

Partners



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

It's Unconditional!

by Joel A. Nelson, WELS Youth Discipleship Administrator

Soon (for those of us stuck in “wages of sin” climates), the snow will start to fly. We will have to start plowing, and scooping, and piling. I don’t fret the snow as much because I have children who want to go places, buy things, and live the all around “good life.” In order to live such a life in winter, my children know that, if they shovel some snow, their father will be more loving, kind, and generous. Sure, it’s conditional love on my part, but that snow needs to get moved!

Praise God that conditional love is not what the heavenly Father is all about. This time of the year shows us that big time. Soon, we will focus on Jesus birth, the human fulfillment of how wide and long and high and deep God’s love for us is (Ephesians 3:18). At this time of year, we have the opportunity to learn again what God’s unconditional love means to us personally, for our students and their families, for our congregation and our community. Through the Word and Sacrament, we remind ourselves of God’s love for us in

Christ, and our hearts overflow with joy and contentment. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be better teachers, better servants, better people – not just during the holidays, but always.



This holiday, as you teach the Christmas story, as you rehearse for children’s services, as you worship together with your family, your students and their families, and with your congregational family, think about God’s amazing love for you and all mankind.

It’s a little early, but on behalf of the Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD) and the national CYD staff, I’d like to wish you a very blessed holiday season. It is also our prayer that your Sunday school ministry joyfully radiates to others

the unconditional love of God that you have been so blessed to receive.

Happy holidays!

*Deep lies the drift across the drive.
I know what must be done.
I boldly grab the shovel,
And hand it to my son.*

Please Take Our Survey

If you are one of the 342 WELS congregations that have purchased and used the teacher training resource, "The Word of Life Comes to Life," we'd like to send you a survey to find out what you thought about the materials and to ask how you think the materials have impacted practice in your setting. If you are willing to participate, contact Joel Nelson, CYD Administrator (414) 256-3224, or <cyd@sab.wels.net>. The survey and directions will be sent to you. If you have yet to order this valuable resource do so right away! *The Word of Life Comes to Life* (video, leaders guide, and participant lessons) is available for \$24.95 plus shipping/handling. (38-3086). Order from: <www.shopwels.net>.

SMILE Announces "Equipping to Share the Joy"

Special Ministries in Lutheran Education (SMILE) III Conference will be held on the campus of Wisconsin Lutheran College:

**8800 West Bluemound
Road, Milwaukee, WI**

July 16-18th, 2004

The theme for the conference is "Equipping to Share the Joy." Watch your mailbox for more information in the coming months. Questions may be directed to Bruce Cuppan at (920) 922-8672 or <bnecuppan@excel.net>.

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CYD's Objectives Could/Should Be Yours

The Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD) mission statement says this: CYD is a unit of the WELS Board for Parish Services and as such, exists to encourage and assist WELS congregations and parents as they nurture youth in the Word from birth through high school.

The specific objectives CYD has relative to Sunday school follow. These would make great objectives for your own Sunday school program!

Through counsel, resources, support, and networking, CYD will assist WELS congregations as they develop and maintain Christ-centered Sunday schools and other Christian youth ministries. CYD assistance will encourage models of caring, organization, effective teaching, an outreach spirit, parental involvement, staff teamwork, and congregational philosophical and financial support...

CYD will help congregations to...

- Develop and nurture positive and professional Sunday school culture.
- Recognize Sunday school as a valuable ministry within the congregation.
- Develop effective Sunday school teacher recruitment approaches.

- Offer quality staff training, using resources that are consistent with the Scriptures and that equip teachers to be their very best.
- Develop strategies that improve parent involvement in the Christian education of their children.
- Coordinate their Christian education ministries, particularly those with Lutheran elementary schools and Sunday schools.
- Find ways to use LES staff members (if they have an LES) as resources for their Sunday school programs.
- Develop strategies for strengthening the pastor's leadership and involvement in Sunday school.
- Network with other LES and Sunday school staffs, pastors, staff ministers, and lay leaders to strengthen their Sunday school ministry.
- Research, develop, and promote new, effective models for part-time Christian education of children and teens.
- Use the *Christ-Light*® curriculum effectively.
- Use other existing WELS Christian education resources effectively (Examples: Vacation Bible school, one-day VBS, WELS Kids Connection).
- Develop strategies that use Sunday school as a vehicle for reaching out to the lost.
- Network with other WELS entities that have a vested interest in the advancement of Sunday school and similar ministries.

Only At Sunday School!



"If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale, and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into heaven?" I asked the children in my Sunday school class.

"NO!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into heaven?" Again the answer was, "NO!"

"Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave candy to all the children and loved my wife, would that get me into heaven?" I asked them again. Once more they all answered, "NO!"

"Well," I continued, thinking they were a good bit more theologically sophisticated than I had given them credit for. They knew the truth of Christianity better than I. So, I asked, "then how can I get into heaven?"

A five-year-old boy shouted out, "YOU GOTTA BE DEAD!"

One little boy's recitation of the Lord's prayer included this rather insightful slip of the tongue: "And forgive us our trash passes as we forgive those who pass trash against us."

Resources

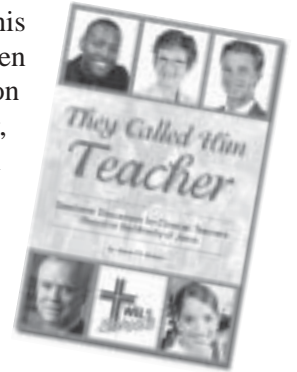
Children in the Church

This 2003 Youth Discipleship produced video and printed resource is for anyone involved in children's ministry: Sunday school staffs, Lutheran elementary school faculties, VBS staffs, early childhood ministries. The four part video and companion study guide encourage participants to seriously evaluate the ministry they are doing with the children in their congregations, and by extension, their families. The future of our congregations rests with our children, and connecting these children and their families to Jesus, is what ministry is all about. Children in the Church is \$19.95 plus shipping and handling. Order from: <cyd@sab.wels.net>.

Lutheran Special Needs Resource Center website at <<http://www.jcministries.org/home.html>>.

They Called Him Teacher

Designed to facilitate reflection on Jesus' ministry as the Master Teacher, this new faculty Bible study series, written by Jason Nelson, former Commission on Parish Schools Administrator, contains eleven lessons that will promote faculty discussion on the values, attitudes, and behaviors of Christian teachers. Order from <www.shopwels.net> or CPS (414) 256-3222 or <cps@sab.wels.net>. \$3.00 per copy.



Reader Recommendation

Lorna Leyrer of St. John's Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa, WI recommends, *Exceptional Teaching: A Comprehensive Guide for Including Students with Disabilities* by Jim Pierson (2002, Standard Publishing). According to Lorna, the book is, "full of information about different disabilities, methods, and techniques on how to include children with specific needs into a Sunday school classroom. Most importantly, and what makes it a great resource, is that it is written from a Christian perspective." Order from Northwestern Publishing House. \$19.99 plus shipping and handling. 1-800-662-6022. (product # 153948)

If you need additional resources, helps, and ideas for working with special needs students and their families check out Jesus Cares Ministries and the Wisconsin

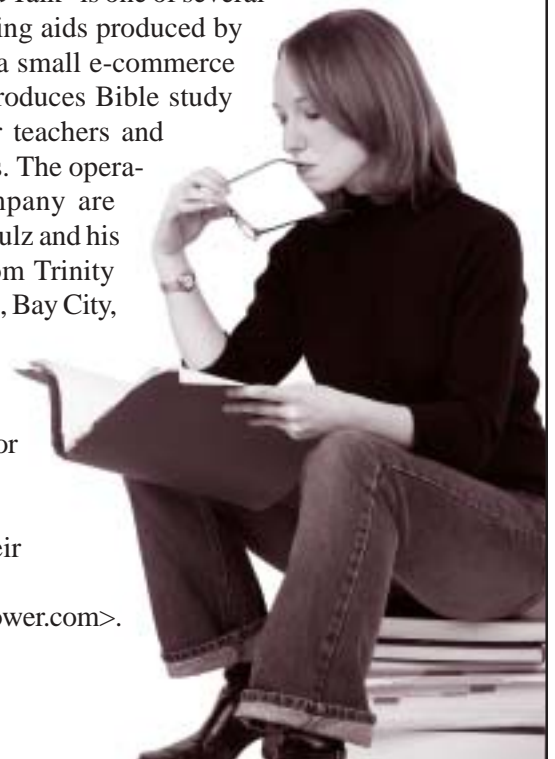
Kid Talk to God Talk

"Kid Talk to God Talk" is an evangelism resource on CD that contains music, graphics, student lessons, and a teacher's guide to help 3rd-8th graders learn how to share the Good News of Jesus with others.

"Kid Talk to God Talk" is one of several electronic teaching aids produced by Point of Power a small e-commerce company that produces Bible study supplements for teachers and religious leaders. The operators of the company are Pastor Mark Schulz and his wife Jeanne, from Trinity Lutheran Church, Bay City, MI.

"Kid Talk to God Talk" sells for \$25.00.

Order it from their website <www.pointofpower.com>.





Date

Fri.-Sun. September 17-19, 2004

Location

Near Chicago, IL (exact site still being negotiated)

Conference Mission

The WELS National Youth Ministry Conference exists to give WELS called and lay ministers a larger scale opportunity to learn from God's Word, from experts in youth and parenting ministry, and from each other, so that their ministry competence and commitment to Christ grows.

Theme

"Building from the Ground Up"

Keynote Presentations

- ◆ "Building from the Ground Up: The Importance of Parents and Home"
- ◆ "Building an Outreaching Ministry: The Importance of Sharing Jesus with Everyone"
- ◆ "Building a Ministry of Strong Partnerships: The Importance of Working Together"

Sectionals on These Ministry Areas

- ◆ Parenting, Catechism and Confirmation
- ◆ Special Needs
- ◆ Sunday School
- ◆ VBS
- ◆ Early Childhood
- ◆ Teens
- ◆ Outreach
- ◆ Christian Camps
- ◆ Para-Synodical Youth Ministries

Plus

Networking Nooks, Models Sharing, Open Space Discussions, Organization Displays, and the NPH Booksotre

Cost

\$135/person covers everything-lodging, meals, materials...everything!

Watch for more information coming soon!

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain."

Psalm 127:1

Great Ideas from Great Teachers

by Bob Mateske, CYD Administrative Assistant

One of the objectives of *Partners* is to communicate and share teaching ideas, tips, and helps with Sunday school teachers, superintendents, and pastors. Each issue (as space allows) we will feature ideas submitted to the CYD office. Send your ideas to us via email <cyd@sab.wels.net> or surface mail (WELS-CYD, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398). What follows are some great ideas from great teachers.

Sunday School Parent's Day

One way to involve and cultivate the interest in your Sunday school is to have a Parent's Day. Plan it early. Set up chairs in the classrooms on Parent's Day. Hand out an outline of your lesson and purpose of each step so that visitors may follow along. Use the opportunity to familiarize parents with the lessons. Emphasize how each parent can review the story at home, review the memory treasure, and complete the take home activities with their children. Tell parents how important **they** are to their children and you, the teacher! (Taken from a previous issue of *Partners*).

Children Absent from Sunday school

When a child is absent from Sunday school because of illness or other family obligations, send the lesson and a short note to each student telling that student he/she was missed and hopefully they will be present the next Sunday. Include the memory verse on a separate strip of paper so they're sure to look at it. Address the letter to the child, because children love getting mail. Plus, they'll get their parents to spend time telling them the story/lesson. Busy parents might just ignore the letter if it is addressed to them. You need to get your church or Sunday school to buy a pack of stamps for each teacher and a box of envelopes for each teacher (or provide envelopes with church information for return address). Use the computer to create strips of paper with the Bible verse for the day. Use sticky notes or note pads for handwritten messages. Encourage all the teachers to use this to show kids and parents that they are being thought of. (Submitted by Pastor Aaron Schoenike-St. John/St. Peter-Cleveland, WI)

Pastor Schoenike's idea was taken from "Become a Better Partner – Swap Your Ideas" a booklet of ideas compiled at the 2003 National WELS Sunday School Conference. You may obtain copies of this booklet by contacting the CYD office.



Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Commission on Youth Discipleship
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Did You Know...

- ◆ In 2002 there were 35,215 students in WELS Sunday schools.
- ◆ Since 1990 Sunday school enrollments have decreased by 8,344 students, a 19.2% drop (1990 = 43,559 students).
- ◆ In 2002 there were 5,303 Sunday school teachers in WELS congregations
- ◆ Since 1990 Sunday school teacher numbers have decreased by 809, a 13.2% drop (1990 = 6,112 teachers).
- ◆ There are currently 1,250 WELS congregations, an increase of 29 congregations or 2.3% since 1990 (1990 = 1,221 congregations).

Important Notice...

You have received *Partners* because your name was submitted to the CYD office as a person interested in receiving information about Sunday school ministry, or because you attended a recent Sunday school conference. If you would like to continue receiving *Partners*, do nothing. However, if you would like to have your name removed from our mailing list, contact the CYD office (414) 256-3274 or email <cyd@sab.wels.net>. Also, if your address has changed, or you know of someone else who would benefit from receiving this newsletter, please let us know.



Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

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