

The Christian Education Connection

Purpose: To Encourage, Educate and Excite

from IAYM CE Board September 2015

SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO:

goodhome@heartofiowa.net or 641-939-7795

Christian Education Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/iaymce/>



You are encouraged to join our Facebook page. Our goal is to provide a means for Sunday School teachers, CE committee members and anyone interested to swap ideas, share resources and encourage each other. We hope to have better interaction as more join and participate. Check it out; ask a question, make a comment and join us as we grow together to share God's love in our families, churches and communities.

Net Support

<http://youthministry.com/conference/> One day youth ministry training event September 19, 2015 - Des Moines, IA

<http://ministry-to-children.com/where-to-find-christmas-plays-for-children/> Christmas plays to use with children and youth

<http://www.sunday-school-center.com/preschool-bible-lessons.html> Preschool lessons

SS Service Project:

College Kids Care Kits



Put together care kits for church & community students. They will love getting a funny card of encouragement in the mail, and be even more grateful for a package of goodies. You might include: microwave popcorn, hot cocoa mix, coffees, post-it notes, granola bars, pudding cups, bubbles, markers, silly toys for stress relief, pens, small boxes of cereal, gift card for pizza, laundry detergent and/or quarters, music CD, homemade cookies, Chex mix, lip balm, card game, Easy Mac, Ramen Noodles, batteries, etc.



Teacher Appreciation

How do you thank a teacher for being there every Sunday, having a lesson prepared, caring for their students, and often leading them to Jesus Christ? It can't be done! (At least not this side of heaven!) But in the meantime, here are a few ideas to help you make plans for your own Teacher Appreciation Day!

Perhaps begin by inviting teachers to a breakfast served by their students, no matter the age. Then have a short program & give a simple gift like one of the following. The best way to support your teachers and youth leaders is to regularly pray for them and let them know you appreciate their time with a handwritten note. Also be sure you are on time and prepared for each lesson or activity.

"You are 'souper' – soup mix, or homemade soup
"Thanks for lighting the way" – a nice candle
"You are a Treasure!" – Treasure candies
"Thanks for being Jesus' hands", here is something for your hands" – lotion
"Have I told you REESEntly how much I appreciate you?" – Reese's Peanut Butter Cup

Benefits of Sunday School for Big People

<http://real-life-at-grace.blogspot.com>

Adult SS provides an opportunity to teach God's Word in a deeper manner. In this smaller setting of similar stage of life, gender, interests, etc. you can be more specific in the teaching and practical application.

Adult SS helps train new leaders. Teachers grow even more spiritually since they must study deeper in order to accurately teach.

In this smaller group environment we have a chance to know people more intimately and to learn more about the Word in a safer environment to ask questions.

People are already committed to being out for church and only have to come one hour early. We are all busy, but this is a way to grow deeper in a setting that you are already committed to. Also, children are learning in their own classes.

You get to know people and understand their needs. Write a note, give a call, make a meal when they are in need, or visit. It is easier to volunteer to meet the needs of people that you know enough to care about.



Hellos and Goodbyes

By Jennifer Talbot

A little over a year ago, my family and my church said goodbye to my mother-in-law. She was a gem, a recorded Friends minister, a public speaker, an active member of our meeting and Iowa Yearly Meeting. But she was first and foremost, at the time of her death, a grandmother. And my six children, each of whom she had eagerly welcomed into her family, needed to say goodbye.

I have told many parents of little people that one of our jobs, as parents, is to teach our children how to say hello and goodbye. I believe that this is the responsibility of our faith families as well. But in all honesty, we probably don't do it as well as we should. We face not only the challenges of our culture and its preoccupation with youth, but the challenges of our faith vocabulary, as we use words and phrases that sometimes befuddle the young minds among us. "Home to be with Jesus." "Passed away." "Traveling through the valley."

We have a family policy- always tell the truth. That policy was born from our faith, but strengthened by our experience with children who were often lied to and about by those that they were supposed to trust. So around the Talbot house, we speak truth and love. And when Grandma was struggling with cancer, we did the following:


1. We told the kids the truth. Cancer is a horrible disease. It is attacking her body. But her body- that's the temporary part of Grandma. Her soul, that's the part that lives forever. That's the real Grandma. That part of Grandma is the part that will be with Jesus someday.
2. We told the kids the truth. Everyone dies. Some die young, some die old, some die in accidents, some die of disease. Some die because someone else kills them. Everyone dies. But everyone has a soul. That soul, that's what really matters.
3. We showed the kids the truth. And we let them see it, and smell it, and touch it. They visited Grandma at her house, at the hospital, and at the nursing home. They saw the wounds on her face. They saw the feeding tube. They continued to see her, to talk to her, to play at her feet. Death was coming, but it wasn't here yet. Life was here and it was meant to be shared.

4. We showed the kids the truth. After she died, all but the oldest saw her body. The empty shell. And we talked about healing- no more cancer, no more diabetes, no more feeding tube, no more pain. They witnessed healing as we hugged and loved and cried and laughed.

5. We gave them the time they needed to mourn. So often, we rush through death's rituals- the visitation, the funeral, the burial. In our case, we waited a month and then we had a party. In retrospect, waiting a couple of weeks might have been better, but in the end, we had given ourselves time to mourn, and to heal a bit before the gathering of the saints and the celebration of her life. And because we waited, our children seemed able to really participate in the celebration of exactly who their grandmother was, and all the lives she had touched.

Hello- that's the fun stuff! New babies, new marriages, new believers. Goodbye, that's the tough stuff. We long to protect our children from the hard stuff, but it really isn't the way of Jesus. These words, they are just one example of how one family "traveled through the valley of the shadow of death," nothing more, nothing less. This is part of our family's story, not to be a how-to, or an instructional guide. I hope that it gets us thinking together of what it means to say hello, and to say goodbye, and to do so in a way that honors the One who lived, and died, and lives again.

October is Pastor Appreciation Month

Think of one small thing your pastor enjoys --M&Ms, fishing lures, coffee, etc. Ask each member to bring that item on Sunday. OR use an  October calendar to schedule folks for a month of surprises. Each day, the pastor will receive a token of appreciation from an individual, family, or group. The tributes will vary--a balloon delivery, a shoe shine, an apple pie, a gift card. Don't forget a note stating specific reasons how you appreciate your pastor's spiritual leadership.

"God understood our thirst for knowledge, and our need to be led by someone wiser; He needed a heart of compassion, of encouragement, and patience; someone who would accept the challenge regardless of the opposition; someone who could see potential and believe in the best in others...so He made teachers" ~ Unknown

Building Relationships

By Mindy Hadley



I never thought that I would be living in a town with just over 200 people, but now I cannot imagine life outside of New Providence. What I love about my town are the relationships I have built with the people who live here and who attend church with me.

As you all know, relationships are so very important in our everyday lives, but we also know that life is busy. So the question is how do you build relationships with those around us?

For me, it was all about investment. I came to this community not knowing anyone, but they were willing to invest in me. I needed to put myself out there and invest in them. I can remember sitting in church trying to name everyone in the pews around me. Then I moved on to trying to remember a little detail about each person. First I needed to learn a detail about each person; I needed to ask questions and invest in them.

You may be thinking what does this have to do with me? I go to a small church and I already know everyone. Well, think about the people in your community that maybe need someone to reach out to them. For me, I know that there are young couples in our community that I could be bringing into our church. I need to start investing myself in them and establishing a relationship. Then when I ask them to come to a bible study with me, it won't be so hard. I will already know them and they will know me.



Conversation Starters for Classes of any Age

By Wayne Stocks of
Ministry-to-Children.com

- What makes you smile?
- What was something fun you did this week?
- What is your favorite food or ice cream?
- If you could receive one thing as a present right now, what would it be?
- What zoo animal would you like as a pet?
- What are your hobbies?
- What is your favorite season or time of the year and why?
- If you were in charge of our church, what would you do different?

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

Encouragement for Small SS Classes & Youth Groups

By Scott Biddle

Working with a small group for Sunday School and Youth Group can be challenging, but rewarding. You see, even the mega churches break down into small group ministry. That is where the actual spiritual growth happens. Sunday morning preaching is a time to listen and take in, small groups is for hearing, grasping, asking questions and really digging into what the Word has to say.

I have had the opportunity to teach different sized groups. It is a teaching time, and yet teaching comes in different forms. I am very much a “questions” based kind of teacher. What I mean is, I will present scripture, video, a story, real life situation, something that will interest the group and then have questions to ask to get them to think through the material. Some questions I have written down and some come to me while teaching and are based on the answers received. I allow people to ask questions as well.

The fear in letting people ask questions is, “What if I don't have the answer?” That is real. I had to learn a long time ago, at least what feels like a long time ago to me, that I know I don't have all the answers on the spot and to be alright with that. When those situations arise, I would tell them, “That is a great question. How about this week you talk to others you trust and do some research, and I will do the same. We can come back next week and discuss it some more.”

You see, we are not teaching to memorize facts and scripture only, but also to know HOW to get the answers to things we do not understand. There is no way we can cover in SS or Youth Group everything they will ever need to know for the rest of their lives, but teaching them to look in scripture, pray and have reliable, trustworthy people to talk to are huge part of the process.

Here is a video on the 5 habits of life changing small groups. Care, Safety, Authenticity, Growth, Help. <https://youtu.be/qUOaQ3oduNg>

2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

The Blessings of Small Classes

by Connie Klaas

Teaching Children's Church or SS to 1 or 2 children can be as challenging as teaching to a large group. Time seems to go faster with a small group, so extra activities need to be planned, such as activity pages or discussion questions. The challenge for me is to remember that 1 or 2 are just as important as a larger group. It's easy to say "well, there's only 1 so why bother having a class." But we need to remember that we are planting seeds for Christ. Each child is important to Christ, so they should be important to us.

Having a small class gives the teacher a chance to get to know the students on an individual basis, making a lifelong connection with them. The child has another adult to share accomplishments and problems with that they may not feel comfortable sharing with parents. They have another adult that loves them unconditionally. I've seen how important this is with my own girls. They know they have people other than family that love and support them in their lives. It really touches my heart.

Refresh Teen Sunday School

By Chet Carlson

Frustrated with your teen's reaction to Sunday School? The solution is simple. Stop doing "school" and start connecting.

Change the Name. Sunday School communicates everything that a student is not interested in on Sunday morning: boring lectures, home-work, stress, etc. Students don't want to go to school on Sunday, they want a break.

Change the Location. Meet at a member's home or local coffee shop to connect, discuss a spiritual topic and close in prayer. If you can't change locations, change the environment. Move tables, decorate, rearrange chairs, etc.

Change Format. Personalize curriculum and create conversation in a relaxed environment.

Change Leadership, with Student Input. If we want students to get connected we need to let them speak. If we want students to grow in their faith we need to let them ask questions and talk. Never underestimate the interest and ability of a teenager to bring a meaningful thought to the conversation. Refresh Teen Sunday school and you may refresh their faith.



Bridging the Generation Gap

By Margaret Good



Here's an idea to help children get better acquainted with the older adults in your church. We did this at Bangor Liberty for our Wed. classes and it has gone well.

We asked grandparents to tell us their favorite Bible story, favorite hymn or Christian song, and favorite snack. I would prepare a lesson for the kids around the Bible story, find the hymn on YouTube so we could listen to it or sing with it and make or purchase their snack for all to enjoy. As we ate together the kids asked questions about the grandparent's childhood, working years, family, hobbies, etc. Grandparents would in turn ask questions of the kids. Much was shared and learned. It was a really good experience for both generations.

A Small Church Welcome

By Dan Kimball Outreach Magazine

My life was changed by a 20-person church in London. Even though that church was small, they never stopped praying for new people to come to Jesus.



I found that congregation by a simple sign on the sidewalk; "Bible Study Inside Today 12:00 p.m. Everyone welcome!" I opened the door and peeked in to see three elderly people. The pastor looked up with a twinkle-eyed glance and asked, "Here for the study?" and I couldn't say no. They took me into their church community and my life was changed. They prayed all the time for those who didn't know Jesus.

The size of your church does not mean God is not using you. For one, you have the people God has brought to you to shepherd, teach and disciple. You also have the privilege of instilling in them a passion for reaching others who don't know Jesus.

I have known some small churches that became more focused on themselves than they were on their mission to the world around them. I would ask any small church to do a self-check to make sure they haven't shifted to an inward-focus versus an outward-focus on mission. Are you passionately praying for others now?