



Partners

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

A Place I Want to Come — A Glorious Oasis

by Joel A. Nelson, CYD Administrator

In The Word of Life Comes to Life (see article inside this Partners), Cynthia Tobias, nationally recognized, Christian speaker, author, and educator said,

“And when it comes to teaching Sunday School, for example, a lot of times I’ll ask groups of Sunday School teachers, ‘By and large with the children in your church, if they go especially to a public high school or a public elementary school, does school make them feel valued? Does it make them feel loved? Does it make them feel understood?’ Well, usually the answer is, ‘No, it really doesn’t.’ School is kind of, for a lot of kids, a prison sentence. So, on Sunday, if I come to church, do I want another day of school? That’s the last thing I want! If there was one oasis in the whole week of school for kids who aren’t very happy about learning, shouldn’t it be the time when you step into that church, into that place of worship and finally feel understood, finally feel valued, instead of saying, ‘Sit still. Be quiet. Finish your work sheet. Memorize that verse.’ I want to know what is the point of my coming to church if it’s just like school and, if could quickly get out of school as soon as I can, wouldn’t I also look forward to the time when I no longer have to come to church? It needs

to be a place I want to come to, I feel understood, I understand that that’s what it’s all about.”

Tobias’ words give us all a lot to think about. Are our Sunday school classrooms places where our students want to come, where they feel valued and understood? Are they a weekly oasis that makes a positive difference for children who come from a lot of different places (good and bad) physically, economically, socially, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually? God-willing we can answer these questions in one of two ways: “Yes they are” or “No they’re not, but we’re working like crazy to make them this way!”

As we enter the holiday season, we have the privilege of assisting in oasis building that makes an eternal difference. When we teach our students the Christmas story and share with them God’s gracious plan for the salvation of all mankind, the Holy Spirit uses us to connect our students to Jesus who values them, understands them, and loves them so much that he died for them, took their sins away, and has prepared for them a glorious oasis that will last forever and ever.

Have a wonderful holiday, in Jesus!





Have You Entered the Discussion?

Sunday School Talk (SST) is a new discussion board enabling WELS Sunday school ministry teams to share ideas with each other. The following topics are part of SST's discussion board:

- ❖ Involving Parents in Sunday School Ministry
- ❖ Developing an Outreaching Sunday School
- ❖ Great Ideas to Engage Visual Learners
- ❖ Great Ideas to Engage Auditory Learners
- ❖ Great Ideas to Engage Kinesthetic Learners
- ❖ Majestic Music and Sensational Songs
- ❖ Including Special Needs Students
- ❖ Tips on Classroom Management
- ❖ Staff Development and Teacher Training
- ❖ Improving Congregational Support
- ❖ Keep 'em Coming—Sunday School Attendance
- ❖ SS & LES—Partners in the Promise
- ❖ This & That



heading. Click on this heading to go to the discussion which starts with these words:

Thread: Great Ideas to Engage Kinesthetic Learners (*open*)

Kinesthetic learners need to move in order to learn. Movement helps them to remember better. They need frequent “breaks” built into the lesson. Ideas to help the kinesthetic learner stay focused are shared here.

Click on “Post Response” and enter your comments or questions. Others can then respond to what you have entered. God willing, SST will become a valuable resource for you and other Sunday school teachers in WELS.

To participate, go to the WELS website (www.wels.net) and type SST (either case works) into the upper right hand corner “jump word” box. Hit “enter” or click on the jump word icon and you will be taken to the discussion board where you can discuss (not in real time) the above topics.

If you click on, “Great Ideas to Engage Kinesthetic Learners,” for example, you will be taken to a page with the same

Any Takers?

Northwestern Publishing House and CYD would like to partner together to present VBS workshops to groups of WELS congregations interested in learning how to run a quality VBS, as well as, learn about the 2003 WELS VBS curriculum called, “Back to Jerusalem.” If your congregation is willing to join with several others in your area for such a workshop, contact your CYD District Coordinator (DC) and let him know. A directory of DCs, with contact information, can be seen on the CYD section of the WELS website. Go to www.wels.net, click on the “MINISTRY” heading and then on “Youth Ministry.” You’ll be taken to the CYD site where the DC directory can be accessed at the lower right.

Sign Me Up!

Mark the phrases below that express how people become Sunday school teachers:

- ___ The pastor asked me and I said, “Yes.” I mean, he’s the...you know...pastor!
- ___ I responded to an after church announcement: “Unless we get three more volunteers for the Sunday school program, Jesus’ dear, little lambs will not be taught this year.”
- ___ I lost a bet with the Sunday school superintendent.
- ___ I only wanted a little more information, but I got a teacher’s manual, calendar of lessons for the year, a student attendance chart, schedule of staff meetings, Volume I and II of Franzmann’s Commentary, and a key for the classroom.
- ___ My great grandmother, grandmother, and mother all taught Sunday school here. Who am I to buck tradition? (Do you know what? They are all still teaching here!!!)
- ___ My husband is the chairman of the Church Council for cryin’ out loud.
- ___ I really wanted to teach...no kidding...honest... why are you looking at me so funny?

Do any of the “approaches” above sound familiar? Were any of them the way you became a Sunday school teacher? While there is a little humor in some of the above, recruiting Sunday school staff can be a real challenge, causing those tasked with doing it to sometimes become a bit more “creative.”

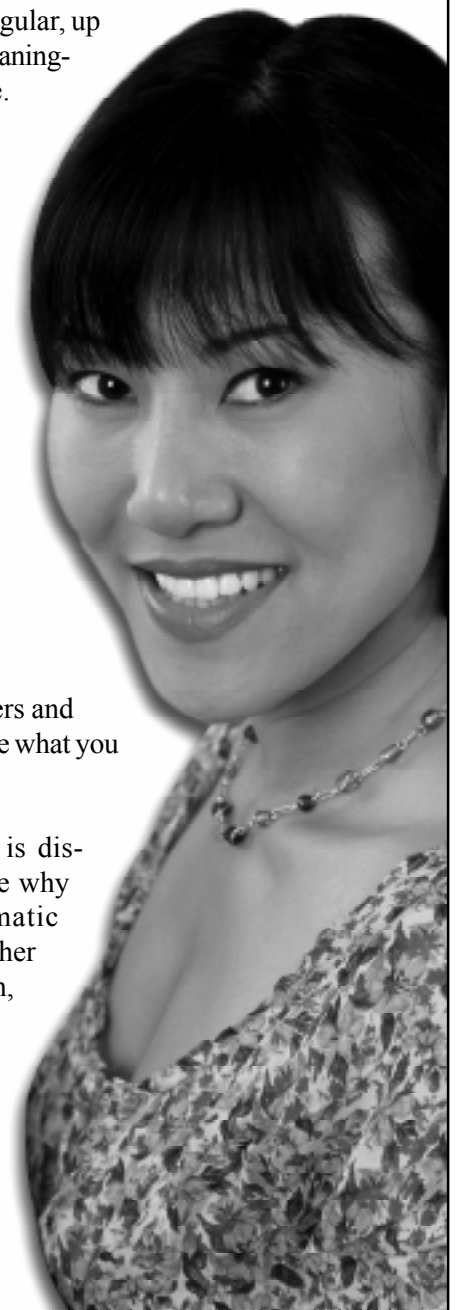
There will always be teacher turnover. People move, life changes, and things happen. But isn’t it sad when recruiting Sunday school staff becomes such a regular and stressful situation? Isn’t it unfortunate that some Sunday school ministries seem to be recruiting teachers all the time—and it’s not because 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.

Over the next two issues of Partners we will discuss how doing the following things helps teachers to remain positive

and committed to Sunday school ministry and, interestingly enough, entices others to want to join the Sunday school team:

- ◆ Seeing a positive, written articulation of the Sunday school’s mission.
- ◆ Receiving a clear description of what the Sunday school teacher job and commitment expectations will be.
- ◆ Obtaining in advance a complete calendar of Sunday school lessons, meetings, and activities for the year.
- ◆ Getting a solid promise that staff meetings will be regular, up beat, organized, meaningful, and reasonable.
- ◆ Having the total confidence that all teacher guides, student lessons, teaching materials, visual aids, and lesson preparation resources will be there before they are needed.
- ◆ Trusting that the rest of the Sunday school team is just that—a team.
- ◆ Knowing that the congregation leaders and members appreciate what you are doing.

As each of these areas is discussed, I think you’ll see why they have such a dramatic impact, not only on teacher recruitment and retention, but also on the whole Sunday school culture. I think you’ll see that when these things are done, Sunday schools become ministries that God’s people just can’t wait to become a part of.



Only at Sunday School!

Three boys left Sunday school bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper. He calls it a poem, and they give him \$50." The second boy says, "That's nothing. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper. He calls it a song, and they give him \$100. The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper. He calls it a sermon, and it takes eight men to collect all the money!"



At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and asked, "Johnny what's the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."



Sunday School for Today and Tomorrow

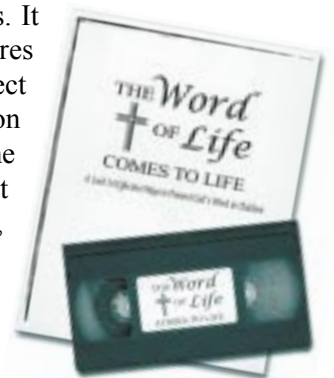
Did your congregation get its copy of *Sunday School for Today and Tomorrow*? It is a free resource to improve and strengthen Sunday school ministry and was produced by the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship. The binder and supporting video include the following topics:

1. The Role of Pastor in Shepherding the Sunday School
2. The Role of Superintendent in Building an Effective Team
3. The Role of the Lutheran Elementary School Teacher in the Sunday School
4. Recruiting and Training Sunday School Teachers
5. Reaching Out with Jesus Through the Sunday School
6. Planning Worship in the Sunday School
7. Parent Involvement
8. Evaluation and Planning
9. Sunday School Models
10. Other Resources

If you think your congregation did not receive *Sunday School for Today and Tomorrow*, first check with your pastor. If he does not have it, then call Bob Mateske, CYD Administrative Assistant at 414-256-3274 or email: cyd@sab.wels.net.

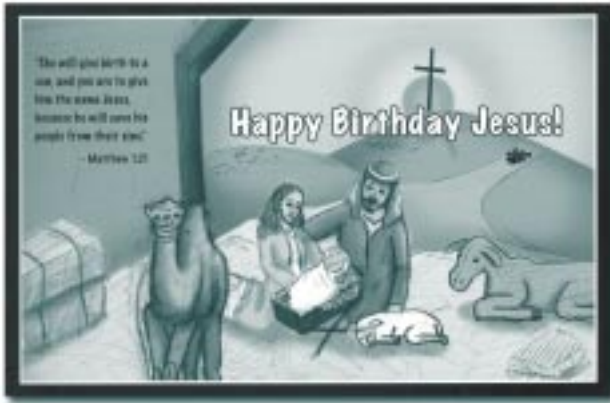
It's Ready!

Two years in the making, the Commissions on Youth Discipleship and Parish Schools, proudly present a new and exciting, video assisted teacher training course for Sunday school and Lutheran elementary school teachers. It's called, *The Word of Life Comes to Life* and was produced with the help of Emmy award winning Boettcher Productions (Steve Boettcher is a member of Calvary Lutheran Church in Thiensville, WI). *The Word of Life Comes to Life* will help teachers prepare and present Bible and *Christ-Light*® lessons that truly come to life for students. It discusses why we want to teach God's Word well and shares fascinating insights on presenting lessons that better connect with visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Research on the human brain and interviews with Cynthia Tobias and Diane Weis, nationally recognized experts on learning, round out the five segments. *The Word of Life Comes to Life* (video, leaders guide, and participant lessons) are now available for purchase, through Northwestern Publishing House (800-662-6022) and www.shopwels.net. The cost: \$24.95 plus shipping and handling.



So we can keep our database current, and serve you better, please contact the CYD office if your Sunday school staff changes. Updated mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses will ensure that the best and most up to date Sunday school ministry information gets to you on time.

Happy Birthday Jesus!



For several years the CYD and the Commission on Evangelism (COE) have sponsored a Christmas card contest with the winning design being used for the special, WELS produced, Christmas outreach card. Early each calendar year a theme would be chosen for that year's Christmas outreach effort. Children of WELS congregations (both SS and LES) would then be invited to submit original artwork for the card. A winner would be chosen from the entries submitted.

For the 2002 Christmas outreach card, children from 38 WELS congregations (12 SS and 26 LES) submitted just under 500 pieces of artwork which were reviewed and the winner selected. This year's winner is Mary Wardell, a 7th grade student at Memorial Lutheran School in Williamston, MI. For winning, Mary was given a \$25.00 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble Bookstore. In addition to Mary's entry, 22 other noteworthy entries will be displayed in the WELS national headquarters from Advent to Christmas. This year's theme is "Happy Birthday, Jesus!" Congratulations to all!

Rather limited orders for the cards and fairly significant expense to produce them have led CYD and COE to discontinue the contest. The Commission on Evangelism is planning, however, to develop new outreach cards for Christmas and Easter that will compliment each other and be more affordable for congregations to order.

Two Important Outcomes with One Awesome Lesson

Sometimes, Sunday school staff members would like to participate in their congregations' Sunday morning adult Bible studies but can't because they are teaching Sunday school. Yet, Sunday school staff members need to be growing in their faith and in their knowledge of God's Word, so they can be better presenters of the Good News of Jesus Christ. What can be done?

Have you ever considered using the *Christ-Light*® adult lessons as part of your Sunday school staff training? The *Christ-Light* adult lessons cover all the same Bible stories used in the *Christ-Light* children's curriculum for Old and New Testaments, lessons A and B, but do so with a more adult format. Sunday school staffs using the *Christ-Light* adult lessons would be learning more about God's Word from an adult perspective.



They would also be learning more about the Bible stories they have to teach to their students, especially if the *Christ-Light* adult lessons are covered before the Sunday school student lessons are presented.

Give it some thought. You may find this option to be a great way to achieve two important outcomes with one awesome lesson. To order the *Christ-Light* adult lessons, contact NPH Order Services (1-800-662-6022).

Partners in the Promise

The next Sunday school conference will be held on January 18, 2003, at the Howard Johnson/Antiqua Bay Hotel and Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells, WI. The theme is "Partners in the Promise" being selected from the words of Acts 2:39, "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." Jason Nelson, Commission on Parish Schools Administrator, is the keynote speaker. He was selected on the basis of his vast ministry experiences and insights but also as a way to further encourage LES and SS partnership. All speakers and presenters have been arranged. An initial promotional mailing was sent out in late September. Final registration materials, providing more details about the other speakers and sectionals are in the mail.





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Partners

Kids Connection Mission Statement:

"To illustrate through example and examination of Christian lives, the purpose, excitement and joy of a living faith in Jesus Christ."



Featuring stories from around the WELS...

- ...meet peers; learn about their lives.
- ...discover opportunities for Christ-centered service.
- ...interview Christian lay leaders.
- ...hear from world missionaries and tour world mission fields.
- ...tour synodical schools.
- ...learn about synodical and parasynodical ministries.
- ...receive help from the Bible for today's Christian youth.

Kids Connection is more than a video magazine for children, it's a teaching tool for the classroom (both elementary school and Sunday school) and for the home. It keeps kids connected to Jesus. Cost: \$85/year including shipping and handling. Contact CYD@sab.wels.net to order.

Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

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