lessons on CD. They can run off what they need, in either full color or gray scale. If a few unplanned students arrive, just run off more!
- 4.** NPH VBS gives you lots of ideas, but then lets you go off on your own. You’d be surprised how many ideas people come up with to enhance what is offered! It’s quite amazing!
- 5.** “Fun-looking, yet solid in content” is a good way to describe NPH VBS materials. Christ Jesus as Savior is in every lesson.
- 6.** NPH VBS materials get the kids involved. Many interactive teaching ideas and kid-involved activities are offered. But these helps also try to keep things simple, so the teacher does not have to scrounge around for hard-to-find materials.
- 7.** NPH VBS offers two kinds of crafts: things that can be made with readily available materials and special kits supplied by S&S Crafts.
- 8.** An awesome NPH VBS component is the music CD of fun songs sung by kids. The CD also includes the memory treasures set to music for ease in learning them.
- 9.** NPH VBS provides Bible story skits that can be put on for the entire group. In each teacher’s guide, optional ways to teach the Bible story are also given.
- 10.** In addition to Bible story skits, NPH VBS provides short devotional skits that whet the appetite for the Bible story. For those who prefer simple introductions to lead into the lesson, we provide those in the teacher’s guide.

As you can see, NPH VBS provides many ideas, yet makes them easy to implement. Users can choose what works best for them and their setting. And, most importantly, God truly works through these Word-filled materials, leading even the youngest children to say that Jesus lived, died, and rose to save them. Those words are the best evaluation of all!



Secrets of Happy Sunday School Teachers

by Pat Verbal (excerpts taken from <http://www.childrensministry.com/article.asp?ID=1944>)

Happy Teachers Are Adventurous

The thrill of teaching isn't like a short sprint; it's more like a marathon. A short sprinter teaches in the same classroom with the same furniture and decorates the same old bulletin board month after month. If the sprinter has taught very long, he or she frequently tells the same stories and grabs the same old lesson plan. Every week, the same "problem" children show up. Where is the adventure in that?

For marathoners, their discipline comes from a deep, inner commitment. They're in it for the long haul. It reflects a strong desire to be the best they can be. When the Sunday morning alarm signals their 6 a.m. workout, no one needs to pull them out of bed and lace up their track shoes.

It's their personal zest for adventure that spurs them on. In the same way, adventurous teachers do more than the lesson requires. They scrutinize the curriculum to determine if the printed activities will really work for their kids. Then they add new crafts, games, experiences, and devotions because they strongly desire that their students learn all that God has for them.

Are you that adventurous about making an impact on children's faith? What would it take for you to rediscover the quest?

Secrets of Adventurous Teachers

- They look for fresh, creative ways to present Bible lessons.
- They sacrifice TV time for lesson preparation.
- They attend training events—even at their expense.
- They search out and invite guests to speak to their class.
- They pray for miracles and watch for results.
- They keep a camera in class for memorable moments.
- They get their class out of the building for fun and service.
- They never stop being a kid themselves.

Happy Teachers Are Affectionate

Someone once said, "If Jesus had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it." That's where we keep all the most important people's photos, right? Jesus constantly demonstrated unconditional love for his followers, especially the children. On a "Love Scale" from 1 to 10, how would your students describe

you? What would it take for you to show your students that love is an action, not simply a word?

Secrets of Affectionate Teachers

- They pray for wisdom to see each child through Jesus' eyes.
- They write loving notes to their students.
- They discover each child's special interest and talk about it.
- They make simple Christmas presents for each child.
- They invite students home for a party.
- They keep their students' pictures on the refrigerator.
- They're huggers.

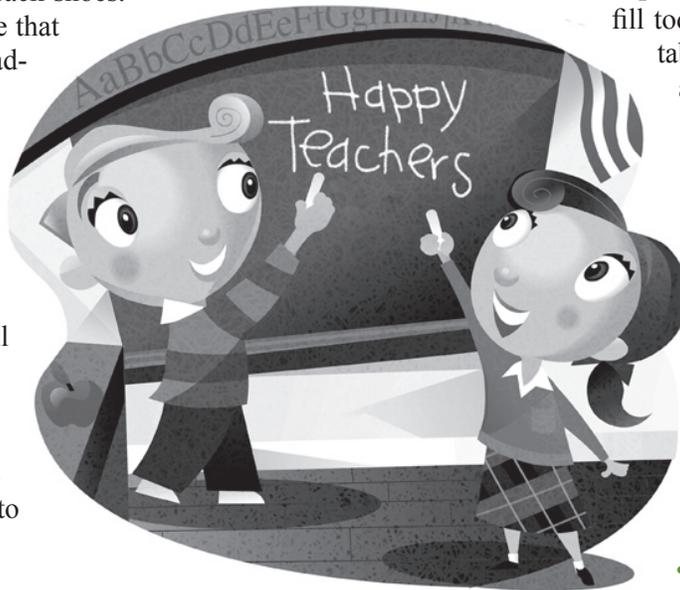
Happy Teachers Are Addicted

Stories of people trapped in a variety of addictions fill today's news headlines. Each year notable athletes, movie stars, doctors, and politicians enter rehab centers by the thousands. Some are addicted to alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, or the thirst for power. We don't read much, though, about people addicted to serving others and making the world a better place. As I've heard stories of teachers serving 20, 40, and even 60 years, I'm amazed at how their addiction has shaped so many lives.

Secrets of Addicted Teachers

- They ask for their materials well ahead of time.
- They keep files on all their lesson aids.
- They wear crazy hats, T-shirts, and smocks.
- They get to class early and stay late.
- They're constantly rearranging their classroom furniture.
- They spend their money on students.
- They get bored in adult classes because there's nothing to color or cut out.
- They have nearly perfect attendance.

Whether others call these happy people born teachers or artists, they're an amazingly diverse group of people with an innate love for children, who are constantly learning how to be even more effective. And any way you look at it, that's a happy combination.



FIND MORE ARTICLES LIKE THIS AND A HOST OF OTHER COOL TEACHING RESOURCES AT:

WWW.CHILDRENSMINISTRY.COM

Sunday School, Service, and a Smile:

Start Planning for 2009-10 NOW!



Impress visitors to your Sunday school with these simple customer-service principles from the best retail businesses:

1. Directional Signs

- Post directional signs on the outside of your church to clearly label your Sunday school area.

- Post easy-to-read location signs at each of your entrances and key traffic locations.
- Provide first-time visitors maps to your classrooms.
- Clearly identify each room with an easy-to-read sign.
- Post pictures of Sunday school staff and volunteers in a central area.

2. Helpful Staff

- Your Sunday school staff and volunteers should have clearly identified name tags. Consider having your greeters wear brightly colored buttons with the words “Ask Me About Sunday School.”
- Station greeters at each church entrance to assist visitors as they enter.
- Create an information or visitor check-in booth where visitors can get information and answers to their questions.
- Hold an annual workshop geared only toward how to assist and greet the first-time visitor.

3. Product Information and Packaging

- Use attractive, concise brochures to give overview information about your Sunday school.
- Provide newsletters to give more detailed information about the Sunday school ministry.
- Use wall, tabletop, or free-standing racks to display your Sunday school brochures, newsletters, sample lessons from each level, brochures about your church, etc. Keep racks fully stocked and clearly marked.

4. Personal Shoppers

- Identify volunteers who'll greet first-time families at your information area, assist them with check-in, and take each family member to the appropriate class location.
- Recruit several volunteers for this one-on-one ministry so that as one volunteer is assisting visitors to their classrooms, others are available to help at your information area. These volunteers will constantly rotate from the information area to classrooms and back to the information area.
- Make sure these volunteers are knowledgeable about the other church ministries so they can answer and assist visitors with any non-Sunday school questions.

5. Check-out Line

- Recruit people who'll answer questions and provide information about your church and ministry as people leave.
- Give visitors a clipboard and pen for them to use as they fill out a family information card.
- Place your Sunday school/church information in a visible spot so parents can read it while they wait for their children.
- Play background music.
- Ensure that you always have ample registration forms, pens or pencils, temporary name tags, Sunday school and church brochures available so no one has to wait as you hunt for these items.

6. Maintained Areas

- Do a regular walk-through of your ministry area. List all areas that need to be repaired or updated.
- Look for safety hazards, broken equipment, burned-out lights, or damaged walls and ceiling tiles. Remove any unsafe supplies or equipment being stored in classrooms, hallways, or entryways. Verify that rooms are thoroughly cleaned, trash removed, and setup has been done properly.
- Check your climate control to ensure that the temperature is comfortable in all rooms.

7. Attractive Displays

- Create interest in your Sunday school with wall murals and exciting, child-friendly entries and hallways.

Continued on page 6.

Autism Workshop: God's People Are Differently Abled

Produced by JCM Media - A ministry of The Lutheran Home Association in Belle Plaine, MN

Saturday, March 28, 2009

Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel & Student Center
220 W. Gilman St., Madison, Wisconsin

For full details, visit our Web Site: www.jcministries.org

Who should attend?

Autism Workshop Tracks will be offered for: Parents and Caregivers, Professional and Volunteer Educators, Church Lay Leaders and Called Workers

- Hang bulletin boards or display boards in highly visible areas to highlight your Sunday school ministry and any other programs for youth and parents.
- Keep your displays current and seasonally appropriate. Change them frequently.

8. Follow Up

- Send welcome letters or personally call all first-time visitors during the week following their visit.
- Ask visitors to come back to your information area on their second visit. This gives you a great opportunity to follow up on their first visit and to answer any questions they may have.

9. Scouting

- Visit other Sunday schools in the area, even if non-WELS, to see how they operate. You may learn something that could help your Sunday school.
- Read the events calendar in the religion section of your local newspaper.
- Stay current on youth ministry trends by subscribing to children's ministry magazines/newsletters.

10. Product Evaluation

- Brainstorm with team leaders.
- Check past history. Did things you did help or hurt enrollment?
- Follow up with first-time visitors for initial reactions.
- Create a feedback group with children or parents.

Check These Out!

- Add some musical fun to your class with selections from the Camp Phillip Campfire Choir.
Go to: <http://streams.wels.net/radio?channel=children>
- Keep abreast of what's happening with the Christ-Light 2 curriculum.
Go to: www.nph.net/CL2
- Use these new streamed-videos to engage your upper grade students in discussions about everyday living for Jesus.
Go to: <http://streams.wels.net/video/?series=everyday>
- Find all kinds of CD and DVD resources that could enhance your teaching. Not WELS, so be discerning.
Go to: www.sundaysoftware.com

Surprise Mom & Dad

Fifteen minutes before the end of class on Mother's Day or Father's Day, give each of your students (or every student in the entire Sunday school) a large piece of colored chalk. Take children outside to write messages and draw pictures on the church sidewalk or driveway, thanking God for moms and dads. The chalk can be hosed off easily. "Play it safe" by clearing it with the appropriate church leaders first, however!



Only At Sunday School!



When a 3rd grade teacher asked, "How do you decide who to marry?" she got the following answers:

- You've got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming.
- No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with.

Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship

2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398

E-mail: cyd@sab.wels.net • Phone: 414-256-3274