

W I N T E R CHILDREN'S LEADER 2 0 0 2

A NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE WHO LEAD CHILDREN IN THE CONGREGATION.

Branching Out *2*

In the Beginning *2*

Website Updates *3*

News & Notes *3*

Wanted: Earliteen
Opinions *4*

Solving Those
Recruiting Woes *4*

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Sabbath School Goes Evangelistic

Imagine a Sabbath School room filled to overflowing, with a list of non-Adventist families waiting to get in. This describes Jerilyn Cogan's Beginner class at the WillowBrook church in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Each week, 16-25 toddlers and their parents crowd into Jerilyn's Sabbath School room for a creative program filled with Jesus' love, hands-on activities, music, and joyful interaction. "Beginner class is a dynamic force in a church's growth," Jerilyn says. "I have a wide variety of faiths represented in my Beginner class. Only three or four of the families represented are members of our church." Mother of Raeven (6) and Coramina (2-1/2), Jerilyn has chosen to make this program her ministry of outreach to the community.

Typically, this beginner Sabbath School meets the developmental needs of children ages 0-4: exploring through the senses and fostering security in God's love. Each week's program is filled with opportunities for independent discovery: an "archaeological dig" in a turtle-shaped sandbox, hunting for hidden stuffed animals, demonstrating the special characteristics God has given to different creatures.

Prior to starting the program, Jerilyn advertised in the church bulletin and newsletter--also a great strategy for acquiring supplies and volunteers. Then she reviewed the congregation at WillowBrook, personally contacting each individual with a child (or grandchild) in the target age range. "Many young parents aren't comfortable bringing their children to the kind of program they grew up with. I had to tantalize them with exciting activities and a thematic program with a definite start and end date."



Amber feeds the walrus.

(Continued on page 2)

A World-Class Adventure Awaits

children ages 2-3 in an innovative program that explores different cultures, discovers animal friends, and stimulates creativity with

- ❖ hands-on activities
- ❖ musical movement, and
- ❖ journeys of the imagination!

This weekly program begins Saturday, February 9, at 9:30 AM and is located at 1234 Main Street in the Beginners' Room. To register, contact Jerilyn at (301) 123-4567.

Sample newspaper ad for a Beginner Sabbath School

(Continued from page 1)

Once she'd contacted the families of church members (and former members) and their relatives, Jerilyn went on to place an ad in the local newspaper, where free classes in the community can often be listed at no cost. "When they called to ask about the class, most of the parents were shocked to find out that it's free," she laughs.

"I was able to answer parents' questions positively, and assure them that this program encourages discovery and



"Ice fishing" is a big hit.

interactive growth, based on the gentle Christian assurance that God loves them. For one Catholic family, it was important we didn't try to proselytize their children. Yet our class is giving them a positive encounter with a different faith. You plant the seed, and the Holy Spirit prompts the harvest."

After gathering registration information from parents, Jerilyn sent out a reminder one week prior to the class. She made sure that church members were alerted to cheerfully direct the visitors to the Beginner room upon arrival.

Jerilyn reports that several families who bring their children to her Beginner class have asked about joining the WillowBrook church.

Would your church benefit from a Sabbath School ministry like this one that reaches out to the community?

The North American Division has asked Jerilyn to prepare a planning guide that will provide step-by-step instructions for a Beginner program like hers. But don't wait until it's published to get your church excited about the possibilities when Sabbath School goes evangelistic!



Branching Out

Branch Sabbath School is another great way to make your Sabbath School evangelistic. A branch Sabbath School takes the program and lesson study to the neighborhood, instead of expecting the neighborhood to come to church. Apartment buildings are a great place to take your program, because a number of children often live in one building.

Gaining access to the building need not be a problem. Someone already living in the building can serve as a contact. One family in Richmond, Virginia, started their ministry to an apartment complex by sitting out on the grass. While the children played Sabbath School songs on their instruments, the parents "sang" along with puppets.

After some time a child or two came to watch a puppet story. The family promised to return the following week. Later, when they approached the building manager, he was open to granting use of a room for weekly programs and for financial counseling.

Use leftover GraceLink Sabbath School or Vacation Bible School materials for Branch Sabbath School. (Plan to "talk up" a couple of years for inner city audiences.) Or use programs such as *Come Meet Jesus* (Review & Herald), *Forever Stories* (Review & Herald), or *DiscipleLand* (Through the Bible Publishers, www.throughthebible.com).

You can find more information about starting a branch Sabbath School in the NEWS & ARTICLES section of childmin.com.

In the Beginning. . .

Child psychologists Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget identified a "key developmental task" for each stage of a child's life. A person who masters each stage of development is systematically developing character and specific virtues or strengths. Perhaps Luke's phrase "in favor with God and man" indicates this process in Jesus' own childhood.

Birth to age two. For infants, the task is choosing between basic trust and mistrust. At this age, the child's most pressing need is to develop a solid foundation of love and trust--both in relationship to God and to the adults around them. Notice that faith (as in trust) is foundational to character development.

Ages two to three. In early childhood, the focus of the task changes slightly: autonomy (independence) versus shame and doubt. During these years, toddlers need opportunities for choices. It is important to teach them to relate to Jesus as a friend and feel confident of His love and care. Teaching in a style that builds children up rather than shaming them is especially valuable with this age group.

Ages four to five. Erikson identified this third pre-school stage as a time for determining whether a child's life will be motivated by initiative or guilt. This is the difference between brushing my teeth because I want to take care of them, and brushing my teeth because I'll get in trouble or feel guilty if I don't! Four- and five-year-olds experience rapid growth in many areas, yet they can con-



concentrate on only one thing at a time.

School age. When children reach this stage, they begin to develop values based on competence. The characteristics that struggle for dominance during these years are industry and inferiority. While a second-grader may want to be industrious and productive, he may choose to do nothing at all rather than risk having his work (and himself) appear inferior.

Adolescence. The most important value developed during adolescence is loyalty. You've noticed how adolescents can be fiercely loyal to their "best friends." The task at this stage is creating an identity of their own, rather than having their identity defined by outside forces. A teacher can have the most influence on an adolescent by affirming the positive aspects of their personal identity.

Understanding the values formed at each of these childhood stages gives a whole new viewpoint of a child's spiritual development.

Did You Know?

"By the time she is three, your baby's brain has formed about 1000 trillion connections--about twice as many as adults have. A baby's brain is super-dense, and will stay that way throughout the first decade of life. Beginning at about age eleven, a child's brain gets rid of extra connections, gradually making order out of a thick tangle of 'wire.' The circuitry it ends up with is more powerful and efficient."

www.iamyourchild.org/brainfacts

News & Notes

Website Updates

◆ **How Family-Friendly is my Church?** Now you can find out for free! Visit the Family Friendly Church website, www.family-friendlychurch.com, and go through our online evaluation. One church elder who took the survey commented, "This gave me lots of great ideas that I'm going to present to our church board."

◆ **Materials List**--A list of products to compliment your Sabbath School program each quarter is posted at gracelink.net (see RESOURCES).

◆ **New to Children's Ministry?** Wondering where to start? Go to www.childmin.com, and look in the RESOURCES section for Children's Ministries job descriptions. We've just completed an update for leaders like the Children's Coordinator, Sabbath School division leader, and Vacation Bible School leader. Each job description includes a list of resources as well as responsibilities.

◆ **Bug Safari--Coming Soon to an ABC Near You!** By February 1, Adventist Book Centers across the North American Division will have a sample starter kit on hand for you to check out. Or you can find more information (including a catalog of Bug Safari materials) at www.childmin.com/VBS.

◆ **Child Safety Concerns**--The Volunteer Screening Form available under RESOURCES at www.childmin.com has been updated. Coming soon--additional guidelines and resources for your church board and volunteer screening committee.

◆ **More on Harry Potter**--The ISSUES section of www.childmin.com now offers several new selections dealing with the *Harry Potter* books, including "Andrew Asks Why," a Bible study prepared by Sally Pierson Dillon.

Easy Memory Verse Songs for Kindergarten

We've received many requests from small Sabbath Schools to provide music on CD. This album, companion to *52 Easy Program Ideas for Kindergarten*, does just that! It provides creative arrangements of familiar tunes for learning this year's kindergarten memory verses.

It's a New Year!

Our appreciation to the following conferences, which have sent in their 2001 year-end reports as of this writing:

- ◆ British Columbia
- ◆ Central California
- ◆ Dakota
- ◆ GA-Cumberland
- ◆ Gulf States
- ◆ Hawaii
- ◆ Idaho
- ◆ Indiana
- ◆ N. New England
- ◆ Maritime
- ◆ Montana
- ◆ Mountain View
- ◆ Oklahoma
- ◆ Pennsylvania
- ◆ Upper Columbia

Despite the fact that year-end reporting gives you a chance to spotlight the ministries that are thriving in your local church, a number of conferences mentioned that they had a hard time collecting the information from their constituent churches. Local church report forms are available at www.childmin.com, see RESOURCES.

Coming Events

◆ **April 24-27, 2002**--North American Division *Festival of the Laity* will be held in Orlando, FL. One track of Children's Ministries seminars will be offered, featuring Judi Rogers, Steve Case, Noelene Johnson and Wilma Kirk-Lee. For more information, phone 301-680-6430 or visit www.plusline.org.

◆ NAD-sponsored Children's Ministries & Family Ministries training convention will be held **September 12-15, 2002** in Charlotte, NC. Watch for details at childmin.com.

Letters from the Front

Many people have taken the time to share what they like about the GraceLink Sabbath School curriculum, especially since the beginner and kindergarten materials were released at the beginning of this year. We'd like to hear what you have to say too--visit the DISCUSSION area at www.gracelink.net to post your comments.

"When I first looked at the new quarterlies for the beginner and kindergarten, I almost cried. They are so beautiful! I am the kindergarten leader in our church, and my husband leads the juniors. He has enjoyed GraceLink so much that it really got me enthused to see how it would turn out. I knew it would be nice, but this is just totally beyond my expectations."
~W.M.

"We totally love the new curriculum. It has caused a whole new excitement for teaching in the lower divisions in our church. The constant comment is, "This makes it so easy and fun to teach--all the material is right here!" No more hours of prep time. . . A real plus for those of us who work, have children, and teach also. Thank you so much for caring about children and giving us such great material to work with." ~W.C.

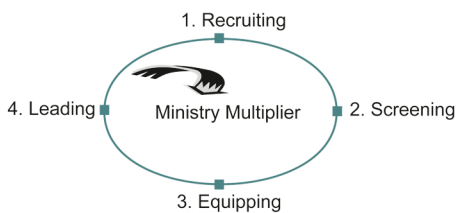
"I just wanted to let you know that some of the same people who didn't appreciate GraceLink a year ago are thrilled with both the beginner and kindergarten programs. I'm excited! I saw the new programs for the first time today and they are wonderful. Please pass on my appreciation to the people who worked so hard on this program." ~M.S.

Solving those Recruiting Woes

Children's leaders constantly ask for help with their least favorite task--recruiting volunteers. In spite of all our "hot-stuff" recruiting seminars, people keep asking for this seminar year after year. Why? Because churches do not have a system in place to support and equip volunteers.

A Support System for Volunteers

Al Newell, of Newell & Associates, in Colorado Springs, suggests a high impact model for volunteer support with five components:



- 1. Recruiting.** According to Newell, a trained recruiter provides job descriptions and gathers a pool of prospects who each fill out an application for a specific ministry position.
- 2. Screening.** Screening is a means to find out whom God has called to ministry in your church. "Don't take just anyone," Newell

Wanted: Earliteen Opinions

If you're involved in an earliteen Sabbath School division, the General Conference Sabbath School department would like to hear from you. Kathy Beagles, editor of the *PowerPoints* quarterlies, is collecting input from earliteens and teachers in order to produce enjoyable and effective materials designed JUST for earliteens.

You can participate by going to www.gracelink.net (look for the link to "Earliteen Survey"). Print out a copy of the survey forms--complete the teacher portion, and distribute the student form to the members of your class. Then collect and return the results to

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advises. "Check to see if their spiritual gifts match what is needed in the job description." And along with the ministry leader, analyze individual applications to gauge the level of interest and general suitability for the task

3. Equipping. Having accepted a volunteer, the ministry leader does everything possible to support and equip that volunteer for success in ministry. Leaders equip volunteers

when they provide a good job description, model the ministry and train persons to do it. They also provide volunteers with the best possible equipment and resources. Don't worry about the cost, Newell says--"God will give it to you if He can give it through you!"

4. Leading. A good leader encourages and disciplines the volunteers who assist in their ministry. Leadership includes casting a vision as well as generating cooperation and enthusiasm among the team who seek to fulfill the vision. Good leaders find a variety of ways to affirm volunteers.

5. Leadership Multiplier. Good leaders, like good teachers, constantly try to "put themselves out of business" by mentoring future leaders to take their place. They may invite a prospective leader into an assistant position,

gradually delegating more and more responsibility to them. The trainee thus becomes the leader responsible to help new volunteers through the cycle of volunteer management.

When churches develop an on-going cycle of high impact volunteer management, their

"I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing." ~King David (2 Samuel 24:24)

volunteers experience a high degree of satisfaction and fulfillment. And satisfied customers stay with the ministry, making it unnecessary to recruit some-

one to fill their position next year. Recruiting joys chase away the woes.

~Noelene Johnson

Facts About Volunteerism in Church

- ❖ The church is a volunteer organization.
- ❖ Churches utilize more volunteers than any other organization.
- ❖ The vast majority of leaders in the church are volunteers.
- ❖ The Church offers leaders little or no training in volunteer management.
- ❖ Volunteer management could end the church's recruitment woes.

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