

C **A U T U M N** CHILDREN'S LEADER **2 0 0 2**

A NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE WHO LEAD CHILDREN IN THE CONGREGATION.

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Vol. 9, No. 4
Editor: Sharon Wright
Children's Ministries Director:
Noelene Johnsson

A publication of the
North American Division
Children's Ministries Department
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600
(301) 680-6425
www.childmin.com

Wake up, Church! Who's Minding Our Kids?

A few weeks ago at prayer meeting, I heard an anguished teen request prayer for freedom from sex addictions. Today as I open America Online and select the mail icon, I am surprised by the volume of mail awaiting me. I don't use my home e-mail very much, so I know these are not messages from friends; they are unsolicited "spam."

Startling words from the subject lines jump out at me. I can't print them here--let's just say that they boast pleasures and immediate gratification. I was once tricked into opening one such message, thinking it was from a friend. I could hardly delete it fast enough. I don't want those muddy boots leaving footprints in my mind. So I delete them unopened.

As I delete the messages, I think of all the tech-savvy kids who get home from school before their parents and amuse themselves at the computer. A couple of innocent mouse clicks, and they could start down a slippery slide with no easy escape route. Kids are absorbing the concepts promoted by popular culture. One such message says, "How do you know it's not for you if you've never tried it?" Is this potentially lethal or what? How can we prepare our kids to meet such temptation and such lies?

For a starter, GraceLink has devoted the junior/teen lesson for March 22 to the story of David and Bathsheba. This presents a great opportunity to talk to kids about purity. Keeping our lives pure for Jesus is one very effective way that we worship Him. We can help kids develop a personal slogan about valuing purity. They can make refrigerator magnets or design bumper stickers with a purity message. If we challenge them to post these in their rooms and on their lockers, purity can become a treasure to be proud of. We might also try one or more of the following:

1. Involve parents. Let them know that this lesson is coming up. Urge them to study it with their kids. With parents, brainstorm ways homes and church can affirm purity. Pray together for success.
2. Invite the pastor to talk to the kids about purity. Kids will listen to him, especially if he sometimes stops by Saturday nights to play table games with them.

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Coming in April: National TV-Turnoff Week

April 21-27, 2003, millions of children and adults around the world will turn off their televisions and discover that life without TV may just be more rewarding, fun, and relaxing.

Why turn off the TV? Television cuts into family time, harms our children's ability to read and succeed in school, and contributes to unhealthy lifestyles and obesity. Here are just a few of the facts:

- ❖ On average, children in the United States will spend more time in front of the television (1,023 hours) than in school this year (900 hours).
- ❖ Forty percent of Americans frequently or always watch television during dinner.
- ❖ As US Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher said at the kickoff of TV-Turnoff Week 2001, "We are raising the most overweight generation of youngsters in American history... This week is about saving lives."

Who participates? Anyone and everyone. Millions of people all over the world have participated in TV-Turnoff Week since it began in 1995. Children and adults, rich and poor--people from every background and all walks of life--take part through schools, churches, or community groups, as families or individuals.

What's so great about TV-Turnoff Week? Turning off the television gives us a chance to think, read, create, and do. To connect with our families and engage in our

(Wake Up, Church! continued from page 1)

3. Encourage the Family Ministries committee to plan a discussion on the topic of teaching children purity. Parents need to know that by studying the lesson with kids and discussing topics the kids are interested in, parents earn the right later to talk to kids about sensitive topics such as purity.
4. Look out for unhappy young people whose behavior has suddenly changed; they may be children at risk. We need to make friends with them. If we don't look out for them and make them feel special, the enemy will.

~Noelene Johnsson

communities. To turn off TV and turn on life.

Benjamin Loxley, a second-grader, sums it up well, "I had a great time, and my only question is: If this is so great, why don't we turn off the TV for the other 51 weeks of the year?"

TV-Turnoff Week Works! According to hundreds of responses to TV-Turnoff Week follow-up surveys, 90 percent of responding participants reduced their TV-viewing as a result of participating.

Sound like fun? It is! Join thousands of parents, teachers, pediatricians and other families by celebrating TV-Turnoff Week 2002 this coming April 22-28. Start your planning now by visiting <http://www.tv-turnoff.org>.

TV-Turnoff Week is supported by over 70 national organizations including the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Education Association, and President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

Second grader Drew Henderson, of Donora, PA observed, "I really didn't like TV-Turnoff Week, except that I did notice that my grades went up and I was in a good mood all week."

~<http://www.tv-turnoff.org>

Letters from the Front

As my local church has implemented many of the ideas presented in the Family Friendly Church seminar series and online at www.family-friendlychurch.org, we're thriving more and more.

Fifteen years ago, my church had 50 in attendance on a good Sabbath. A really busy Sabbath in beginners brought three kids. Now we have THIRTY in beginners alone--and 128 kids from birth to 18 for whom we're buying Christmas gifts--and some 90 families in our new church directory.

So I commend these ideas to you because of first-hand experience. Paying attention to kids in church and Sabbath School reaps great benefits for the Lord's work. The other "secret" is a rich prayer life in the church and in our homes.

Blessings!

~Aileen Andres Sox (Kuna, Idaho)

News & Notes

Kindergarten Resources for 2003

If you appreciated 52 Easy Program Ideas for Kindergarten, Year A, you'll enjoy the second book in this series. It offers a wealth of creative activities for kindergarten Sabbath School teachers--including room decorations, activities for teaching memory verses, storytelling suggestions, and five learning centers each week.

Another feature of 52 Easy Program Ideas is the weekly Bible Words (memory verse) song. The book provides a monthly accompaniment as well as specific settings of the verses for each week. Accompaniment CD also available--with sound tracks by David & Heidi Zinke and vocals by Joann Herrington. Order your copy of the book and CD from AdventSource today--800-328-0525 or <http://adventsource.org>.

You can get a sneak preview of 52 Easy Program Ideas--and a special online holiday greeting from NAD Children's Ministries--at http://childmin.com/Misc/Christmas_2002/Christmas.html.

Coming Events

◆ Growing a Family of Grace: Mark it on your calendar--**October 16-19, Portland, OR**. This training convention will include tracks not just for Children's and Family Ministries, but also for Adult Ministries, Adventist Community Services, and more. Watch for details coming soon to <http://childmin.com/Events>.

◆ Registration is still open for the **S.C.U.B.A. VBS Training**, January 10. This event will be held at the Monterey, CA Hyatt Regency Hotel, site of the 2003 Adventist Ministries Convention. Visit <http://plusline.org/events> today to register (hotel registration separate).

Our Gift to You

Ever wondered what ACMA (Adventist Children's Ministries Association) is all about? As our Christmas gift, we offer you a two-week window of opportunity to browse the members-only ACMA website. Find out how ACMA works, and what it can do for your ministry. Details online at http://childmin.com/Misc/Christmas_2002/Christmas.html.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Certification

North American Division Children's Ministries has partnered with Griggs University, the higher education division of Home Study International, to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for the seminars taught at NAD training conventions.

The Basic Children's Ministries Certification* courses are divided into two tracks as shown at right. Future conventions will be planned so as to offer participants the ability to complete their choice of tracks.

Each completed track is worth 1.5 CEUs (actual undergraduate credit may also become available in the future).

In order to apply for CEUs, you must

- ◆ Be registered as a convention participant or presenter.
- ◆ Complete all of the courses in one track. You may keep your course record and complete the tracks at future convention(s). A \$15 charge will be applied by Griggs University for each CEU application.
- ◆ Print your name on the class roster for each breakout seminar you attend.

Storytelling Resources

Check out these great books available from Standard Publishing (<http://www.standardpub.com>):

- Interactive Object Lessons (four books available) by Joette Whims & Melody Hunsford (0-7847-0478-3)
- The Creative Storytelling Guide for Children's Ministry, by Steven James (0-7847-1374-X)
- Storytelling by Karyn Henley (0-7847-0697-2)
- Object Talks That Teach the Gospels by Zach Hapeman (0-7847-0941-6)
- Easy Object Talks For Teaching Children by Virginia Ann Van Seters (0-87403-920-7)

Checking the Numbers: Vacation Bible School 2002

To date, Vacation Bible School reports indicate that a total of 6,097 adults and 2,516 teens ministered to a record 20,883 children (43 percent were non-Adventist) at 425 different Vacation Bible School programs around the North American Division. Last year's total was 17,885 children (42 percent non-Adventist).

The stories and comments that accompa-

ny VBS reports are positive and inspiring. Many leaders said they appreciated the partnership with GROUP Publishing that allowed for the creation of a brand-new program. They also reported the helpfulness of grouping children in multi-age crews and utilizing teen helpers as crew leaders.

The greatest number of VBS programs

was reported in the Georgia-Cumberland conference, where 44 churches conducted summer outreach. The Lake Region conference reported a total of 1,088 non-Adventist children attending Vacation Bible School. And Southeastern California indicated the largest total number of children--2,482 in attendance--with 386 teen helpers.

This year, the North American Division has offered churches the option of submitting VBS reports online, making that information available to conferences online as well. To view the summary of information received from all conferences, go to <http://childmin.com/VBS>.

Track I

1. Understanding Children (one of the following age levels)
 - a. Birth through Primary
 - b. Junior and Earliteen
2. Learning Styles & the Learning Cycle
3. Modes of Learning
4. Bible Learning Activities
5. Temperaments
6. Teaching GraceLink (one of the following age levels)
 - a. Beginner
 - b. Kindergarten
 - c. Primary & Junior/Earliteen
7. Teaching Children to Think
8. Teaching from Nature
9. Memorization without Tears
10. Crafts that Teach

Track II

1. Understanding Grace
2. Faith Development & the Life Stages
3. Children with Special Needs
4. Protecting Children from Abuse (Screening Volunteers)
5. Multiple Intelligences
6. Drama Ministries (and/or Puppets at Church)
7. Interactive Storytelling
8. Positive Class Discipline (Managing a Class with Grace)
9. Getting Children to Sing
10. Teaching Children to Pray

*Basic Children's Ministries Certification requires completion of Tracks I & II as well as a 13-week (one quarter) supervised field practicum.

Let Us Know . . .

Children's Ministries Coordinators--have you completed a local church year-end report? In order for your conference to make its deadline of reporting to the North American Division by January 31, your help is needed immediately. You can find the report forms--or submit your information online--at <http://childmin.com/Resources>.

Why do we need to report? According to George Barna, 75 percent of those who have accepted Christ indicated that they had done so between the ages of 5 and 13. Children's Ministries precisely targets that window of opportunity.

Reporting things like branch Sabbath Schools, baptisms related to children's ministries, non-Adventist children attending VBS, children involved in outreach--or serving in church offices--provides a concrete way for administrators to recognize this. When they see how actively the rubber meets the road in Children's Ministries, they'll be more receptive to requests for funding and support. Furthermore, we're inspired each year by the comments and stories of how God is blessing you. Those reports represent not just numbers on paper, but Spirit-led ministry.

Growing a Family of Grace in Charlotte and San Jose

"This has been so much fun!"

"I can't wait to get back home and start using the things I've learned."

"When can we do this again?"

Nearly 300 leaders of Children's and Family Ministries enjoyed this fall's two Growing a Family of Grace training conventions held in Charlotte, NC (September) and

At both locations, an on-site Adventist Book Center offered a variety of resources in both Spanish and English for purchase during non-Sabbath hours.

Children's Ministries breakout sessions included basic certification courses such as Crafts that Teach, taught in Charlotte by Brenda Grant-Stokes; Beginner Sabbath School with Rob Robinson in San Jose; and Learning Styles, taught by Dr. Owen Roberts (Charlotte).

Participants also enjoyed Rebeca de los Rios' Spanish presentation on Child Preachers (Charlotte), and Children's Church with Steve Case (San Jose).

The San Jose convention also inaugurated the new partnership between NAD Children's Ministries and Griggs University, the higher-education branch of Home Study International.



Presenters Edwina Neely and Nora Ramos enjoy a Sabbath meal with some new friends in San Jose.



Steve Case demonstrates a lively children's church song service.

For the first time, convention participants were offered the opportunity to apply for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as well as working toward Children's Ministries certification.

The next NAD Growing a Family of Grace convention is planned for October 16-19, 2003. Watch for details coming soon to <http://childmin.com/Events>.

San Jose, CA (November).

General sessions featured speakers such as Ricardo Graham (Northern California Conference), Aileen Andres Sox (Our Little Friend/Primary Treasure) and Byard Parks (Adventist Frontier Missions). Jackie Bishop (Rocky Mountain Conference) and



Above: Ginger Calkins and Ortrene Gordon staff the convention registration table.

Below: The Charlotte leadership team from North American Division, Southern Union, South Atlantic and Carolina conferences.



Left: Pastor Charles Tapp speaks at the Charlotte convention.



Jerry Page (Central California Conference) shared powerful personal experiences of God's grace in the family.

In Charlotte, Donna Williams and her team transformed the main stage area into a heavenly throne room scene, flanked by the Garden of Eden and a Judean cave--the setting for a Sabbath evening drama on the Great Controversy.

Rick and Wendy Silvestri shared their musical gifts with the group in San Jose.

Children's Ministries Department
 North American Division
 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
 12501 Old Columbia Pike
 Silver Spring, MD 20904

