

Reaching Rural America for Christ

A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

Volume 8, Issue 5 • Newsletter

May 2017



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

Rural & Small Town Mission

Our "Life Together"

- To follow the core beliefs of the LCMS
- To equip rural professional and lay leaders
- To support congregations in community engagement

Remember: RSTM is eligible for Thrivent Choice Dollars!

Please Pray for These Important Dates

May 25 - Webinar

"Teaching the Faith: Sunday School"
Angela Kollbaum, youth director,
St. Paul's, Concordia, Mo.
1-2 p.m. CST

June 10

"Engaging the Wandering event"
Zion Lutheran, Chamberlain, S.D.
with the LCMS South Dakota
District.

Nov. 9 - 11

National RSTM Conference
Hilton Kansas City Airport
Kansas City, Mo.
lcms.org/rstm/conference

If you have an idea or story for Rural Outreach, contact Amy at the RSTM office.

Phone: 888-463-5127

Email: amy.gerdt@lcms.org

"And we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and fervent love toward one another through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord" (Post Communion Collect, LSB)

STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

Alexander Pope in "An Essay on Criticism" said:

"A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring: there shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again."

Pope reminds the reader that when one learns a little, one can become puffed up and think he knows more than he does. Even more dangerous is the one who with a little learning thinks he knows it all.

Conversely, when we continue our learning, we might find out just how much we don't know.

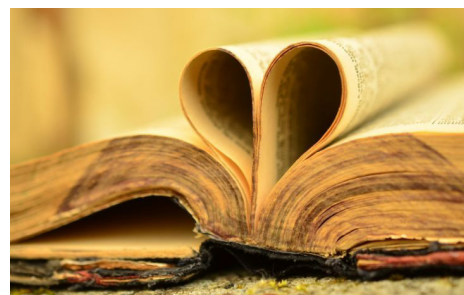
This is the premise behind our recent series of articles and webinars on "Teaching the Faith." Often in the Church we have folks who engage in learning the Word of God but at some point decide they've learned enough, whether in Sunday school, confirmation, high school or beyond.

As Pope observes, however, this way of thinking is dangerous! In fact, our faith is a lifelong learning situation, for it is

through God's Word and His Sacraments that we are made strong in faith and life. In fact, we are told in Deut. 6:6-9, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Sounds like lifelong learning to me.

Pastor Todd



RSTM Events Update

Don't forget: RSTM provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is **Teaching the Faith: Sunday School** with Angela Kollbaum, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Concordia, Mo., on 5/25, 1-2 p.m. CST, followed by **Teaching the Faith: Adults** with Rev. Heath Trampe, Faith Lutheran, York, Neb., on 6/8, 1-2 p.m. CST. Find past webinars in our webinar archive on our website as a free resource for use when

you need it. Register for our Engaging Your Community (EYC) and our new Engaging the Wandering events on our website, lcms.org/rstm. You can also see our full calendar.

Don't forget to check out all the RSTM National Conference details at lcms.org/rstm/conference.

Now is a great time to register! Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.



TEACHING THE FAITH:



Contributed by Angela Kollbaum, youth director, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Concordia, Mo.

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.

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.

Learn more about RSTM at lcms.org/rstm or by calling Amy at 888-463-5127. “Like” us on our Facebook page at facebook.com/lcmsrstm.

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