

DIRECTIONS

for Foursquare Christian Educators

SUMMER 1993

National Department of Christian Education
and Foursquare Publications

Volume 19

“Why Do We Do What We Do?”

As we approach the 21st Century, the Church--especially Christian Education ministries--is facing an unprecedented array of challenges; interracial tensions, high teen pregnancy rates, gang violence, families in crises. In order to stay relevant in today's society, we must anticipate, innovate, and evaluate our **PROCESS AND PURPOSE**. If we are to address the many issues that now confront us, we, as the Church, must respond with greater authenticity in our lives and greater **PERSONAL** investment in our mission.

What we believe, think, and feel will make all the difference in who we are and what we do. Just as we have believed and experienced God's presence, we must also seek to understand and fulfill God's purpose. The Great Commandment (Matthew 23:37-39) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) are relevant for the disarray of the day. His purposes should require us to rethink and restructure our methods.

Several years ago I was asked to evaluate a declining adult Sunday school class within a local church. Upon arrival I was informed that the teacher had been teaching out of the book of Proverbs for seven years and was only in the eleventh chapter. Following a few minutes at the coffee pot, the class was called together by a prayer led by the teacher. He opened his Bible to Proverbs 11:16-18, read the passage and asked the class for comments. Then, for the next 45 minutes the class experienced an odyssey from Genesis to Revelation, from Soteriology to Pneumatology. This dear group of people had experienced first-hand that “routine without relevancy” can lead to demise rather than life-giving ministry.

Each Christian Education ministry needs to ask if there is utilization of the “Jesus style of teaching,” which is not only right content but right practice as well. When Jesus encountered the woman at the well (John 4), He discerned her need and provided far more insight into her life than just a good lesson.

- Jesus illustrated truth/passed on information
- Jesus helped the woman identify and struggle with the reality of her need.
- Jesus called for a decision and response.

The result was **changed lives**, both for the woman and the people of the town.

The true function of Christian education is to create the best conditions for self-learning. One might say that he who teaches best teaches least. True teaching is not to just impart knowledge but to stimulate students to gain it.

As we look at past ministry methods we have great reason to appreciate all that has been accomplished. However, the changes in our world are coming so rapidly we must look forward to the future or become obsolete! The reason methods become obsolete is because of an inability to adapt to change. Therefore, we who are called to carry out our mission in shaping the future must adapt to the changes of time while still being anchored to the rock, Jesus Christ.

Let's stop and take time to ask ourselves, “Why do we do what we do?” in relation to programs, methods and structure. Evaluation does not necessarily mean abandonment of the existing approach, but whether the present structure is working with the greatest

I'm learning that as good as the structure may be, there are areas that can be improved for greater ministry.



Excuses, Excuses



This article was contributed by Linda Allen, Eastern District C.E. Representative.

“Working with kids isn’t as much fun as I thought it would be. In fact, some Sundays it’s a real pain.”

“I think, basically, I’m afraid of those little ones. I become so stressed out when they get out of control. I feel like they are controlling me!”

“Kids today have no respect. I just don’t want to be bothered putting up with the hassle.”

“I feel like I don’t know what I’m doing. I don’t know anything about children, so count me out.”

“Working with kids wasn’t exactly a positive experience. I don’t ever want to do that again!”

Excuses — we hear them all the time. But what’s behind those excuses? Do we sense a clear need motivating each excuse we hear? If not, perhaps we should listen a little closer.

Behind the discouragement, fear, anxiety, and inadequacy there is a common theme — lack of proper training. Almost every excuse we hear from those not wanting to become involved, or those quitting after only a short time of teaching or working with children, can be traced back to a volunteer’s lack of confidence in his or her ability to carry out the teaching task.

Remember learning to ride your first bicycle? Nervous, sweaty hands? Weaving all over the sidewalks? Scraped knees and elbows? It didn’t take very many falls to say, “This is it for me. I don’t like to have scraped knees. This is too hard.”

Trying to learn to ski at the age of 45 was no picnic, either. I remember

vividly that winter morning when my husband said, “I’m going to put you in a course with a great ski instructor and then you will gain confidence quickly.” After about three hours on the bunny hill my ‘great ski instructor’, frustrated beyond hope, said, “You are afraid. Just don’t be afraid anymore. Let yourself go.” Well now, how do I do that? I don’t know what I’m doing! Fear, anxiety, discouragement, and feelings of inadequacy quickly set in. I fell down so many times, and ate so much snow, that by the end of the day, I sighed with exasperation, “This is fun? I paid for this? I’m never going to do this again!”

But ask me to teach a Sunday school class and I’ll say yes every time! That’s because I know what I’m doing and how to do it. Sometimes it’s hard for me to imagine that anyone could say, “Teaching is too hard,” or “I just don’t know how to work with children.” But then I remember my experience on the ski slopes and realize how natural it is for someone who isn’t adequately trained to feel that way.

“People tune out if they feel they are failing, because ‘the system’ is to blame. They tune in when the system leads them to believe they are successful. They learn that they can get things done because of skill, and most important, they are likely to try again. The old adage is ‘Nothing succeeds like success.’ It turns out to have a sound scientific basis. Researchers studying motivation find that the prime factor is simply the self-perception among motivated subjects that they are in fact doing well.”

This quote was originally excerpted from the book In Search of Excellence by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman, Jr. p.58.



BEARING GOD’S LOVE

As a church, we must minister to the needs of “God’s heritage.” We are being pressed to pray, evaluate, and execute our care for God’s kids. This is why we extend an invitation to you and your church family to participate in the children’s missions outreach “**BEARING GOD’S LOVE.**”

There are four basic truths that need to be communicated to this and future generations:

- Jesus always loves you!
- Jesus loves all people, equally.
- Jesus wants you to “TELL” others about Him.
- Jesus has given you abilities and resources to practically care for those who don’t know Him.

“Bearing God’s Love” is the 1993 children’s missions emphasis. Bearing God’s love brings **HIS BEST** out through us. This missions outreach is available to all Foursquare churches - whether you do or don’t have a Good News Bears Club.

For more information regarding this children’s outreach, contact: Dept of Christian Education or Foursquare Publications
213/484-0105

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Where you go from here depends, of course, on where “here” is! Are you feeling...

- overwhelmed at the enormity of your job?
- discouraged because of past failures?
- impatient with people who are not as ready for change as you are?
- excited about possibilities and opportunities you see for your Sunday School?
- puzzled about where to start?
- unsure that you have the ability to do what needs to be done?

You’re not alone in your feelings! People from other churches have the same concerns, desires, anxieties and frustrations you do. And so did people in Bible times!

Think about Moses. After killing an Egyptian and having to flee from that country, he settled down to being a shepherd. But God had other plans for him. God said, *“I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt”* (Exodus 3:10). Moses was terrified! He made all kinds of excuses: *“Who am I...?”* *“Suppose...”* *“What if they...?”* *“I can’t speak well...”* But God’s answer was always the same: *“I will be with you.”* *“I will help you.”*

Think about Joshua. How do you suppose he felt when God commanded him to become the Israelites’ leader after Moses died? Joshua must have been terrified, for God said to him, *“Be strong and courageous. do not be terrified: do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”* (Joshua 1:9).

The list could go on and on, for people in Bible times were just like we are—and we can learn much from them.

Many times we miss the richest of God’s blessings because we don’t step out in faith and claim all that God wants to give us and do for us. In Isaiah 43:29 God says, *“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.”*

Could it be that God wants to do a new thing in your Sunday school/Children’s church and that He wants to do it through you and your staff? Talk to the Lord about this. Open yourself up to His leading—make yourself available for whatever God wants you to do. Ask God to increase your vision and faith. Then work together with your staff to accomplish all that God directs and enables you to do. *“May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed”* (Psalm 20:4).

A Strategy for Change

It’s exciting to have a vision of what God can and will do to make your Bible teaching ministry more effective. But how do you communicate this vision to others? How can you get your staff to work together to “make it happen”? Here are some tips to remember...

About your source of wisdom and guidance...

- Pray and rely on the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are full of illustrations of people who, depending on the Lord, were used by Him to bring about changes in individuals and nations.

About people’s response to change...

- There are causes for the ways people think and act—usually resulting from their value system. People’s objections are, to them, quite valid.
- People are afraid of change because it makes them feel insecure. They fear the unknown, failure, confusion.

- Knowing facts, being involved in planning, having a part in making choices and decisions help reduce anxiety and fear.
- The fact that a person conforms to what has been decided doesn't necessarily mean that his attitude has changed.
- People respond to change in different ways.

About avoiding/handling negative feelings...

- Remember that when changes are proposed, people will behave like normal human beings—and it's normal to fear change. Be prepared to handle negative feelings, but don't expect rejection. Be positive in your presentation.
- Anticipate objections. Try to see your ideas from the other person's perspective. List the pros and cons. Plan how you will respond to each objection if it is raised.
- Win people, not arguments. Sometimes, when opposition is intense, the best course is to become neutral. Abandon any pressure. Usually this will cause the other person to consider abandoning his counter-pressure. Keep the discussion on issues—not personalities.
- Go through proper channels.
- Make changes in your own area of responsibility, not those above you.
- Watch your timing. Good timing requires a balance between "urgency" and "do not rush."
- Try again. Don't give up when your idea doesn't win a warm reception. Approach your suggested change in different ways and at different times. Don't be discouraged by a lack of interest at first.
- Delay change, if necessary, to give people time to adjust.
- Keep channels of communication open. Points of conflict can become points of creativity and more effective communication—if handled correctly.
- Humor helps people over the rough spots.
- Expect some failures and problems, but learn from them.

About building positive attitudes...

- Identify and respond to the expressed needs of people. Don't force solutions—be flexible enough to see and suggest new solutions to the problem.
- Focus more on building a climate of mutual trust than on the proposed changes.
- Consult and involve others. People accept change more readily when they have a part in designing it. Test a new idea out on a number of individuals before presenting it to a group. This is a good way to refine the idea—and the support of a number of individuals makes it "our" idea rather than "mine."
- Help people discover for themselves the difference between what is and what could be. Help them not only to "catch the vision" but also to discover and develop a plan for accomplishing it.
- Show the benefits of change to counterbalance the cost.
- Start with small changes. To succeed in reaching a goal, a person must want to reach the goal and feel that they can do it. Success builds a feeling of self-confidence which increases a person's willingness to try more new ideas. "Success breeds success; failure breeds failure." A person who succeeds tries more ideas; a person who fails gives up trying.
- Try to get people to agree on short-term or immediate goals. Motivate them to take the first step toward their goals.

"Even the longest journey begins with the first step."
What is the first step you and your staff need to take?

Ideas for Summer Sunday School

Does summer seem to be a time when you lose contact with many of the children in your class? Here's a helpful way to bridge the gaps created by vacation schedules.

Vacation Kit

Make a "vacation kit" of take-home papers, books, games and other items to give to each of your children when he or she travels on vacation. Such a kit will help you maintain contact with each child while he or she is on vacation and encourages each one to keep learning along with the rest of your class.

At the beginning of school vacation, find out which of your children will be going on vacation and when they will be leaving. Obtain a cardboard gift box or large manila envelope for each of these children.

Just before each child leaves for vacation, fill the box or envelope with items such as worksheets and/or take home papers for the days the child will be absent. Other items you might include are ideas for games to play in the car or on an airplane, a box of crayons or felt pens and some paper. Your local newspaper may even provide a special children's section with coloring pages and other activities. Clip out the section to include in the kit.

Enclose a letter similar to the following in each vacation kit:

Dear (child's name),

In a few days you will be leaving for vacation. We'll miss you! But we know you'll have a good time.

Here are a few things to do while you are traveling — a book to look at, games to play, your Sunday School worksheets and take-home papers.

Have a happy vacation. And hurry home!

Your Sunday School Teacher

Give a vacation kit to each child on the Sunday before he or she leaves on vacation. Explain the contents and purpose of the kit to the child's parents and encourage the child to use the materials inside. You might want to call the kit a "surprise box" and give instructions not to open the box until the child is a certain number of miles or minutes away from home.

Spice Up a Hot Sunday Morning

- ✧ Meet with your class in a shady spot outdoors.
- ✧ For a change of pace, stack up the chairs and have everyone sit on the floor.
- ✧ Bring a pitcher of ice-cold lemonade to serve before, during or after Sunday School.
- ✧ When children come back from vacation, take a few minutes during Bible Readiness or Bible Sharing to conduct interviews about where they went and what they did.

Teachers Take Vacations, too!

During the months of April and May, complete a "Vacation Calendar" that tells you who will be gone on vacation on which dates.

- ✓ Update your substitute list.
- ✓ Recruit college students to teach during the summer. Ask mature high school students to observe in your class for one or two weeks. Then ask them to assist for a unit of lessons.
- ✓ Invite grandparents or others with no school-age children or those who cannot teach on a regular basis to substitute for a unit of lessons or the entire quarter.
- ✓ Combine classes on holiday weekends.

1993 Vacation Bible School

Young Explorers Amazing Journey to Bible Times

This summer, take your children back in time to the days when the Bible was being written. You and your kids will get excited about the Bible as you experience it first-hand and meet the great people described on its pages.

You'll be amazed to see how easy it is to turn your church into a Bible Times village. You'll dress as the people in Bible Times dressed and eat the foods they ate. You'll make Bible Times jewelry, musical instruments, scrolls, pottery and baskets. You'll learn Hebrew words, songs and music activities. You'll even find yourself walking in the very footsteps of the amazing people in the Bible who trusted God.

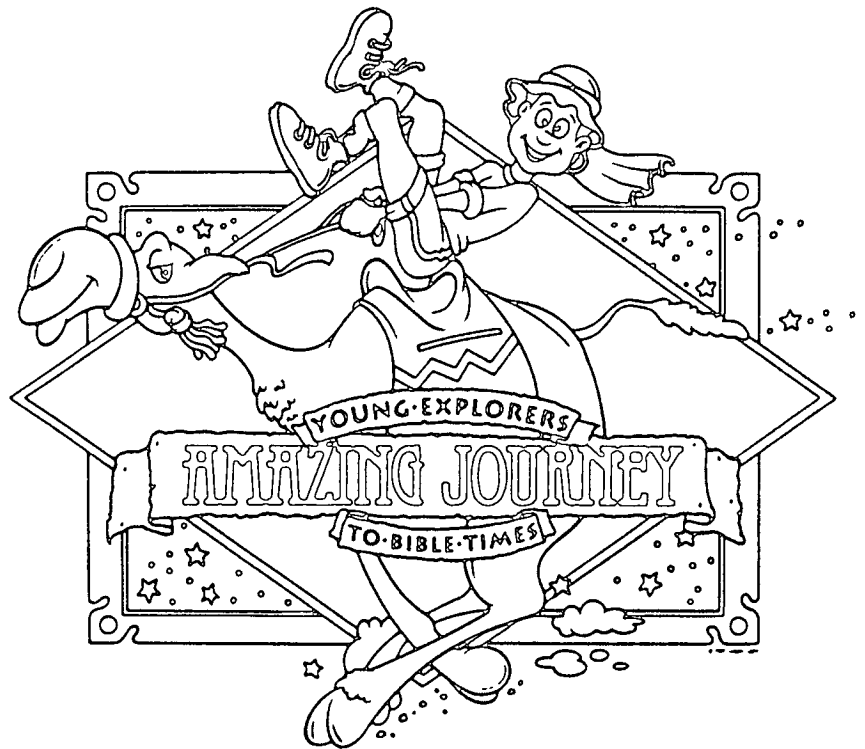
But best of all, your kids will be able to experience God's amazing plan as it comes together in the person of Jesus Christ. The VBS program is geared for evangelism! Each day's Bible lesson tells about God's plan for salvation and has built-in opportunities for sharing the good news about Jesus with children. The lessons covered are: "The Amazing Book," "God Creates Adam and Eve," "Abraham Trusts God," "God Helps Joseph," "God Teaches Moses," "David Worships God," "Isaiah Tells of the Coming Savior," "Jesus Fulfills God's Plan," "Paul Joins God's Family," "Jesus Will Come Again."

Scheduling can be planned for a 5-10 session VBS. The material is easy to use. So come along on this amazing journey. Everything you need to begin is listed below. An order blank is also enclosed.

VBS Starter Kit includes:

- 1 Teacher's book and 1 Student book for each age level
 - Bible Times Craft book
 - Music sampler cassette
 - Activity Center Booklet
- Director's Pack (which has a planning schedule, skit productions, promotional items and other helpful ideas and resources)
 - Catalog with additional items listed

All this for only \$29.95!



Here's Some Beary Good News...

From Marysville, Ohio

This Bears club does quite a few activities with their group. We'll mention a couple in this article and feature the rest in the next FRESH WATERS.

"We have taken the children on several outings since we started. Among those trips was a visit to our local radio station. The children were allowed to tour the station. They were allowed to sing their theme song, and share their names on the broadcast!

They toured our local hospital from one end to the other. They learned some important lessons: how thankful they should be for their good health, what a wonderful health facility they had, and we were able to convey to them the concept of divine healing."



Present with the Lord...

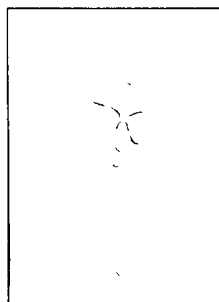
Isabelle Helmle-Peck

passed away February 3, 1993.

She was a 1928 graduate of LIFE Bible college. Isabelle was appointed by Dr. McPherson to initiate the Christian Education Department and served as the National Director of Christian Education from 1947-1963.

She represented the Foursquare Church by serving on the board of the National Sunday School Association. Isabelle was also the co-founder of the Greater Los Angeles Sunday School Association (GLASS). She taught in LIFE Bible College and influenced them to accept the materials and standards of the Evangelical Teacher Training Association (ETTA) which in turn allowed certification to the graduating students.

During last April's International Convention at the Church on the Way, Isabelle received her 60-year service pin.



A scholarship has been established by the Greater Los Angeles, Sunday School Association in memory of Isabelle Helmle-Peck for Christian Education student majors. Gifts may be sent to:
GLASS, P.O. Box 296,
Rosemead, CA 91770-0296



National Day of Prayer.

May 6, 1993

For more than 40 consecutive years, Americans have joined together for a National Day of Prayer—lifting their thanks, needs and concerns to Almighty God. Prayer is as basic to our nation as family and freedom. You can play an important part in 1993's National day of Prayer:

- As a church stay open all day
- Set up a community-wide event at a central location
- Host a prayer breakfast or lunch meeting
- Spread promotional materials

For more information regarding the National Day of Prayer contact:

The National Day of Prayer Task Force
P. O. box 15616
Colorado Springs, CO 80935-5616
(719) 531-9300

DIRECTIONS FOR FOURSQUARE CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS is a resource published quarterly by the National Department of Christian Education in Los Angeles, California.

You may receive bundle (5 or more) copies of the newsletter to distribute in your church for a small charge to cover shipping costs.

If you would like to make a contribution to this newsletter we would appreciate hearing from you.

NATIONAL DEPT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
1910 West Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
213/484-0105