

Teaching the Faith: Sunday School

Does your church offer “drive-by” Sunday school?

Gone are the days of the little ones attending Sunday school and their parents attending a Bible class of some sort during that hour before or after church. Too often, if they are brought at all, children are dropped off for Sunday school. What can we do? How do we reach out to the young families who are getting their children, if not themselves, to Sunday school? How do we reach out to those who don't even try? The most important thing is to give them an opportunity to learn about Jesus, but wouldn't it be great if we could also connect to them in other ways?

Most rural congregations struggle with small attendance numbers. Maybe instead of seeing this as a struggle we should see it as an opportunity. Imagine the relationships that can be built when we can talk about the lesson and how it applies to our daily lives! Here are some thoughts on how to get children and families excited about Sunday school.

We are directed in Prov. 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” The best way to do this is to lead by example. When we drop our children off for Sunday school we are sending an important message, but is this the message we want to convey? Do we want to train them to only be in God's Word for an hour on Sunday or worse yet, teach them that once you can drive you do not need to be in the Word for even that hour? It is imperative to teach the importance of a lifelong faith that requires learning, studying, praying and fellowship with other believers. God created us to be in fellowship with one another, but as fallen human beings we think we can do it entirely on our own.

There is also a lack of volunteers to teach Sunday school for a variety of reasons. What if we developed a ministry that would involve the whole family? We could provide an opportunity for families to learn about Jesus together and provide education/resources for this to spill over into every day of their lives. We could connect the widow with the young family, the single mom with the empty-nest parents whose grandchildren live in other states, or the military wife with the family who is living far away from their own family.

Another challenge is creating excitement. Excitement is contagious, so it is important to find leaders who are excited about Sunday school ministry. This can be an even bigger challenge, but if people know the responsibility will not be entirely on them, maybe they will be more willing.

God's Word provides us with amazing curriculum, but how do you develop this in your congregation? Plan to join me in the conversation about Sunday school curriculum, creating excitement, intergenerational ministry and lifelong faith during the LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission webinar on Thursday, May 25 at 1:00 p.m. CST.

Contributed by Angela Kollbaum, youth director, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Concordia, Mo. LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission supports and encourages rural and small town congregations in engaging their communities and growing together in Christ through Word and Sacrament. If you have a good idea for outreach or a story you'd like to share so that we can share it with others, please email Amy Gerdtz at amy.gerdtz@lcms.org. Learn more about us at www.lcms.org/rstm, by calling our office at 888-463-5127, by email at rstm@lcms.org or “like” us on our facebook page at www.facebook.com/lcmsrstm.