

Education & Family Ministry Newsletter

Families and congregations learning, living and sharing daily faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ!



Based on the Great Commission and as part of our **CALL** to ministry the Education and Family Ministry Team will encourage and equip families and congregations to serve Christ.
Matthew 28:19-20

Children & Adults Living and Learning

This is the spring edition of the Western Iowa Synod's Education & Family Ministry Newsletter. This newsletter contains ideas, articles and resources for the upcoming season and is published quarterly. It is now available on the Western Iowa Synod website at www.wisynod.org under Education & Family Ministry, it will be e-mailed to the Christian education contact people that we have e-mails for and a hard copy will be sent to our contact list and congregations. We hope you will let us know which way you prefer to receive it so that we can offer this resource in the most efficient way possible for you. **Please contact Lynn via phone, 712.732.4968, or e-mail, wisle@wisynod.org, and let her know which way you would prefer to receive the newsletter.**

This Spring Newsletter Contains
Ideas and Information For:

**Intergenerational
Ideas**

**One Room
Sunday School**

Rally Day

Mission Projects

**Rotational
Sunday School**

**Alternatives for
Sunday School**

Rally Day

I am sure most everyone is thrilled with the coming of summer. We will be able to put the Sunday school books away, and rest a bit before the fall schedule starts all over again. Well . . . don't rest too much. Now is the time to start working on a glorious reunion for your church family as they all come back from summer adventures — recharged, refreshed and ready to study. Don't wait until the last minute, and just start Sunday school because you have nothing planned. **Boring!!!**

I have expressed before why Rally Day is so very important. I believe the whole year will define itself by what happens on Rally Day. Pick a theme and run with it the whole year. Every congregation has creative people with wonderful imaginations. Turn them loose. The children, as well as the adults, will be excited to find out what is going to happen next. This is a marvelous way to keep interest and anticipation as to what they will learn next. I love watching and hearing about how the young people who insist that mom and dad get out of bed Sunday morning, and get ready for church. Excitement can be very contagious. Allow the Spirit, room to operate.

How do you pick a theme? This year is an easy one. The first thing I always think about is: what are my available resources. I have used semi trucks, tractors, trains, heavy construction equipment, farm machinery, lots of balloon, piles of sand, boats, mining equipment, golden rocks, fire trucks, army vehicles, and our Norwegian heritage.

This year Badger Lutheran Church will be **“Campaigning for Christ.”** We will be having posters and placards, maybe even a loud speaker — boasting of our candidate's phenomenal qualification. *“Christ is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.”* *“He died for our sins.”* You get the drift. We will be outside and inside the church, campaigning for the Savior of the world. We will have balloons with a great message on them.

Take the time to check with your neighbors. What are they going to be doing for Rally Day in September? Catch their excitement. You might just think of something much, much better. **Think Big!** Never think in minimums! You will usually always get what you aim for. It is easy to get people on board when your efforts are producing results. **Failure is never an option!**

Remember you are working for God here. His Holy Spirit will never let you fail if you always strive to do your very best for Him. Don't be afraid to let Him take you by the hand and run. You will have a smile on your face! You'll always be looking for more of His handiwork. Ideas and inspiration will bubble out of you.

Excited? You should be! We all are working for our most glorious God!!!

By Pastor Darryl Landsverk

Adults and Children Talking at Home Caring Conversation at Home...The Discussion Continues

When was the last time your family sat down together at a meal and had some meaningful conversation? How about the last long car ride you took together? These are wonderful times for some caring conversation. Caring Conversation is one of the four keys to faith formation and passing on our faith. Here are a few easy questions to get you started:

*What is your first memory of Jesus?

*What questions do you have about God?

*Kids, what do you want to know about your parents' faith? What do you want to know about your grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins' faith?

*Parents, what do you want to know about your children's faith?

*Get out pictures of baptism days, weddings, confirmations and talk about how this day was important to you.

*Call up those people in your life that you would like to know more about their faith. Write down what they tell you and put it in your Family Faith Album.

*Get some Talk Cards and use those at supper, bedtime, car time, whenever and wherever you experience "Holy Ground."



Intergenerational Conversation at Church, Why Not?

Why not carry this idea into the church? Make table tents with some basic questions like the ones above or like, when I see a rainbow it reminds me of..... My favorite Bible story is..... My favorite holiday tradition that I remember with my family is.... The kids will love hearing the faith stories of the older adults and the adults can get to know the children of the congregation even better. Try this during your coffee or fellowship time and alternate adults and children as they find a seat. You'll be amazed at what you can learn about each other and from each other.

Rotation Sunday School

By Pastor Trish Underberg, Faith Lutheran Church in Odebolt



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In the spring of 2007 as an education committee we decided that staff our own VBS in July. The model of the program we used was in stations. It worked so well that as fall approached the committee wondered if that may not be the way to go for Sunday school in the fall. Our goal was to keep the kids excited about learning God's Word, even after the Christmas program was over. With that style in mind for Sunday school we looked at various curriculum that would meet our basic needs.

With using the rotation model we opted to have two different stations each week and in that way we were able to cover the same material for two weeks in various methods. The first week of the new material always included the storyteller, and we had one person who volunteered to serve as our story teller and then it would be either a craft, science lesson, game, cooking, or another idea that may fit with the lesson. The second week would be two other stations opening up the story in a new way. This helps to support the various learning styles of the students but also the various teaching styles of the teachers.

As we are a smaller congregation with decreasing Sunday school numbers this method proved extremely helpful. It allowed for more volunteers to help with Sunday school while at the same time making their commitments short term. We have found that we had parents who were much more willing to help for a one or two time project than for a full school year.

In order for this to work the education committee worked on laying out a schedule of what each station would be and then making sure that the materials for the teachers were available ahead of time so they could be prepared. It does take some prep work by the Sunday School Superintendent and committee but it really worked for us this year.

VBS Kits, They're Not Just For Summer Anymore!!

By Lynn Egesdal, Education, Youth & Family Ministry Coordinator

Vacation Bible School is probably one of my favorite ministry programs to work with. There are so many wonderful kits that are now available complete with ideas for crafts, snacks, a music DVD and so much more. It is so much fun making the decorations that create a fun and enjoyable atmosphere for the kids and even us adults.

As the week begins it is such a joy to see all the children gather together, not only excited to be with their friends but excited about the decorations, the theme and the new music that they are eager to learn. As the week continues you may come to know some new kids from the community, you connect with certain children that run up and give you a hug and are happy to be back for another day of singing, playing and learning about God. When it is time to begin you just turn up the music and away we go to start the day. The kids jump right in with singing and sometimes even dancing. It is a wonderful experience!

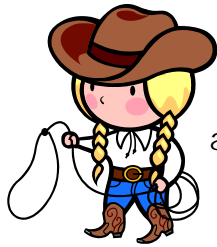
As our Christian Education Team met to talk about our fall curriculum, we were still so thrilled with how our VBS had been going the past few years that we thought why not use a



VBS kit to start off our fall semester. So we did!! We borrowed Avalanche Ranch from another congregation that had used it in the summer and we came up with a great idea that worked well for the number of children that we had.

We still used a rotational or station model, but we spread each story or topic over two weeks. For example on one Sunday we had story telling and a craft. On the next Sunday we had Chadder's theatre and games. We began with an opening all together, then the children broke into two groups and they switched halfway through the morning. Of course we couldn't forget a themed snack during this time also. By having the story telling and theatre on two different Sundays, the children would hear the story even if they were gone the previous Sunday. If they weren't gone it would be reinforced or taught in a different way.

I'm not going to tell you that this wasn't a lot of work because it was. Finding people to commit to helping the whole fall semester is almost impossible. So, we laid out our schedule and calendar and filled in people where we needed them. We talked with those people that we knew would be good story tellers and plugged them into a Sunday where the storytelling was a part of the rotation. We found others willing to help with crafts and plugged them into the Sundays that crafts were scheduled, and people willing to help a time or two with snacks and so forth. It was wonderful all the different people that we had involved in so many different ways.



We started off the fall semester with our Rally Day at Avalanche Ranch with cowboy hats, wagon wheels and many different decorations to get the whole congregation into the theme. We even took family pictures with everyone dressed up in western wear or fancy old time dresses and each family had an old time photo to put on a Wanted by God poster. This was a fun and exciting way to kick off our Sunday school program! Use your imagination, VBS kits could even be used as an after school program or a midweek program. So as you have read, VBS kits aren't just for summer anymore.

AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

By Kathi Ondracek, EFM Team member

Just as it's time to start thinking about your Fall Sunday Church School curriculum, it's time to develop a new mission project for your students. What better way to teach them sharing and caring than through self-involvement.

The choices are many and you can alternate the projects from local to worldwide. One year you might designate a local food pantry as your mission project and the next year focus on overseas. There are many and varied projects available at the ELCA.org web site. Still stumped? Contact the EFM team and we'll be happy to help you.

Reaching
out to
others

If you can actually make a physical display depicting your project and the students can see the difference their coins are making, it will open up a whole new world for them.

Here are some possible Western Iowa Synod Mission areas you could give to:

The Church of the Damascus Road (prison ministry)
Spirit of Life (worshiping community in Sergeant Bluff)
Our Savior's/Nuestro Salvador

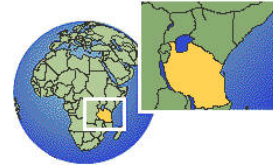
Hatua kwa Hatua (Step by Step) Projects in Tanzania: (for more info. go to www.wisynod.org)

Igumbilo Girls' School

Medical Supplies

Water project (drilling wells)

CAD (Center for Agricultural Development)



Or check our ELCA Good Gifts, available at <https://archive.elca.org/ScriptLib/DS/giving/default.asp>

Heifer International Project

Outreach Africa

Sunday School the Old-Fashioned Way

by Lynn Egesdal, Western Iowa Synod Education, Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is a congregation with an average worship attendance of 73 in the small town of Adair, just north of Interstate 80 in southern Iowa. Though the town and the church may be small, their Kids for Christ program certainly is not. Kids for Christ is the name given to their “one-room school” Sunday school program.

At Good Shepherd Lutheran they use a home-grown curriculum that teaches about God and His love through storytelling, drama, videos, games, music, and food in a “one-room school” atmosphere. For the past six years they have found this to be an inspiring and fun curriculum for both the leaders and the children.

Sharon Anderson is the director of this wonderful program. Sharon, along with a few helpers, have turned the KFC program into a very successful children’s ministry. The curriculum is laid out to cover the Bible in four years. This is a program that is successful whether you have four children or fifty-four children in attendance and is structured to accommodate all ages. The program lasts for sixty minutes every Sunday morning, with special programming planned around such holidays as Easter and Christmas.

Sharon also does a wonderful job getting adults involved. The day I visited KFC they were learning about the story of David and Goliath. With Sharon

as the narrator, the story was acted out using grandfathers, people from the community and fathers representing Goliath, the Philistines and the Israelites, and a young boy representing David. The actors occasionally had a few short lines that made the story a little more amusing for the audience. The only practice that was needed was about thirty minutes the night before and simple costumes such as bath robes and construction paper shields.



children, approximately thirty in attendance, really enjoyed seeing their fathers and grandfathers acting out the story.



During their KFC time they also sang songs to go with their theme and they played a Wheel of Fortune type game in which the teams worked together, adult actors included, to solve the Bible verse of the day. This game was complete with a spinning wheel and points earned for guessing the correct letters. They also incorporate mission projects throughout the year to raise money for such projects as HEIFER International.

I can envision this one-room Sunday school working in many of our congregations in the synod. If your Sunday school is low in numbers, this might be an option for you. If your attendance drops drastically after Christmas, I could see it working for you. If you would like more information about this "one-room school" Sunday school, Sharon would be more than happy to talk with you. You may contact her at 642-742-5518 or e-mail her at sanderson@accs.k12.ia.us.