



**And these words...  
shall be upon your heart;  
and you shall teach them  
diligently to your children...**  
-Deuteronomy 6:6-7

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# Teacher Education Network

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**We proclaim Christ, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.**  
**Colossians 1:28 (NIV)**

## How can we change to serve Christ more fully?

**S**unday School is just around the corner. This year I'm doing something different with the congregation I serve. We've moved Confirmation to an evening during the week and I'll lead a teen class on Sunday mornings. We are trying to be flexible and meet the needs of our families. I'm hopeful the schedule change will work, that is, serve our families better.

There are many people across denominations who believe this type of change weakens the church and church commitment. Certain things like worship, Sunday School, and Confirmation should be set in stone, immovable. Church members should bend to fit their schedules and forgo those things that don't fit this rigid schedule.

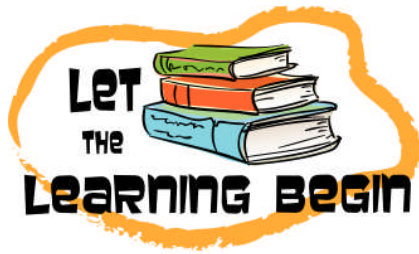
But that's not really how Jesus responded to the world around him. Jesus met individuals right where they were - at the well, on the road, at home, at the shoreline, and so on. Jesus reached out then, and continues to now, into our homes, our hearts, and even our busy schedules.



Let's do everything we can to follow Jesus' lead in reaching out to those around us. Have you considered: a car pool or van to help get students (of all ages) to class, altering your class time to reach the most families, offering a meal as a part of the program (many VBS programs do this, Sunday school could too), or other changes that make Christian Education more accessible to more families?

Our goal is to reach lives with the love, compassion, knowledge, and grace of Christ. Nothing should stand in the path of this good and noble intention, not tradition, and not busy schedules.

In Christ,  
Tammie



By the time the children get a little older they have heard many of the Bible stories over and over. When they hear the stories as an older student they start asking "So what, how does this apply to my life?" Older children need modern day applications to Bible stories. They learn more when they can participate in activities and see how stories apply to them personally. This lesson deals with perseverance. There are many times in our lives when we face difficult situations (loss of a job, cancer, fight with a friend, peer pressure, etc.) and we can choose to give up, feel sorry for ourselves, be angry and negative, give in to temptation, etc., or we can ask for God's help and guidance and carry on with determination. (This lesson is easily adapted for various age groups)

### Materials

- Plastic spoons (one for every student)
- Mini marshmallows (approximately 3 per student)
- One paper cup per student
- Various stories on perseverance:
  - Psalm 40: 1-3, 56 and 57
  - Romans 5: 1-5
  - Habakkuk 3: 17-19
  - Local newspaper

- *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books

### Directions

1. Tell students that they are going to live the life of an OWL by providing for their young.
2. Start the activity by placing marshmallows (mice) around the room.
3. Next, give each student a cup (nest) that he/she must place in a central location.
4. Students must then place a spoon handle in their mouth and attempt to scoop up as many marshmallows as they can to feed their young.
5. They must put the marshmallows into their cup without tipping the cup over and without using their hands. If a student uses his/her hands he/she will not get to keep the marshmallow and it is put back on the floor (field) where it was.

\*\*This activity may be difficult, but don't let students quit. Make them persevere.

### Discussion Questions

1. What responsibilities do the adult owls have?
2. What would happen if the adult owl gave up after they didn't get a mouse?
3. What is perseverance? (Pursuing worthy objectives and

demonstrating determination, fortitude, and patience when striving to meet a goal or confronted with failure.) How did you show it in this activity? What strategies helped them achieve their goal?

4. How does patience apply to perseverance?
5. Why do you think we sometimes feel like we should just quit trying?
6. Did you want to quit when you saw other students succeeding in the OWL Game?
7. Are there times when a person does need to quit? Give an example and explain. What strategies/things can we use in life to help us through the tough situations? How can God help us in difficult times? Or talk about when bad things happen, but we are still able to rejoice in the Lord.
8. When have you shown perseverance in your life? How has God helped you in this journey?

9. Do you have to "win" to show perseverance? Perseverance isn't always winning. Just finishing the task can be persevering. (Someone who was once crippled and can now walk may decide to run a race. They may not finish first, but their goal is to just finish the race. Difficult situations aren't going to go away, but with God by our side, we can bear the difficult task ahead with perseverance and patience.)

After you are done discussing the activity, read stories from the Bible that deal with perseverance, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* stories (Run, Patti, Run.), (We Never Told Him He Couldn't Do it), (The Power of Determination, etc.), or take stories from your local newspaper that demonstrate this trait. Perhaps there is someone in your congregation or a family member of someone in your class who has shown great determination who could come in and talk to your class about how God and perseverance played a part in their life.

By: Brenda Bell



As I sit in my Sunday school class with my two students, I say a quiet prayer asking God for patience and understanding. I may only have two students, but these two students are brother and sister and they are both full of energy. I have my lesson ready and supplies out, but these two are not interested. I don't understand. This is a great kid friendly lesson, or at least I think it is. But they are not on the same page as I am. My patience is wearing thin. So, what is a Sunday school teacher to do?

Patience and understanding in the classroom may be hard for some teachers to grasp, especially those who don't work a lot with young students. We think about when we were young and how we acted and behaved in Sunday School. It might have looked a bit different. And that is one of the first things we have to understand, times have changed and so has Sunday School.

I was used to sitting, listening to a Bible lesson and then doing a follow-up activity. Simple and easy. But these two students I was teaching were very high energy, sitting and listening were not going to work. So this is what I did. I asked them what they enjoyed doing for Sunday School. They told me they liked when we played a music cd and they could dance around and sing. They also liked going outside and doing activities there.

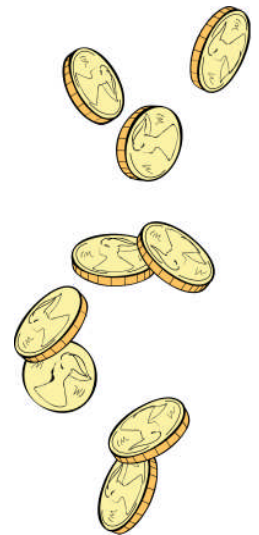
This is where the understanding part comes in. We have to know where our kids are coming from. Kids that are school age sit in class 5 days a week listening to lessons. So when they come to church on Sunday mornings they want something different. If your patience in the classroom is thin or nonexistence and you just don't understand what your students want, ask them.

We now start out our lessons with free-style dance time (to VBS and Sunday school songs, of course) to get out all our wiggle-worms. If we have more worms in us one morning, we'll dance a little

longer than normal. I also tell the kids what we are going to do for the hour or so we are together, and then there are no surprises. Usually at the end of our time, we do more dancing, a Bible game/activity, or just talk about what we want to talk about. I believe that sometimes it is more important just to spend the time together in fellowship with your students rather than trying to get through a lesson. They will remember your kind heart and how you let them run around the classroom and dance. Always end your lesson in prayer, thanking the Lord for bringing them to church that day.

By: Emily Korn

Kids and money can be an interesting combination. They certainly seem to know how to spend it on any number of things they can't be expected to live without: toys, video games, music. And as to how far a dollar can stretch, their experiences wouldn't seem to have included budgeting, in most cases. During the 2009 Lenten season, my Sunday school class undertook a program of saving some of the money they might otherwise have spent on themselves in order to participate



in a community service project. After a discussion of needs and programs in our community, and the importance of our part as Christians in supporting such projects, we chose to contribute to the local food bank.

For each of the forty days, they agreed to put aside a set amount, determined by each of them individually, into banks we'd made the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. The Sunday after Easter, everyone brought their banks and we combined and counted our offerings. I'd brought along an ad from a local grocery store. The children went through the ad, searching for the best deals, amazed at how much food costs, and a bit dismayed that they wouldn't be able to purchase as much as they'd anticipated in what they'd thought to be a great amount of money. They kept a running tally of the cost of items chosen, and list in hand, off we went to the store.

Up and down the aisles we wandered, looking for those deals. Soon our cart was full and we headed to the check out where a very patient cashier helped them count out their money. We returned to church, where during morning worship, the children brought the bags of groceries forward for their offering for the day.

I'd like to think that this hands on stewardship project made an impression on their young minds and hearts. I hope each of them

will continue on their own to regularly bring food on the first Sunday of each month when our church conducts an in-gathering of food to "Feed My People."

Join us in November at our annual T.E.N. Retreat at Mt. Morris and explore more ideas on the Moravian manner of stewardship.

By: Sheila Petroni



## Do We or Do We Not?

Some churches may have asked that question about VBS this year. With the economy the way it is and with some churches being rather small, it may be a stretch financially for many churches to host a VBS this year or in the future. Let me tell you of our experience. This is the year to go 'lean and mean' with expenditures. Our craft coordinator and I went into the supply room and checked to see what was there that could be used. She looked and almost immediately said, "I can do \_\_\_\_\_ with this, and I remember the year we used these. It has been long enough that I think we can do it again." So, with using supplies that would have ordinarily just sat on the shelves, she spent very little on craft supplies, and the children

had very nice crafts to take home each day. The older kids built a birdhouse with donated materials. Another volunteer said, "I think we can decorate on a budget as well." A church just a few miles from us also used the "Crocodile Dock" theme and loaned us the backdrop and another major decoration, and with the skills and the talents of some of our church ladies, they came up with some outstanding decorations. We had a daily story teller and the kids also had classroom time, so they could learn the lesson more intimately and the teacher could get to know the children. Snacks were also donated. The lesson material was purchased. Buttons for perfect attendance, and t-shirts with Hope Moravian VBS logo was our single most expensive purchase.

Many months of preparation, prayer, and fasting goes into having a successful VBS. Holding meetings with the teachers and letting them give input on their ideas is vital. No one person has all the 'perfect' ideas and plans. It takes teamwork. (Ask any major sports player). It takes many people working together to make VBS successful. And some may feel that it is just too much. But when we look at it through spiritual eyes, it takes on a brand new aura. I looked at the children who were eagerly coming to the church daily and really enjoying the singing, and the stories, making new friends, and after seeing the glee on each face, I thought, "We are sowing and watering seeds this week." As I looked the teenagers who are now

helping in VBS, I see that they are blossoming into manhood and womanhood, and wonder what eternity will say about Hope Moravian VBS. What part in these children's lives have we played? Only time will tell. Can this be measured in dollars and cents? No, absolutely not.

Registration forms were taken to the Hope Community Center day care, and the local private day care, in hopes of getting more kids. They came. The culmination for me was on the Tuesday following VBS. The Community Center leader, and a whole bunch of the kids came to my office at the church and presented me with a poster board message, "Jesus liked what you did and we do too!" Each child had signed it. On the back of the poster board, the leaders had written a little note of appreciation. In part it said how thankful they were that their kids were included in VBS because some of the kids never even get to go to Sunday school. Isn't that what Christianity is all about? People giving of their time, talent and finances to further the kingdom of God? Jesus said, *"Let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 19:14 NKJV\_

So if your church is struggling with the idea of whether or not to invest the time and effort into hosting a VBS, I would strongly say, it is worth it all. If you are a small church, find another church that you can partner with, ask for

donations of craft items, and ask for homemade cookies and drinks. The scripture says: *"...whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."* Matthew 21:22NKJV, and *"You have not because you ask not"* James 4:3 KJV. I personally believe that anytime we are doing God's will, everything you need will be supplied. So do not let the economy deter you from spreading the Gospel and doing good in your community. You will be blessed above all that you can think or imagine.

By: Ronda Martin



### Curriculum Swap

**D**oes your church storeroom or library have on over abundance of old curriculum or books that you will never use again in this lifetime? If so, we have the perfect solution...the curriculum swap at the T.E.N. retreat in November. Bring what you have, donate it to the cause, and grab some "new to you" materials! It's a win-win situation for everyone! Come early - first come, first serve! See you there!!

### A Parting Note From Kathryn

**T**here's a great new Rob Bell video out that we watched on Saturday morning at the last T.E.N. retreat. In it, a young



boy is trying in vain to pick up a starfish. It is not until his father asks him why he can't pick up the starfish that he

cries, "My hands are full of shells!" Rev. Sandra Crase said it well at our Appreciation Banquet, when it was announced that I was stepping down from the Teacher Education Committee. She said that, "I was putting down my shells, to pick up my starfish." So, while I will miss being a part of the T.E.N. committee and the MWCEC, I am excited about my new adventures.



Thank you for all the support and positive feedback over the years. God Bless.

Yours in Christ,  
Kathryn Bignall

### Save a Tree

To receive this newsletter electronically instead of snail mail, e-mail [LindFarm@aol.com](mailto:LindFarm@aol.com) and we will make the changes!

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## **A FOND Farewell to...**

*Kathryn Bignall, Beth Glasser and Jennifer Hollenberger! They have all felt for personal reasons that it was necessary to leave the T.E.N. committee at this time. We thank them for their years of service and their dedication to the education of our district. They will be sadly missed, and we know they will all miss us too! Really - we ARE a fun group to hang-out with! SO, if one of them was from your area, and you are looking for some fun, consider being a replacement for them on the committee! For more information on what the T.E.N. committee actually does, contact any of the committee members listed on the front page of the newsletter. OR, come to the T.E.N. Retreat and meet with them personally!*

*The Teacher Education Network of the Moravian Church,  
Western District invites you to its*



## **12th Annual Retreat**

**“On the Money: Talking Dollars and Sense to Kids and Their Parents”**

The Rev. Gary Marsh,  
Director of Stewardship for the Moravian Church  
Northern Province,  
will be our facilitator.

**Join us November 13 - 15, 2009**

**A registration form is enclosed in this  
newsletter!**

