

Partners



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

Sign Me Up!

Part III

by Joel A. Nelson, CYD Administrator

Under the title “Sign Me Up! Part 2,” the last *Partners* presented four things that Sunday school staff members, current and prospective, should be able to count on from their congregation’s Sunday school ministry:

1. A positive, written articulation of the Sunday school’s mission.
2. A clear description of what the teacher’s job and commitment will be.
3. A complete calendar for the year of lessons, staff meetings, and other activities.
4. A solid promise that staff meetings will be regular, upbeat, organized, meaningful, and reasonable.

This issue, we complete the discussion by adding four more ideas that can help Sunday schools to more easily recruit and retain staff members.

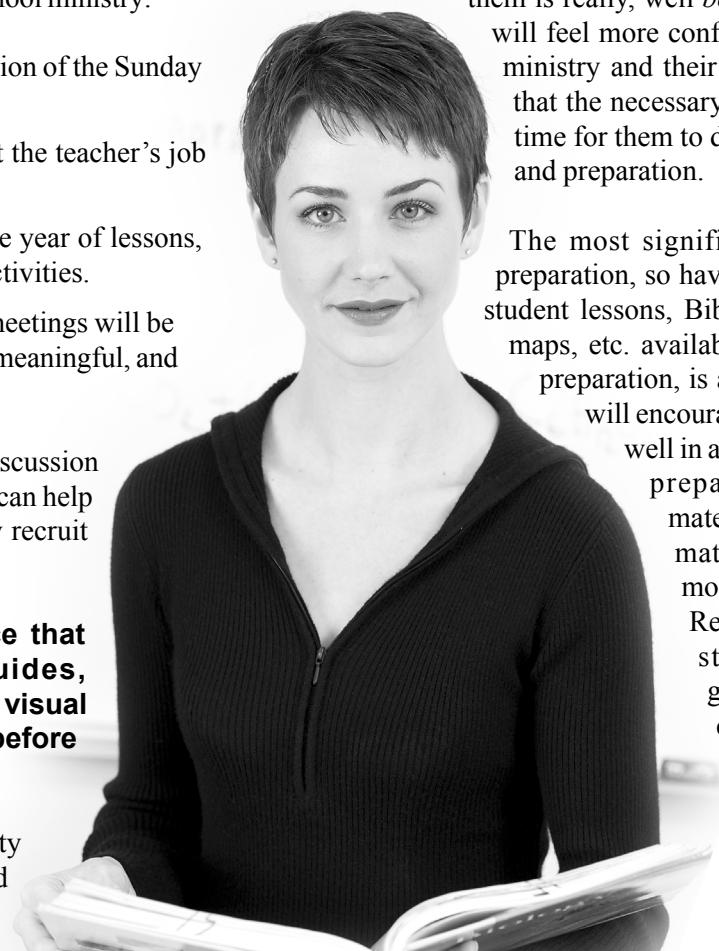


A total confidence that all teachers’ guides, books, materials, visual aids will be there before they are needed.

So much of what makes a quality Sunday school, or related

ministry, are the resources used. In *Christ-Light®*, we have quality resources. But quality resources don’t help much if they are not there when you need them. And when you need them is really, well *before* you need them. Teachers will feel more confident about the Sunday school ministry and their part in it when they can trust that the necessary resources will be available in time for them to do the required planning, study, and preparation.

The most significant part of teaching is the preparation, so having all of the teacher’s guides, student lessons, Bible commentaries, visual aids, maps, etc. available for teachers to use in their preparation, is a must. A good Sunday school will encourage its staff members to prepare well in advance. But stressing advanced preparation is pointless if the materials are not there. Waiting for materials can frustrate even the most dedicated and patient teacher. Retaining staff and recruiting new staff members is enhanced greatly when teachers can feel confident about getting the needed resources well in advance.



(Continued on next page)



The sure trust that the rest of the team is just that, a team.

Like so many other things in life, successful Sunday school ministry requires cooperation, working together, and a real team spirit. A Sunday school staff member has to be able to trust that the other staff members (from Pastor on down to preschool teacher's aide #3) are passionate about sharing Jesus with children and their families, really want to make Sunday school the best it can be, and are willing to encourage and support each other.

A Sunday school staff can be a wonderful, real world example of the body of Christ in action (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12). And there is nothing more wonderful for students and parents to see than a Sunday school staff that openly "one-anothers" each other like so many passages in Scripture say (see the list of one-anothering passages later in this issue). A Sunday school staff that lovingly works as a team, nurturing and supporting each other's spiritual and pedagogical growth, also models what it means to be a family of believers.



A meaningful budget that provides for Sunday school's support.

Sunday school teachers are some of the most gifted and dedicated people around. They are also some of the most generous, voluntarily contributing from their own financial resources to support the Sunday school ministry. But should they have to? Could the fact that, in some settings, there is an expectation that the Sunday school teacher will need to "kick in" for his/her classes materials and supplies, be a reason to not get involved? Some teachers may not be able to afford this kind of support, but they may be too loving to say anything. If we want to recruit and retain staff, we need to make the financial support of Sunday school an optional item for staff members. If teachers want to purchase and donate certain items, great, but they should not be expected to. Teacher's guides, student lessons, Bible commentaries, paper, pencils, markers, glue, etc. should be part of the Sunday school ministry's budget, and there should be a clearly defined process in place for staff members to obtain reimbursement when they pay for things out of their own pocket.



The appreciation of congregational leaders.

I am sure that if you asked Sunday school teachers, "What payment do you receive for teaching Sunday school?" you would get answers like these: "The smiles of my students' faces as they learn about Jesus." "The joy of knowing that

God is using me to share the Good News with others." "The self-satisfaction of using my time and talents to serve my Savior."

Until Sunday school staff positions become paid ones, that's the kind of compensation that can be expected. For sure, the "compensations" mentioned by teachers are wonderful, but could something more be given? I think so, and it could simply be the private and public thanks of the congregation's leadership.

Receiving a card, note, email, or phone call from the pastor, congregation chairman, church council or board members can go a long way toward helping volunteer staff members feel they are appreciated and needed. It can help them to know that they do not serve in a vacuum but rather are part of the congregation's total mission and ministry. It can stress the team and "one-anothering" concepts at an even higher level. Showing appreciation in more public ways can also help the entire congregation to recognize its responsibility to encourage, pray for, and financially support the Sunday school ministry and its staff.

I have heard it said that Christian duty means we serve God and others and should not expect to be thanked for doing what we are supposed to do. While it is true that Christians are to serve God and others, how wonderful it is when Christian duty is nurtured and encouraged with Christian love. Showing more love, support, and appreciation for Sunday school staff members may just result in happier teachers, who do their jobs even better, reflect their joy in Jesus even more, and remain Sunday school teachers for a long, long time.

- 1. A positive, written articulation of the Sunday school's mission.**
- 2. A clear description of what the teacher's job and commitment will be.**
- 3. A complete calendar for the year of lessons, staff meetings, and other activities.**
- 4. A solid promise that staff meetings will be regular, upbeat, organized, meaningful, and reasonable.**
- 5. A total confidence that all teachers' guides, books, materials, visual aids will be there before they are needed.**
- 6. The sure trust that the rest of the team is just that, a team.**
- 7. A meaningful budget that provides for Sunday school's support.**
- 8. The appreciation of congregational leaders.**

As you plan for next year, work toward accomplishing these eight things. If you do, you will find it's a lot easier to keep current Sunday school staff members and encourage new ones to join the exciting effort.

Sunday School Talk ...Start Talking!

Sunday School Talk (SST) is the discussion board enabling WELS Sunday school teachers from around the country 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

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 click on the topic you desire and share ideas with WELS Sunday school teachers from all over the country.

One-another Each Other

- Love one another. (*John 13:34*)
- Honor one another. (*Romans 12:10*)
- Encourage one another. (*Hebrews 10:25*)
- Accept one another. (*Romans 15:7*)
- Submit to one another. (*Ephesians 5:21*)
- Be devoted to one another. (*Romans 12:10*)
- Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. (*Ephesians 5:19*)
- Instruct one another. (*Romans 15:14*)
- Spur one another on. (*Hebrews 10:24*)
- Admonish one another. (*Colossians 3:16*)
- Bear with one another in love. (*Ephesians 4:2*)

Training Sunday School Teachers for Ministry

One District's Approach

Sunday school teachers of the Western Wisconsin District told leaders that there was a need for basic training for teaching Sunday school. One of the challenges of providing assistance is the geographic size of our district. Members of the Sunday school committee of the Western Wisconsin District decided to implement four entry-level workshops for Sunday school teachers in strategic locations across the district. These half-day events begin at 8:30 a.m. end at 11:45 a.m. and will be offered on a rotating basis over the next four years.

On September 13, 2003, these topics will be offered in the following locations of the Western Wisconsin District:

- ◆ St. Mark, Eau Claire – Classroom Management Skills
- ◆ St. John, Sparta – Teaching Memory Work, Singing, and Missions in a Sunday School
- ◆ Northland Lutheran High School, Mosinee – Assisting Families and Outreach Through Sunday School
- ◆ Trinity, Watertown – Preparing a Great Sunday School Lesson

Each of the sessions is broken up according to grade level. An additional feature that will be offered in each of this year's workshop is "Training and Encouragement for Sunday School Superintendents."

In order to encourage participation, the workshop fee is \$30. Each church may send as many teachers as they wish. Refreshments and the cost for speakers and materials are included in the registration fee.

Ninety-nine teachers participated in last year's workshops. If each of these teachers taught ten children, that translates to over 1,000 Sunday school children and teachers who benefited. We are confident that as others become aware of this annual fall event, the number of participants will increase.

For more information contact Jerry Kastens, WWI District Sunday School Contact & Minister of Discipleship, Trinity Lutheran Church, Watertown, WI 920-261-3511 or <trinityminister@charter.net>.

"SURVEY SAYS..."

At the National Sunday School Conference last January, 130 individuals provided the following feedback:

When to have a national conference?

- ◆ 47% were in favor of an every-other-year conference
- ◆ 38% were in favor of an every-year conference
- ◆ 15% were undecided

What grades do you teach?

- ◆ 29% teach grades PreK-K
- ◆ 18% teach grades 1-2
- ◆ 23% teach grades 3-4
- ◆ 15% teach grades 5-6
- ◆ 13% teach grades 7-8
- ◆ 2% teach high school

Average number of students enrolled in your class?

- ◆ 7% have from 1-3 students in class
- ◆ 14% have from 4-8 students
- ◆ 25% have from 5-8 students
- ◆ 24% have from 9-12 students
- ◆ 13% have from 13-16 students
- ◆ 16% have 17 or more students

How often do you have staff meetings?

- ◆ 69% said once a month
- ◆ 6% said none at all
- ◆ 6% said 6 times a year
- ◆ 6% said quarterly
- ◆ 2% said every 6 weeks
- ◆ 6% said twice a month
- ◆ 1% said one time
- ◆ 3% said twice a year
- ◆ 1% said 8 times a year

How much does your congregation budget for Sunday school?

- ◆ 5%...\$0-\$200
- ◆ 7%...\$201-\$500
- ◆ 15%...\$501-\$1000
- ◆ 8%...\$1001-\$2000
- ◆ 7%...\$2001-\$3000
- ◆ 2%...\$3001-\$4000
- ◆ 2%...\$4001-\$5000
- ◆ 54%...Not sure how much

How much of this conference's expenses were covered by your congregation?

- ◆ 65% - Congregation covers all of the expenses
- ◆ 13% - Congregation covers registration fee only
- ◆ 5% - Unsure of congregation's support
- ◆ 14% - No support was offered

Only At Sunday School!

"There will be thunder, lightning, floods, fires, earthquakes!" roared the preacher, describing Judgment Day.

Wide-eyed, a little girl in the congregation tugged at his mother's sleeve: "Will I get out of Sunday school?"

Son: Dad, did you go to Sunday school when you were young?

Dad: Never missed a Sunday.

Son: Bet it won't do me any good either.

On the way home from a Sunday school lesson that discussed the horrible evils brought into the world by Satan, a 3rd grade Sunday school student asked his 4th grade brother: "What do you make of the devil and all that evil-in-the-world stuff we were taught today?"

"Well," the older brother replied. "You know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just dad."

SS Teacher: Why did the Israelites wander 40 years in the desert?

Female student: Even back then the men would not stop to ask for directions.

SS Teacher: What are the Epistles?

Student: The wives of the Apostles.



What a Day It Was!

by Dave Sipes, Sunday School Superintendent
Resurrection Lutheran Church - Maumee, Ohio.

What a sight to see over 30 Sunday School teachers, superintendents and pastors sitting down, standing up, and “motioning” while singing “This is the Day the Lord has Made.” This actually happened about 6 times during a Sunday School Teachers Workshop held at Resurrection last January.

Dave Zubke, [former WELS-CYD Sunday School Assistant] who has researched and studied hundreds of Sunday Schools, presented ways to improve our Sunday School and gave a number of tips on teaching techniques. Teachers from 10 different congregations attended, with some coming from two hours away.

Dave’s opening devotion helped give everyone a Christian perspective on the purpose of Sunday School. The teachers came away with many new ideas. Everyone who was there will forever remember the words to “This is the Day the Lord has Made,” for as we learned “repetition is the mother of all learning.”

It was exciting to see this commitment to our Sunday Schools. Pray for all our teachers as they go about the important work of supporting parents in the spiritual upbringing of their children! Below is what our pastor, Jeffrey Mittelstadt, had to say:

Dave Zubke led a SS workshop at our place. It was great! We invited 20-30 area churches to join us and at least 10 sent one or more of their SS teachers. Dave has a gift for relating to where

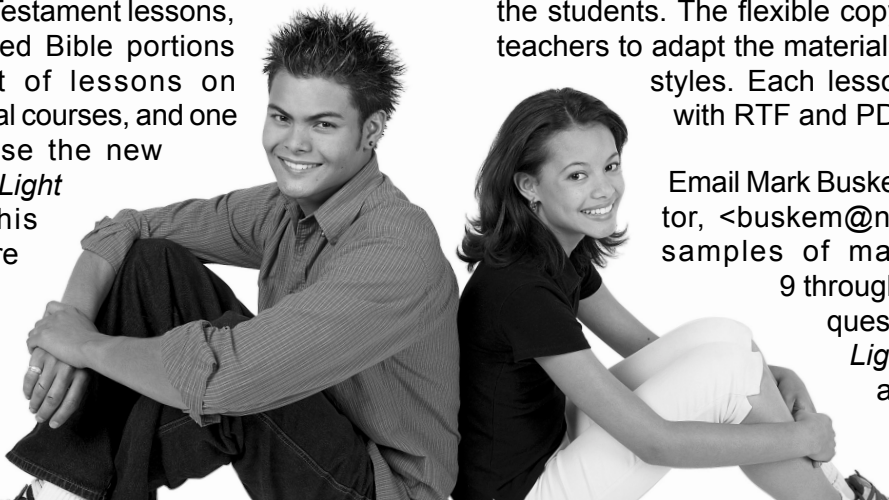
his listeners are. He connected with them (and me) extremely well. His enthusiasm was a huge asset. His examples were practical and very usable too (not pie-in-the-sky theory). He had us all standing and singing (with hand motions!) within the first 20 minutes. It was exactly what our SS staff needed - especially to break up the January doldrums of SS. It appeared to me that our teachers loved Dave’s workshop. [It was] especially cool to hear other teachers experiences etc. I’d hope our Superintendent considers inviting Dave back again next year for another round. As for the value of this event - our 5 teachers who attended walked away big-time uplifted. Three of them incorporated things Dave taught in their lessons the very next day! I guess you could say they saw relevance.

Dave Zubke’s work with CYD ended in 2002, but you can schedule a workshop in your area, as well as, discuss Dave’s workshop expenses.

David Zubke
7123 Fieldview Street #4
Racine, WI 53406
262-886-2441
email: buzz@wi.net.

More Teen/High School Bible Studies

Three sets of New Testament lessons, one set of treasured Bible portions lessons, one set of lessons on Galatians, five topical courses, and one core book comprise the new releases for *Christ-Light* teen materials this year. The lessons are constructed around a solid pedagogy that penetrates Scripture and applies God’s Word to the lives of



the students. The flexible copy master format allows teachers to adapt the materials to individual teaching styles. Each lesson also includes a CD with RTF and PDF files of the material.

Email Mark Buske, NPH Marketing Director, <buskem@nph.wels.net> for PDF samples of materials from grades 9 through 11 and to answer any questions about the *Christ-Light* high school materials. Grade 12 materials will be available in Spring 2004.



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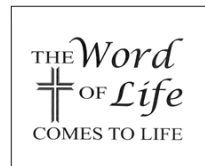
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Can We Chat?

Pam Ludke, Sunday School Coordinator at Hope Lutheran Church in Louisville, KY is interested in connecting her Sunday school students with yours via computers and the internet. If you would be interested in connecting your students with Hope Lutheran's Sunday school students, contact Pam: <pamludke@bellsouth.net>.

Get Some Great Ideas

One of the sectionals at the recent WELS Sunday School Conference found 50 teachers exchanging great ideas for improving lessons, engaging students, and making Sunday school more enjoyable. If you'd like to receive a copy of all the ideas, contact <cyd@sab.wels.net> or call 414-256-3274.

Please contact us with any questions or for further information.

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