



it's for life!

Promote the Sunday School

Many of you found the July/August issue on Sunday School helpful. **How do we know?** We have received a welcome deluge of requests for extra copies and permission to reprint articles. So, we are posting on our online edition more help for pastors. We hope you will use or adapt these materials for the weekly bulletin, your newsletter, or as promptings for a pastoral prayer. Also, for downloadable posters, brochures, and other help, go to www.sundayschool.cokesbury.com and click on "Promote the Sunday School." We hope that you will use these materials to invite new persons to participate in Sunday School and to bring the work of the Sunday School to the attention of the whole congregation.

*Sunday School can make a difference in your congregation.
You can make a difference in Sunday School!*

Notes for Newsletters

Teaching leaders?

Congressman Lee Hamilton, co-chair of the 9/11 Commission, spoke with representatives of the Council of Bishops during their meeting in Washington, D.C. last year. In the course of describing some of the contributions he hoped he had made in a career of public service, he talked about support for people who have been marginalized in one way or another. He commented that he was influenced by the values and ways of seeing and acting that he had learned in the Methodist Sunday school of his childhood and youth. It's likely that his teachers would be surprised to think that those lessons and class experiences were having such a significant impact on this young man. Who are the leaders that this congregation is touching? Let's nurture our teachers and the members of our Sunday school classes.

A Good Question?

Overheard in the hallway: "Daddy, if you've graduated from Sunday school, will you come and teach my class?"

Listen and Learn

Proverbs 2 encourages us to make our ear "attentive to wisdom," to incline our "heart to understanding," to "cry out for insight," to raise our "voice for understanding," and to seek for God's wisdom "like silver." A tried and true principle of education grounds these teachings in Proverbs. We learn best when we desire to learn. In matters of faith and learning God's wisdom, our intent to listen and learn leads to a deeper appreciation of God and to growth in a life of faith in God. Proverbs 2 tells us:

For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding....
You will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path;
for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

Proverbs 2:6, 9-10, NRSV

Sunday school offers a place to listen and learn with others about God. Bring your questions. Bring your intent and motivation. Come to Sunday school.

For the Pastoral Prayer

We give you thanks for the teachers, helpers, and leaders who are investing themselves in our Sunday school. We pray for them—for wisdom, for patience, for joy, and for their openness to hearing your voice. May each class be a place in which leaders and learners together are formed in your image. *Amen.*

Food for Thought

In *Educating Congregations*, Charles Foster describes the following as a "significant" religious experience:

I had just gone to bed. My father was listening while I recited the Lord's Prayer. I got past the "hallowed" and the "trespasses," sailed through the "daily bread" to the "dimes in the kingdom of heaven." After I pronounced a firm "Amen," my father looked down at me, thought for a moment, and then said, "There are no dimes in the king-

dom.” He then told me to say when I prayed “For thine is the kingdom.” Actually it probably made little difference what words I used at the time. The power of a prayer to a young child lies not in the words, but in the relationship of the child to the people who pray it.

Sunday school is a place where children and adults build relationships and learn to pray. Am I inviting people in to these important relationships on a regular basis?



“Congregations need to find multiple avenues to reach people. But the fact is that each week, millions of people are in Sunday school classes, and over half of those are adults. Sunday school is the basic building block of an adult education program, and we often overlook it. If we took efforts to revitalize this existing avenue of faith, then we could have immediate impact on a huge number of people.” (From an article by Arlene Hewitt in *Leader in Christian Education Ministries*, Fall 2004)

Want to talk to teachers or students about what’s going on in Sunday school?

Here are some of the themes for this quarter in Cokesbury’s most widely used materials:

- In *Exploring Faith and One Room Sunday School*, September classes begin with Exploring the Bible—The Bible

is a book of history, stories, law, poetry, sayings, wisdom, prophecy, and letters that tell who God is, what God has done, and what God expects. The Bible provides us the foundation for our faith.

In October, classes will move to Exploring Creation—The Bible reveals God as the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe.

And looking ahead to November, classes will be talking about the Season of Hope—God is the One who creates, the One who forgives, and eventually through the birth and death of Jesus, the One who redeems. Advent begins the last Sunday of the quarter.

- The fall issue of *Bible Lessons for Youth* focuses on God’s creativity at work in us. In September, youth will study call, covenant, and what it means to be created for a purpose as they dive into the Torah. In October, they will be challenged to look for God’s creative work in Scripture and in themselves as they study Samuel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Psalms. November lessons encourage teens to discover what it means to be a new creation in Christ by exploring Matthew, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Ephesians.

- The theme for September and October 2004 in *Adult Bible Studies* is the God of Creation. September offers a survey of Torah texts that assert that God created us for a purpose. October looks primarily at prophetic texts to understand how God’s creativity is ongoing. Looking ahead, November turns to New Testament texts to help us think about the new creation that Christ made possible.

- *Bible Lessons for Youth*, *Adult Bible Studies*, *Lecciones Cristianas*, and *Lecciones Cristianas para Jovenes* all follow the International Lesson Series outlines.



Sunday School



it's for life!

- lifelong
- life-giving
- about real life
- connected to the Source of life