

# *I* Organizing the Responsible Committee

## The Lake Wobegon Presbyterian Church

**L**et's drop in on Lake Wobegon, Garrison Keillor's fictional hometown, the town that time forgot and decades cannot improve. Garrison has seen most everything in Lake Wobegon, like Ralph's "Pretty Good" grocery store, where if Ralph doesn't have it you can probably do without; the Catholic church, Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility; and, of course, the Norwegian Lutheran Church, where he seems well acquainted with Pastor Ingvist.

But I don't think Garrison has found the Presbyterian Church in Lake Wobegon. I can't blame him—the church is tucked away on a side street, and there's no sign on the main highway that goes through Lake Wobegon telling visitors where the church is.

The folks are friendly at the Lake Wobegon Presbyterian Church. No one could call them God's frozen chosen. And they're proud of their minister, whose prayers are eloquent and who regularly quotes Niebuhr and Brueggemann in sermons. But still there seems to be some unrest floating around in the congregation. Oh, they have church school on Sunday morning, but not many attend. It's hard to get teachers, even harder to keep them. The classrooms are furnished with an eclectic array of hand-me-downs from the congregation. No one is quite sure what curriculum is being used or why it was selected. Teachers can be heard in the hallway on Sunday morning asking, "Wonder who I talk to in order to get a roll of butcher paper?" or "Where can I get a video on Moses?" or "Who took the glue I brought last week?" Once in a while, two or three parents can be heard bemoaning the fact that their youth are attracted to the fun activities at the Luther

League at Pastor Ingvist's church. And three men talk a lot about the independent Bible study they attend in town.

On this particular Sunday a couple of elders at the coffee hour are moaning and groaning about the church school. Why do so few attend? Why is it so hard to get teachers? Finally, in exasperation they say, "We want to light a fire under our Christian education program. What can we do? Where do we start?"

The above story is pure quill myth, created in the imagination just as surely as Lake Wobegon is created in the wonderful, creative genius of Garrison Keillor's mind. But even though this story is made up, the same scenario has no doubt been played out at countless other churches at some point in their history—maybe even yours. So let's help the Lake Wobegon Presbyterian Church light a fire under its Christian education program. Maybe this will help other Christian education programs. Maybe even yours.

## What *Not* to Do

**A**s a means of emphasizing the organizational task, let's clarify what *not* to do. Sometimes sessions or pastors appoint an elder for education or enlist a Sunday school superintendent. There's nothing wrong with making these assignments as long as it doesn't stop there. If one person does all the work of getting the education program designed and up and running, that individual is usually overloaded quickly and is soon burned out. Not only is this unfair, but it becomes doubly hard to enlist a replacement. Furthermore, having one person organizing the education program doesn't build broad ownership and support for the program.

Therefore, it is important to have an education committee, with each member having defined tasks. In small churches, three persons may be enough; large churches may need somewhere between eight and fifteen members on their committee.

This manual focuses on the education program of the congregation. While it does include planning education for youth, the broad topic of youth ministry is not covered. Youth ministry needs its own manual. (For suggested resources, see the Bibliography.)

### What Are Your Priorities for Education?

Each congregation has its own assumptions about the reasons for an education program. It is important to gather information from a representative sampling of the membership and include those ideas in formulating a statement about your education program. After this statement is approved by the session, it can be used as a basis for designing the program, selecting curriculum, promoting the education program, orienting teachers, and informing prospective members.

Here are some basic questions:

1. What are the hoped-for outcomes for the learners?
  - that they be led to make a confession of faith?
  - that they be nurtured in the faith?
  - that they be equipped for mission and ministry?
  - that their spiritual life be enriched?
  - that they find support and fellowship?
2. What importance will be placed on studying the Scriptures? on interpreting the Scriptures?
3. In what ways will the mission of the church be portrayed?
4. In what ways should the education program emphasize denominational theology and heritage?

### What Needs to Be Organized?

Looking at the overall organization of the program, there are five major task areas:

1. information gathering
2. program design and calendaring
3. curriculum selection and evaluation
4. teacher/leader enlistment
5. teacher/leader orientation, education, and nurture

These major task areas will be described in detail in chapter 2.

### Models for Organizing the Committee

The congregation needs to decide how they want to organize the responsible committee. What follows is a description of three models of organization. All three models include dividing up the work, so that each person is responsible for a particular task.

#### Model A: The Umbrella Approach

In this model of organization, each of the major task areas listed above are formed into subcommittees or groups. Each group is responsible for completing the task for all age levels and all special events. For example, the curriculum selection and evaluation subcommittee would find curriculum materials for children, youth, and adult church school on Sunday morning, for the Lenten series, for vacation church school, and so forth. Leader enlistment, teacher training, and calendar planning committees would follow suit, completing their tasks for all age levels and events.

Each of these major task areas could have two to five persons on the committee, as well as co-opted persons from the congregation, as desired. They would plan their work, report to the overall education committee, and keep in communication with the other subcommittees.

A strength of this approach is that coordination of the entire education program would be emphasized.

### Model B: The Age-Level Approach

In this approach, the subcommittees would be organized by age levels. People interested in particular age levels would enjoy this model. Planning for each age level is unique. For instance, in adult education the offerings are more often in shorter segments. The age-level subcommittees could be, for example, children, youth, adult, and intergenerational.

Each subgroup would have the five major tasks as listed earlier. So the children's subcommittee would do program design and calendaring; curriculum selection and evaluation; teacher/leader enlistment; and teacher/leader orientation, education, and nurture for *any programming* involving children. The other age-level subcommittees would have these same five tasks for their age levels.

### Model C: Task List Approach

According to author Carolyn Brown, "in even the smallest church, good Christian education does not just happen. Plans for programs and curricula must be thoughtfully prepared. What is needed is a public definition of who does what in your church's education ministry."

In her book *Developing Christian Education in the Smaller Church*, she suggests the following process to determine who does what:

1. List as headings categories of people who could do organizational tasks:
    - church school superintendent
    - teachers and leaders
    - responsible committee
    - minister
    - custodian
  2. Make a list of the tasks that need to be done to organize an education program and decide which person or group is to do each task:
    - provide substitutes
    - recruit teachers/leaders for education ministry
- enroll new students
    - plan for confirmation classes as necessary
    - be sure every class has a teacher every Sunday
    - count and deposit the offering
    - plan and oversee the budget for the church's education ministry
    - select and evaluate curriculum used in all classes
    - order curriculum so that each class has the exact number of books they need on time
    - be sure that all necessary CD players, VCRs, DVDs, and other audiovisual equipment are available and working
    - be able to operate all audiovisual equipment
    - select and buy class resources, such as Bible dictionaries, classroom Bibles, and maps
    - buy and keep on hand basic supplies: pencils, crayons, paper, scissors, glue, and so forth
    - buy unusual supplies for special projects
    - decide which books are added to the church library and oversee its operation
    - create a learning atmosphere with posters, banners, bulletin boards, and furniture arrangement, and so forth
    - be sure that each group or class has a clean, warm place to meet
    - plan lessons
    - hear the teachers' needs, problems, joys, and sorrows
    - prepare and lead opening assembly
    - oversee youth fellowship(s)
    - take advantage of leader training programs in your own church and in your area
    - be sure that leaders and teachers have enough training to do their jobs well
    - pay for and/or provide transportation and child care to enable teachers and leaders to attend workshops
    - buy subscriptions to magazines for teachers
    - plan annual events like Rally Day and the Christmas program
    - plan and provide publicity for the education ministry
    - keep attendance records and compile class rolls, figuring out who should be included in each class or group

- search out missing students and encourage them (in appropriate ways) to attend
3. Look at the distribution of tasks and, if uneven, balance out the tasks so no one is overburdened.

This task list becomes a skeletal job description for persons/groups and should be distributed among the congregation so everyone knows who is responsible for a particular task.

## A Sample Planning Calendar

**T**he responsible committee, no matter which model of organization it chooses, needs to take a look at its work for a whole year. (See suggested planning calendar on page 7.) Planning ahead for several months is necessary for many reasons:

1. It encourages creativity.
2. It enables the committee members, who have busy lives, to get their assignments done at their convenience, thereby avoiding last-minute panics and stress.
3. It gives the committee, the teachers/leaders, and the participants the feeling that this is a well-thought-out and inviting program in which they want to be involved.

## Suggested Planning Calendar

### January

Evaluate Advent event  
Recruit teacher enlistment committee leaders  
Decide on education program for summer months  
Hold teacher education event  
Report on plans for Lent  
Plan confirmation member recognition

### February

Select and order vacation church school and other summer programming curriculum  
Select vacation church school director  
Begin Lenten programming

### March

Decide what classes will be offered in September  
Enlist summer leaders  
Hear report of vacation church school plans  
Publicize church camps and conferences

### April

Evaluate Lenten program (whenever Easter is over)  
Begin enlisting fall teachers and leaders  
Plan teacher appreciation activities  
Receive confirmands into membership

### May

Orient vacation church school teachers  
Select curriculum for fall  
Implement teacher appreciation activities  
Publicize summer program  
Complete enlistment of fall teachers and leaders

### June

Hold vacation church school (or July or August)  
Organize confirmation program with the pastor  
Evaluate program and curriculum  
Order fall curriculum

### July

Evaluate vacation church school (if held in June)  
Develop September through May calendar  
Arrange for teacher education events in congregation

### August

Evaluate vacation church school (if held in July or August)  
Publicize fall program  
Hold teacher orientation and training events  
Plan stewardship education for children and youth with finance committee

### September

Begin education programs for children, youth, and adults  
Dedicate teachers and leaders  
Begin confirmation program  
Plan Advent events  
Present Bibles to third- or fourth-graders

### October

Begin stewardship education  
Enjoy the fall colors  
Enlist leaders for Advent activities

### November

Plan Lenten events  
Report on Advent plans  
Plan teacher education event for January

### December

Carry out Advent plans  
Enjoy Advent Merry Christmas!

## A Whole Committee Task—The Budget

**T**he people involved in the education program should make the recommendations to the session for budget needs, since they know best the variety of items that need financial support. They also can be convincing advocates to "sell" the budget to the session and the congregation!

A good rule of thumb is to plan to devote between two and five percent of the congregation's budget to the education program. Any paid education staff, either part time or full time, would be in addition to this two to five percent.

Adequately funding education is important. First, it enables a quality program. Second, it says to teachers and participants that the congregation puts a priority on education in its life. Third, it says specifically to teachers that the congregation is funding classroom needs. This makes it clear that education is the task of the whole congregation and not just the task of a few dedicated teachers.

### Budget Writing

Each congregation may have some unique needs that require financial support, but there are some needs that they share in common. A basic list might include the following:

- curriculum materials, both print and video
- honoraria for visiting speakers from outside the congregation (optional)
- supplemental curriculum materials such as Bibles, Bible dictionaries and commentaries, maps, stories, music, and art media books
- supplies (see chapter 3)
- equipment and furnishings (see chapter 3)
- teacher education resources
- teacher education scholarships
- publicity and promotion
- refreshments
- summer programming
- paid nursery attendants

See appendix A on page 25 for sample Christian education budgets.

### Budget Monitoring

The whole committee should be involved in writing and advocating for the budget. There is also a third budget task that can't be forgotten—monitoring the budget through the year. Check monthly or quarterly to see that the bills have been paid and that the expenditures are being reported accurately. Follow through on plans to buy equipment, furnishings, and supplemental curriculum materials. If the education committee spends its budget responsibly, not overspending unless there is a good reason, then advocating for the following year's budget will be that much easier.

### Looking Ahead

**N**o matter which model a congregation chooses to get its education program organized, the major tasks previously mentioned need to be implemented:

1. information gathering
2. program design and calendaring
3. curriculum selection and evaluation
4. teacher/leader enlistment
5. teacher/leader orientation, education, and nurture

The next chapter gives specific guidance for working on these five major tasks.

# 2 The Five Major Tasks

## Major Task 1: Information Gathering

**M**ost congregations—even our fictional Lake Wobegon Presbyterian Church have some form of education program going on. Sometimes, however, it consists of many pieces, with little vision of the whole. This may be the result of many small groups "doing their own thing," with each group having little idea of what "thing" the other groups are doing. Each of the pieces may have been created out of individual or momentary needs, or simply because someone thinks, "we ought to be doing something!"

Our problem then is that "we can't see the forest for the trees"! Each of these pieces may very well be good when considered separately, but when the "trees" are pulled together, the "forest" may not be exactly what we want it to be. In order to determine the pluses and minuses of our educational program, we have to look at those individual trees. We need to know why they were "planted," which ones we want to encourage to grow, and which ones need to be thinned out so the forest can thrive.

As stated in chapter 1, a congregation interested in taking control of its educational ministry will first decide who will be responsible for planning it. These persons will then determine the congregation's educational goals and the functioning model under which they will work. Once these issues have been decided, the next step is to look at the trees in the forest; that is, take stock of what is already happening educationally in your congregation.

To survey what educational experiences are already being offered for adults, youth, children, and toddlers in your congregation, use appendix B on page 26. Each of the surveyors should have a copy of the form. Additionally, so that the information will be visible to everyone as the form is completed, either copy it onto overhead transparencies or recreate it on newsprint.

## Wishing to Do Is the First Step Toward Doing

What would you like to see the congregation doing educationally that you are not doing now? You may have seen some ideas listed on the survey form that appeal to you personally or that suggest things your congregation needs. Return to the list and find the ones that appeal to you the most. Put a check mark in the last column by those ideas you would like to consider for your educational program.

The next step is brainstorming still more ideas. The following questions will help the process. (*Note: Keep in mind that most of these areas apply to a variety of age levels.*)

1. In what ways are people of different age levels in the congregation being left out of our educational program? What about people with special needs (those physically or mentally challenged, single or divorced persons, single parents, blended families, those who are lonely or experiencing difficulties in their lives, older adults, young career couples, those who are biblically inexperienced, new members, etc.)?
2. In what ways are special interests being ignored? What areas are not being covered?
3. What could be offered that would help the congregation live up to its mission statement and goals? What would help the Christian education committee live up to its goals?  
Bible knowledge  
Bible interpretation  
Church history  
Awareness of current denominational issues  
Aging  
Ethics in the workplace  
Theology  
Stewardship  
Faith sharing  
The needy in the congregation or in the community

Social or controversial issues in our community or in the world at large  
Understanding our denominational belief (for example, the Sacraments of the Presbyterian Church)  
Mission in general  
Knowledge of missionaries our denomination or our congregation supports  
Others \_\_\_\_\_

4. In what ways do we offer a variety of choices?

### What Is Reasonable for Us to Tackle?

No congregation can cover all fronts. The size of your congregation will determine how much you can offer or what needs you can reasonably fulfill. The kinds of people who make up your congregation will influence the direction you will want to go. The ones you would like to attract to your congregation and the type of area in which your building is situated may also help you decide your direction. To help you determine who you are as a congregation, use one or more of the following resources:

1. Fill out appendix C on page 27. Do this as a committee, or assign two members to complete it and report back to the committee.
2. Each year the Clerk of Session must fill out a report to the General Assembly. It is a good way to see all your congregation's statistics in one place. See that each of your committee members gets a copy.
3. The survey required when you are seeking a new pastor will give a good overview of both your congregation and your community. If you have a current survey, make copies for your committee members and walk your way through it together.
4. To understand the community in which your congregation resides, see Nancy Foltz, ed., *Religious Education in the Small Membership Church* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1990), chap. 3. Ask one of your committee members to read it and to report back at the next meeting on ways the committee might use this information.

5. To understand the special needs of the three major generations attending our churches today, see Gary McIntosh, *Three Generations: Riding the Waves of Change in Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revel, 1995).

By now your group should know what your Christian education goals are, what is currently going on educationally in your congregation, what some of the missing pieces may be, and who you are as a congregation and as a part of the surrounding community. The following section encourages you to continue planning programs that are based on your congregational and educational goals. Look through this section briefly before moving on, and remember to refer to it periodically.

### For Further Consideration

Molding an education program, like our faith, is an ongoing process. We will never have a program that satisfies everyone, or one that will continue to be adequate for our changing needs. Keep asking questions and examining your program. Read the following questions and pick out the ones the group would like to discuss at future meetings:

1. Have we seen education only as children's Sunday school? In what *ways* has this helped or hindered our educational program?
2. Are we offering classes for adults? In what ways has this helped or hindered our educational program? (See Delia Halverson, *Leading Adult Learners: A Handbook for All Christian Groups*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.)
3. Is the pastor or session actively involved in or at least genuinely supportive of the educational program? If not, how could this be improved?
4. When are classes and events offered? What are some changes that need to be made? What do we need to do to make those changes?
  - Do people have to choose between worship and education?



- Do the teachers usually miss worship?
  - Do the classes or events start too early or too late?
  - Are classes offered at an inconvenient time, day, or time of year?
  - Are we expecting too great a time commitment?
5. Are we open to new ideas? Where can we get help to encourage acceptance of necessary changes? How can we tell which ones would be good for us? (Chapter 4 offers specific resources that might be helpful.)
  6. How can we bring about a melding of the ideas from experienced leadership and new leadership?
  7. Do we encourage the congregation to offer their ideas by listening to, considering, or following through on their suggestions? How can we make this happen?
  8. Are we offering events or classes in which members have requested or indicated an interest? How could we keep track of requests or solicit ideas?
  9. Why do we continue to offer classes that have ceased to be effective or well attended? (Use appendix B to highlight these events or classes.)
  10. Is our education only for knowing the facts or does it include opportunities for action and response? How could we change or improve this? (See appendix D on pages 28-29 for help in this area.)
  11. Do we offer events or classes that are relevant to the lives of the congregation? How can we find out what is relevant?
  12. Has church membership changed considerably over the years?
    - Are we bigger or smaller?
    - Do members live farther away than they did twenty years ago?
    - Are occupations and interests quite different?
    - Are the members younger or older?
    - Are we racially or ethnically diverse?
    - Are there other changes we need to take into account?
    - How do our educational programs reflect these changes? What can we do to make sure they do?

## Major Task 2: Program Design and Calendaring

**I**nstead of piecing a program together wee-by week- or even month-by-month, looking at the education program of the congregation for a whole year enables a more coordinated program, fewer last-minute panics, and usually more participants. In developing a year's design, this task group needs to carefully analyze the information gathered in Major Task 1. From the information gathered, determine the groups for which you want to develop and continue programming.

After brainstorming possible groups, topics, and content, begin to do some prioritizing. Realizing there are limits to what can be offered based on several factors—space in the building, leadership and financial resources available, and the need to provide a balanced program—select the priorities that rise to the top of the list.

If possible, collect information about each group's preferred time and format of meeting—Sunday morning or evening, weekday breakfast, late afternoon or evening, Saturday morning, weekend retreat.

Remember to decide what, if anything, you want to do for special seasons in the liturgical calendar—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and World Communion. This programming could be congregation-wide or for a segment of the congregation. It could take the place of ongoing classes for one to four weeks. Therefore, the teachers and participants of ongoing classes need to know the plans for special events so they can adjust their lesson planning.

Careful attention also needs to be given to consulting with the curriculum selection and teacher/leader enlistment groups. Are the proposed plans feasible for them? Are there resources and people available to meet those needs? The task group should also complete the following tasks:

1. Determine the classes and programs to be offered to which groups and in what format, either short-term or ongoing.
2. Fill in the calendar for the year with ongoing classes and special events.

3. Spend some time reviewing the proposed calendar, and check for balance, variety of audiences, and any overlapping of events. Then make any adjustments in the schedule that are possible.
4. Develop a publicity plan that will be placed in a wide variety of media—posters, banners, bulletins, newsletters, personal notes or post cards, telephone calls, video.

### Major Task 3: Curriculum Selection and Evaluation

**T**here is a myth about curriculum that is widely expressed in many congregations. It goes something like this:

If we can just find the perfect curriculum materials that we know are out there somewhere, then all our problems will be solved. We will have happy teachers, wonderful classes, and eager students.

Unfortunately, this is a simplistic myth. What people refer to, as curriculum, is usually the materials and resources. The reality is that curriculum materials are a tool. There are many factors that go into a well-rounded and meaningful class. These include the following: a welcoming atmosphere—the teacher and the room; the shared faith and teaching skills of the teacher; the students' readiness to learn; and the different learning styles preferred by the students. All are vital pieces of the curriculum.

The curriculum selection and evaluation task group nevertheless has important work to do. Here are some suggestions:

1. Develop a set of guidelines for selecting curriculum. (See appendix E, page 30, for a sample questionnaire.) These guidelines may include statements about the congregation's approach to the following:
  - interpreting Scripture
  - learning theory and educational methods
  - the mission of the church
  - the meaning of church membership
  - one's relationship to God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and fellow Christians

- user-friendliness for the teacher
- affirmation of Reformed theology
- denominational heritage

Obtain approval from the session for the guidelines selected.

2. In consultation with the program design group, determine age-level groupings of classes to be offered. Evaluate prospective curricula based on the congregation's guidelines for selecting curriculum. Obtain session approval for the curriculum selected.'
3. Orient teachers/leaders in the use of the curriculum selected. What are all the pieces of the resources; how are they to be used together; what, if any, additional resources are needed to use it?
4. Develop an annual process to evaluate the curriculum (in ongoing classes), relating it to the curriculum selection guidelines. Involve the participants as well as the teachers, if possible.
5. Ponder these points in curriculum selection:
  - Will students growing up in the congregation's education program receive a balanced education?
  - Will students learn what it means to be both Presbyterian and ecumenical?
  - In emphasizing teacher friendliness of curriculum, has the curriculum compromised creative and sound learning activities?
  - Is there a balance between the covenant community called to be in mission and the individual being helped to grow spiritually?

By having guidelines for selecting curriculum, a congregation can avoid being pressured to use a curriculum that is attractive but has questionable content and theology.

### Major Task 4: Teacher/Leader Enlistment

**T**he special people who enlist teachers/leaders need to approach their task with some basic understandings. For instance, God has gifted all God's people with talents, abilities, and faith to be shared in the ministry and mission of the church.

It is the work of each person to discern his or her gifts and, with the help of others, to find ways to use them in the church.

We are called individually and corporately to "go therefore and make disciples . . . teaching them . . . everything that I have commanded" (Matt. 28:19-20). In addition, all church members make promises to parents and their children at the Sacrament of Baptism.

With this positive approach, here are steps for developing an enlistment plan:

1. Enlist an enlistment task force. Consider asking "pillars" and "saints" of the congregation who have a long-standing love and commitment to the vitality of the congregation. They make wonderful ambassadors for the church's ministry.
2. Consult with the curriculum selection and program design groups to make a list of teachers/leaders needed.
3. Provide a "package" to offer the prospective teacher that could include the following:
  - length of commitment, a definite starting and ending date
  - curriculum and supplemental resources available
  - orientation to teaching in their setting: church building, camp, sanctuary
  - education methods and skills workshops
  - a substitute system, with the understanding that teachers will need to be gone, on the average, one Sunday a month
  - dedication of teachers in worship
4. Develop a prospective teacher/leader list that may include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:
  - parents, both men and women
  - grandparents
  - adults who have taught in the past
  - grown children of longtime church members
  - some senior highs
  - single adults
5. Put each prospective teacher/leader on a 3" x 5" card and in a computer database (if you have one) where you can record this:

- date of contact
  - response of the prospect
  - person making the contact
6. Send a letter to all prospects saying that the task force believes they have the talents to teach in the church. List the "package" offered. Ask them to prayerfully consider the invitation. Tell them they will be contacted within two weeks.
  7. Distribute worksheets listing all the teaching positions needed and several prospect cards, and ask the enlistment task force member to contact the people.
- The best way to contact prospects is to visit them in their homes. The second best is a personal phone call. Avoid collaring them in the hall at church or making a blanket appeal in worship. One church task force goes to an office building at night where there is a bank of telephones and the whole group makes calls that night.
- The invitation to teach should read something like this: "I invite you to become a part of the teaching team for \_\_\_\_\_ (*month, season, or year*). We are enlisting for the following age levels: \_\_\_\_\_. Do you have an age level preference? We will try our best to honor your preference, but do you have a second choice?"
- If they say yes, thank them on behalf of the church. If they need to think about it, schedule a definite time (within a week) when you can contact them again. If they say no, ask them if they'd be willing to substitute. In any case, thank them for considering the invitation. Record any comments on the 3" x 5" card.
8. Have one person on the enlistment task force keep the composite list of the results of the contacts.
  9. Submit the list of teachers/leaders to the session for their official appointment.'
  10. Send a letter to all who have agreed to teach/lead, thanking them and confirming the age level, teaching partner(s), starting date, and length of commitment. Include in the letter that the teacher/leader orientation group will be contacting them.

## Major Task 5: Teacher/Leader Orientation, Education, and Nurture

### Orientation

Teachers/leaders need to know about the norms and priorities of the congregation and the practical stuff about the church building. An orientation will help make them feel comfortable as part of the team. Here are some questions teachers/leaders should or could ask:

1. For what reasons did the session choose the curriculum?
2. Who gets the supplies I need and who pays for the supplies?
3. Are there other groups using the supplies and the space where my class meets?
4. What, if anything, am I expected to do about attendance and absentees?
5. Is there a classroom discipline policy?
6. Is an offering to be collected? Am I to explain how the offering is used?
7. Who can I talk to if I have any problems?

### Education

Most teachers/leaders need some instruction to equip them for the teaching task. Even church schoolteachers with degrees in education benefit from sessions on such topics as faith development, prayer in the classroom, and finding the theology in the curriculum.

Teachers with no formal training in education need additional sessions on learning theory, age-level characteristics, classroom hospitality, and specific teaching skills, such as storytelling, drama, and art media.

There are a variety of places where one can find resources for this task (see chapter 4 for more details). A presbytery resource center may offer DVDs, books, and other materials for training purposes. The presbytery staff person in education can also provide workshops or refer the congregation to other possibilities.

For example, the presbytery may have a committee of church educators or designated Presbyterians Organized in Nurture and Teaching who are equipped to lead teacher education events.

This task force should plan their work throughout the year, not just a one-time event in August or September. In the process of scheduling, check with the presbytery to see what presbytery-wide teacher workshops are planned. Then survey the teachers to see what their most pressing needs are for training.

Putting together a year's teacher workshop schedule that provides training every two to three months could include some combination of the following:

- presbytery-wide workshops
- video-based workshops
- locally designed workshops
- visiting educator workshops

Think creatively about timing these workshops. Certainly weekday evenings, Saturday mornings, or Sunday afternoons are possibilities. Whenever they are scheduled, be sure to provide childcare. Some congregations schedule workshops on Sunday morning during the worship service (or one of the worship services). Others secure substitutes for all the classes and have the workshop during the normal education hour.

### Nurture

Teachers and leaders need encouragement and support all along the way. Not only do they need someone with whom to talk to work out a problem, but they also need to be fed spiritually in order to teach out of fullness, not out of emptiness. The caring and feeding of teachers can include the following:

- encouragement to go to workshops
- monthly or quarterly teachers' meetings/workshops
- teacher and student dedication service
- phone calls to check in
- teachers' bulletin board
- publicized successes

- teachers' communion service
- basic resource library
- remembering teachers in public prayer
- "hand on the back" encouragement
- personal notes
- a small gift or a flower
- end-of-year teachers' party
- gift book at end of term'

These ideas are just suggestions. Each congregation should use its own creativity in finding ways to nurture its teachers. Here is a word of caution. Teachers are using the talents and gifts that God has given them to volunteer in the education program of the church. Many others in the congregation use the differing gifts that God has given them to volunteer in other areas of congregational life, such as evangelism, stewardship, and outreach. So when showing appreciation to teachers, the education committee should be careful to mention that teaching is one of many ways.

© Permission granted to revise, reformat, and distribute this information online from the out-of-print text, *Help! we need to organize the education program*. Original book published by the Presbytery of Twin Cities Area, Minneapolis, MN, Witherspoon Press, and the authors: Pat Channer, Jan Noller, and Kathleen Waugh.

# 3 Environment, Equipment, and Supplies

Many of the learning activities for preschoolers through adults can be accomplished without any equipment or supplies and in the simplest of surroundings. However, variety is essential if children and adults are to be inspired to open their minds to and focus their attention on the ideas and concepts of faith. Enthusiasm for learning is encouraged by the use of interesting surroundings, which include the room itself, its furnishings, and its equipment and supplies. This chapter will address how the persons responsible for their congregation's Christian education determine the needs of their classrooms.

The first step is to survey your church building and determine all the possible areas where classes could meet. If you have separate classrooms and there are enough rooms to handle all the classes, please turn to "Classroom Assignments" (pages 17-18). If you have more classes than you have classrooms, continue reading.

## **Churches with Limited Classroom Space**

Some churches without separate classroom areas, like our fictional Lake Wobegon Presbyterian Church, have used other areas for teaching, such as the kitchen, hallways, the choir loft, the church office, the furnace room, a porch, or other multiuse areas. Your congregation's classroom may be the fellowship hall or even the sanctuary, with several groups using a single space. If this is true for you, there are ways to make the room into appropriate classroom areas.

Room dividers can be purchased or made to

set off the learning areas from passersby or others using the same space. The dividers can also be used for displaying pictures, giving the space a personal touch. If dividers cannot be used, have the groups situated as far apart as possible. They may still be able to hear the other groups, but it is less distracting if the teacher is the only one facing the other classes.

It is important also to have a space where you can tape things to the wall. If this is not possible, prop a poster board against a window or on a tripod. Display resources that illustrate a lesson or items that give the educational space a feeling of class ownership.

If the class is held in the sanctuary, containing unmovable pews, use the front pew as one part of a square or half-moon, and complete it with moveable chairs. If the teacher needs to stand in the walk space of a pew that faces other pews, a box or table-like structure that rests on the pew back could be used. Lap desks for class members could be created by placing boards atop large beanbags or covered storage boxes. These boxes can also hold some of the classroom supplies. The floor can also be used as class space, with carpet squares or pillows made for the children to sit on.

The fellowship room can be divided into cubicles by hanging curtains from ceiling strips. Making or purchasing moveable screens or room dividers is also a possibility. None of these are soundproof, but cutting down on the visual distractions is helpful in itself. Using music may be a distraction to other groups using the same area, but the classes could meet together at the beginning or end of class time for songs that coordinate with the lesson.

## **Classroom Assignments**

Deciding which age levels will be placed in which classrooms can be determined by considering the following items:

1. Younger groups need more space for movement. (For information on space requirements in day-care centers, see appendix F on page 31.)
2. Younger groups need to be closer to the restrooms.
3. Reevaluate classroom assignments each year. One age level should not necessarily claim the same room year after year unless its needs require it.
4. Consider if any person(s) in the class assigned to a specific room will find it difficult to get there (consider wheelchairs, stairs, distance, etc.).
5. Consider combining small classes into multi-age, broadly graded groups. Remember that not all students will come every week, and it is more fun for both the teacher and students if there are more people in the group on a weekly basis.
6. Consider dividing large classes into smaller groups. This is especially true of preschool or junior high school students, because they will have fewer distractions and will get more individual attention.
7. Don't forget to set aside a room for nursery or toddler care.
8. Display signs on each classroom door indicating which class level meets there.
9. In several places in your building, display a map or floor plan of your church that shows where each class level meets, with a clear view of how to get there. As a base, use a copy of your building blueprint or have someone draw it on the computer or by hand. You might also place signs in strategic places that point to the classroom area(s).
10. Read chapter 10 in Carolyn Brown's *Developing Christian Education in the Smaller Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993) for some helpful suggestions on space and equipment. (See also the Bibliography on page 33 for more information.)

## **Furnishings Classrooms Will Need**

Churches whose classes meet in spaces that must be revamped for another activity right after class time should see "Churches with Limited Classroom Space," on page 17, for seating and display ideas.

If your church has a separate classroom area or a fellowship hall that is occasionally used for other activities, more permanent furnishing can be provided. Survey your church building and write down what furnishings you already have and what condition they are in. Include in your survey chairs, tables, storage cabinets or shelves, floor covering, adequate light (fixtures and windows), bulletin boards or walls to which things can be tacked or pinned, and something large on which to write (such as a chalkboard, a white board, or newsprint).

**Chairs:** Each classroom will need one chair of the appropriate size per student and one adult-sized folding chair for each teacher. Wooden chairs of various sizes that are built for preschool children and for kindergarten through third-grade children can be purchased. They are sturdy and will last for years. Combination wood and metal chairs are also good. Less durable ones made of plastic are adequate but may not be a wise investment in the long run.

Third-graders through junior high age can sit in youth-sized chairs with plastic seats and metal legs. These chairs are slightly smaller and shorter than adult-sized chairs and are far more comfortable for them. If youth chairs are beyond your budget, then use the smaller chairs for third grade and below, and adult-sized folding chairs for fourth grade and above.

**Tables:** The size of chairs you are using will determine the size and type of tables you will need. Look for rectangular tables that seat four to six persons, with legs that can be adjusted to fit chairs of any size or height. They are quite durable, but shouldn't be stood on or subjected to abuse by larger children or adults. It is nice to have these smaller tables for smaller projects. They can be put together to form squares or longer rectangles.

Trapezoid-shaped tables (also with adjustable legs) work well for worship centers or as places to put supplies or a DVD/CD player. Durable card tables work, but do not have adjustable legs.

All sizes of chairs and tables can be ordered from catalogs that come to your pastor from local or nationwide companies, or you can check the yellow pages or Internet for office supply stores. Recommendations from other churches would also be helpful. There may be churches or schools in your area that have more than they need and would give them to you or donate them at little cost. They could also be requested from other churches in your presbytery or community. Another source is garage sales and, of course, members of your congregation who are willing to help with furniture needs.

**Cabinets or shelves:** When planning new buildings or remodeling old ones, attached cabinets (and possibly counters and drawers) are nice, but less elaborate storage would still be adequate. Freestanding wooden cabinets with doors on them (with or without locks) can be purchased or even made by a member with carpentry skills. Metal ones in various sizes are also available at office furniture stores. Besides being safer and more secure, closed cabinets make it easier to keep the classroom uncluttered and to keep items not being used on a particular day out of sight.

Bookcases or shelves also work for storing supplies and are especially good for storing toys in the nursery and preschool rooms. Shelves can be the wall type with boards suspended on brackets; boards laid on cinder blocks to three levels; the metal or plastic storage type secured to the wall; or high or low wooden ones with attached backs. The first three choices are not as safe for preschoolers, however.

Remember that when classrooms must be shared with groups who meet at other times, assign storage areas specifically for each group. Also secure agreements that each group will clean and put their things away before leaving. These two agreements will help keep the peace.

**Floor covering:** Concrete floors need to be covered with vinyl or carpeting for ease of

cleaning. There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Uncarpeted rooms are better for music activities, and spills can be more easily cleaned from vinyl floors. But uncarpeted floors are noisier and do not have as warm or comfortable a feeling as carpeted floors. To alleviate this problem, you can use a piece of carpet large enough for gathering all of the class members or carpet squares for students to sit on.

**Lighting:** Rooms that have inadequate lighting (fixtures and windows) are more difficult to teach and learn in. It is important to find ways to make the classrooms as light as possible, but without unnecessary glare. Some churches have covered parts of their classroom windows for energy efficiency but have not improved the ceiling lighting to compensate for the reduction in light coming into the room from outside. You may need to change ceiling lights or find ways to increase their wattage. Lighter-colored wall paint and ceiling surfaces can also help reflect more light. Architects and building inspectors can use light meters to test whether the light in the room is up to standard.

**Display areas:** Attractive classrooms are inviting to the persons entering or using the room. If your walls are plastered, you will need to provide a place where pictures, student work, and other items can be displayed. Cork or bulletin board is best. If no other display area is provided, displaying materials on bare walls should be allowed. Tack strips that are corked with metal edges can be secured to the walls for this purpose. Masking tape, double-faced tape, or tacky putties are other popular ways to attach pictures to walls, doors, or windows.

Remember to keep in mind the height of persons using the room when putting up any display area. Items should be displayed at their eye level.

It is important that churches not put beauty before the education process. Teachers should be allowed to decorate their rooms with pictures and posters attached to the walls. Classroom walls should be painted periodically, and blemishes and tack holes can be filled or covered at those times.



**Writing surfaces:** Some large surface on which to write, such as a chalkboard, a white board, or newsprint, should be provided in the classroom. These can be purchased or created items, and can be freestanding or attached to the walls.

Chalkboard paint can be purchased to refinish old chalkboards or to create them on sanded wood.

Newsprint usually comes in pads. Sheets can be ripped off and taped to the wall or use PostIt™ pads with built in adhesive. Felt-tip pen ink can soak through the paper, so be careful. Paper is also available in large rolls. The roll is placed in a metal standard, and any length of paper can be ripped from it.

Plastic sheets that stick to the wall when smoothed with the hand are now available. White board felt-tip pens are used to write on them. They come on a pad and can be used on a flip chart, then ripped off and placed on the wall. They can be wiped off and reused a number of times, but will smear if rolled up to save. Caution is needed when wiping off the pen ink if the sheet is still on the wall—it is difficult to get the ink off a painted surface.

**Toys:** The preschool rooms and the nursery should have age-appropriate toys, such as building blocks, pull and push toys, dolls, wooden puzzles, and housekeeping toys. Other preschool items might include a child-sized kitchen sink, stove, refrigerator, pots and pans, pretend food, play table and chairs, a riding horse, a puppet theater, a paint easel, and durable children's books. See appendix G, page 32, for a more complete list of preschool toys. Ask members to purchase or donate toys that are in good condition. Garage sales are good places to find toys. Some churches re-supply their toys by having periodic toy showers from lists of suggested donations.

Two important things to remember: (1) Have the courage to go through the toys and throw them out if they are broken or in bad condition, and (2) use toys that are washable and wash them each week. One church has a bin, and all toys that were used that day go into the bin. They are then washed before they go back on the shelf.

## **Organizing the Storage Area**

**Before** we discuss what supplies and equipment should be provided for the classrooms, let's look at how to organize these resources. Some places in the church building should be designated as the supply areas. These can range from a large classroom-sized area with shelves, cabinets, and other storage places to one cabinet, a shelf, or several boxes in a space close to where classes are held.

If your church can provide at least a small room or closet for the resources that will be used for many church activities and the education program, you will find it easier to organize them and easier to find individual items when needed. It will also be less expensive in the long run because people do not buy as often when supplies are easily found. If this area is kept locked, with only teachers and other designated persons having access to the key, the cost and inventory of supplies can be better monitored, and expensive equipment kept more secure. If this is not possible or advisable, provide a locked place, at least for the more expensive equipment.

Once a site has been chosen and is ready to use, make a sweep of the church building and bring all of the equipment and supplies to that place. You will be surprised at how much you already have and at the number of different places these things have been kept. Ask someone with organizational skills to help organize the area.

Label boxes, shelves, or cabinets as to their contents. Find someone with a computer who would be willing to list all the supplies and equipment you have now and update the list as things are added or removed. If you have to use more than one area for these items or if the space is large enough to warrant it, the location of each item should also be included on the list. This list should be posted in the room, and copies given to the teachers, staff, and others who would benefit from it.

Once the current supplies have been surveyed, consider what additional ones will need to be purchased or donated.

## Supplies and Equipment

### Necessary Classroom Supplies

Place the following supplies in covered boxes or gallon ice cream buckets and put one in each classroom or in a place where they can be picked up by teachers each week.

crayons(preschoolers)	pointed, left-handed
crayons and/or felt	scissors
tipped pens	(elementary-youth)
(kindergartners--	large scissors (one for
third-graders)	each teacher)
pencils (teachers and	glue sticks for the
kindergartners-adult)	children
felt-tipped pens	(preschoolers-third
(fourth--graders--	graders)
adults)	school glue
staplers	chalk and an eraser
staples	(if needed)
transparent tape	tacks or pins (for
masking tape	bulletin boards)
rulers	white-board pens (if
round-nosed scissors	needed)
(preschoolers)	tacky putty (for
round-nosed, left-	pictures and
handed scissors	posters)
(preschoolers)	stickers (for attendance
pointed scissors	charts)
(elementary-youth)	

Each classroom should have at least one Bible, and more should be placed in rooms where reader-age people meet. Bible storybooks should be in preschool through third-grade rooms. (When reading to preschoolers and other nonreaders, be sure to note when it is a story from the Bible so the children begin to understand that this is the church's book.) Both beginning readers and older adults appreciate the large-print Bibles. Children who have received Bibles from the congregation should be encouraged to bring them each week.

### Necessary Storage Room Supplies

The following supplies should be available in the storage room or area to be borrowed by the teachers or persons involved in other church events.

8 1/2" x 11" and/or	felt-tipped pens (fat and
12" x 18" manila or	thin)
drawing paper	stickers (variety)
(lightweight, beige	poster board in a
construction paper or	variety of colors
newsprint)	9"x 12" computer or
construction paper in a	copy machine
variety of colors	paper
(mostly 9" x 12", but	Bible story pictures
some 12" x 18")	Bibles in a variety of
powdered paint in a	translations
variety of colors	First-aid kit (especially
(much cheaper than	Band-Aids and a
already mixed paint)	disinfectant)
paintbrushes	yardstick
small or regular-sized	paint shirts
margarine bowls for	lined paper
reconstituting the	boxed watercolor paints
paint	erasers
stirring sticks or spoons	string
for mixing paint	hammers
dishwashing liquid*	paper clips
fingerpaint**	paper punch
glossy paper for	molding clay
fingerpainting	play dough
glue and glue sticks	(commercial or
rubber cement	homemade, or at least
transparent and	the ingredients to
masking tape	make it)
tacks and pins	yarn
chalk	

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\*If you put a small squirt of dishwashing liquid in the bowl when mixing the powdered paint with the water, paint spilled on the children's clothing will be easier to wash out.

\*\*Fingerpaint can be made by adding liquid starch to water-based paint.

Other resources that might be useful include the following:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| commercial bulletin board letters and borders                 | sequins                                     |
| felt boards and felt figures                                  | beads                                       |
| colored pencils   | buttons                                     |
| colored art tissue paper                                      | newspapers                                  |
| crepe paper   | magazines                                   |
| wallpaper sample books  | old greeting cards                          |
| magnifying glasses  | religious Christmas cards                   |
| collection of bathroom tissue tubes or paper towel tubes      | pocket folders                              |
| nature objects (shells, dried leaves, pinecones, etc.)        | old and new candles                         |
| pantyhose or stocking "eggs"                                  | votive candles and holders                  |
| film cans   | hemmed cloths for the worship center tables |
| metal frozen juice can ends                                   | costumes                                    |
| large and small fabric pieces                                 | paper cups                                  |
| felt squares or yardage                                       | waxed paper                                 |
| sewing notions (lace, seam binding, trims for craft projects) | fixative spray                              |

### Equipment for Classroom and General Congregational Use

The following items are essential:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| CD players for each classroom                                     | portable projection screen                   |
| collections of CDs and DVDs                                       | hand-cranked or electric pencil sharpener(s) |
| at least one television and VCR or DVD player on a moveable stand | display easel(s)                             |

If funding allows for it, the following items are very useful:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| digital camera and/or digital video camera with blank discs or USB drives for storing; | iron   |
| commercially produced Bible stories and other video discs for showing)                 | small or regular sized ironing board   |
| CD, TV, and DVD players (more than one)  | copy machine or easy access to one computer on a rolling cart with biblical programs appropriate for classroom use |

### Don't Forget the Church Library!

Essential to every congregation's ministry, educational or otherwise, is its library. Have book fairs and ask through the newsletter for specific book needs. Here are some possible categories:

- Bible stories for all ages
- contemporary children's books that teach biblical truths
- devotional and inspirational books
- Bible study aids
- theological books
- contemporary issues books
- books about Bible life and times
- books about the church, in general, and the Presbyterian Church, specifically
- nature books
- craft books
- books about Christmas through the ages
- biographies about ethical or world-changing people
- books about organizing and teaching church school
- teaching aides (drama, art, storytelling, etc.)

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# 4 Using the Connectional System: Where to Get Help

**H**elp is often close in the connectional Presbyterian system. One of the most helpful resources is the denominational *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*, available from the Presbyterian Distribution Services at 1.800.524.2612 (ISBN 978-1-57153-095-0). In addition to providing an eighteen-month calendar, the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar* also offers resource information for each programmatic emphasis, reminders of Christian education conferences, suggestions for materials to buy, and events that may relate to the Christian education ministries. It also includes directories to synod, presbytery, and General Assembly staff, many of whom can be quite helpful to educators in the local congregation. Resource centers in synods and presbyteries are also listed.

- Each congregation receives *ideas!* magazine, which lists the educational resources available from the denomination. If you don't receive a copy, ask the pastor of your church, or contact the Curriculum Helpline for your free copy (1-800.728.7228, ext. 5080).
- Some of the denominational program areas (such as Mission Interpretation) will automatically send an educational packet to every local congregation and to each pastor. These packets will have materials for adult education classes and youth events, as well as other ways to help your congregation in its educational ministry. Contact Presbyterian Distribution Services (1.800.524.2612) to obtain a packet if your church has misplaced the one sent to it. The Curriculum Helpline will help locate materials that may be useful to your particular congregation. These include materials produced by Congregational Ministries Publishing, producers of the denomination's official curriculum, along with books and resources published through Witherspoon Press.
- The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation offers print resources published by Westminster John Knox Press and Geneva Press that may be helpful for your educational program. Their number is 1.800.334.6580.

- Denominational and ecumenical Web sites provide a wealth of information and many tools to connect to local congregations, presbyteries, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other denominations. Visit [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org) for general information about the PC(USA). You can find a church, connect to your presbytery, or locate a specific mission area of the church from this site. Web pages that offer support for education and church educators are not limited to, but include these sites: [pcusa.org/education](http://pcusa.org/education), [pcusa.org/point](http://pcusa.org/point), [pcusa.org/christianeducators](http://pcusa.org/christianeducators), [faithandwisdom.org](http://faithandwisdom.org), [practicingourfaith.org](http://practicingourfaith.org), [openingdoorstodiscipleship.com](http://openingdoorstodiscipleship.com).

Locally, one can find a number of resources to enhance, enable, and encourage those involved in the Christian education programs of the local church.

- Resource centers are located throughout the United States. Most provide video and print resources. Some publish regular newsletters that provide updates on materials available to support Christian education programming. Still others will offer special events with prominent educators as keynote speakers. Their staff members are extremely helpful in searching for and offering ideas that can enhance and support programs in your church. To locate the resource center nearest you, look at the list of resource centers in the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*. Over 130 resource centers are listed by presbytery or synod. There is a resource center near you. Find it and use it!
- Many presbyteries or resource centers subscribe to the Resource Center Subscription Service and receive copies of materials developed for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This is a good way to preview samples of the curriculum and other support materials offered by the denomination. Check your presbytery office or resource center to see if it subscribes and regularly receives updated materials.
- Many synods offer special educational events. These events offer courses for families

and Christian educators working toward certification, as well as other subjects of interest

- Most presbyteries also offer regularly scheduled events and workshops that are available to both staff and volunteer congregational members working in Christian education programs. Contact your presbytery office for dates and times of such events.
- Some presbyteries employ a staff member whose responsibility is to resource the congregations within the presbytery in the area of congregational life. These persons will generally staff the church education and youth committees of the presbytery, which in turn offer to the local congregation workshops, teacher training, Christian education program evaluation, and assessment of staffing needs in the area of Christian education and youth ministries. Some presbyteries have trained experts called Presbyterians Organized in Nurture and Teaching (POINT) representatives and staff ready to help congregations. Contact your local presbytery office to determine whether such resource people are available. If not, ask them about their presbytery-level Christian education committee, where one will likely find information about both Christian education, in general, and local Christian educators who have volunteered to be resource people.

to children, youth, and adults wanting to know how their faith can relate to their daily lives.

- The Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) is a national organization that supports and enhances the Christian education ministries of six Presbyterian and Reformed denominations. An APCE annual conference is held in late January or early February, which includes premier keynote speakers in the Christian education field, inspirational worship, and countless workshops. Regional events are also offered throughout the year. Local committees meet on a regular basis. Sometimes they are part of the presbytery Christian education committee, but often they are a separate resource. A magazine, the APCE Advocate, is published four times during the year. To find out more about APCE and the annual conference, visit [apcenet.org](http://apcenet.org).
- Certified Christian educator advisors are available to oversee the journey for anyone interested in pursuing certification as educator or associate educator. To find out who the certified Christian educators are in your area, ask your pastor for the denominational Directory that is sent automatically to all local churches or [pusa.org/vocations](http://pusa.org/vocations). The directory includes a complete list of certified educators throughout the country.
- Local seminaries offer continuing education opportunities on a regular basis. You can contact these seminaries and ask to be put on their mailing lists for notice of such opportunities. (A list of the denominational seminaries can be found in the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*.) However, many seminaries that come out of the Reformed tradition or are nondenominational may be nearer to you. Check with your presbytery office for suggestions of which seminaries may be most helpful.
- Ecumenical organizations often have excellent resources for educational events in your area. Speaker bureaus, video resources, workshop plans, and consultants are some examples. Ecumenical organizations include the National Council of Churches, ministerial associations, Church Women United, and many others.

## Appendix A. Sample Christian Education Budgets\*

### Large Church

Curriculum—All Education	\$ 1,500	Total Program Budget: \$250,000
Supplies		% for C.E. = 4.8%
All Education	500	
Nursery	100	
Wednesday Club (2nd–5th Grade Fellowship)	300 plus \$25/child/year fee	
Youth Connections (Jr. and Sr. High Fellowship)	6,300 plus events fees	
Commissioning Class/Sexuality Retreat Teacher	750	
Training	100	
Summer Youth Interns	500	
Adult Education	1,100	
Media/Library/Resource Center	200	
Family Ministries/Home Nursing Program	400	
Vacation Church School	300 plus \$10/child fee	
<b>Total</b>		
	\$12,050 plus fees	

### Small Church

Curriculum		Total Program Budget: \$120,230
Pre-K through 12th Grade	\$ 600	
Adult junior	500	% for C.E. = 3.5%
Church	75	
Confirmation (including retreat and mission trip)	400	
Children's Choir and Advent Play	100	
Youth Group(s) (Elementary, Jr. High, Sr. High)	1,450	
General Art	60	
Tape Equipment for Children and Youth	75	
General Supplies	100	
Vacation Bible School (new project)	500	
Teacher/Graduates Gifts and Recognition	175	
Bibles for Presentation	100	
Teacher Training	75	
<b>Total</b>	\$4,210	

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 \*Note: This sample is based on budgets from a large church with 500 members (150 children and youth and 60 adults in church school) and a small church with 155 members (30 children and youth and 30 adults in church school).





# Appendix C. People Profile

Complete this questionnaire to gain a better idea of the many types of people who make up your congregation.

Category	Male	Female	Total
Church members	_____	_____	_____
Friends of the church ( <i>People who attend regularly but are not members</i> )	_____	_____	_____
<b>Racial/ethnic mix</b>			
Asian _____ Black _____ Hispanic _____ White _____ Native American(Add categories relevant to your area.)			
Total households in your congregation _____		Distance they live from church building	
Family households _____		Number of people who:	
with two parents, children at home _____		walk to the church	_____
with one parent, children at home _____		drive or ride for	_____
Multiadult households _____		15 minutes	_____
couples, no children at home _____		30 minutes	_____
two generations of adults _____		45 plus minutes	_____
other _____			
Single adult households _____		Persons with special needs	
singles _____		confined to home or institution _____	
widows _____		mentally disabled _____	
widowers _____		physically disabled _____	
Age groupings _____		sight impaired _____	
preschool children (birth—5 years) _____		hearing impaired _____	
children (grades 1–5) _____			
younger youth (grades 6–8) _____			
older youth (grades 9–12) _____			
young adults (ages 19–29) _____			
adults (ages 30–59) _____			
older adults (ages 60+) _____			

*(You may need to add other categories.)*

Adapted from *Planning Your Educational Ministry*, by Carol Wehrheim (Louisville: Presbyterian Publishing House, 1988), p. 19. Used with permission.

**(This page may be photocopied)**

## Appendix D. Tasks of Learning

Donald Griggs, in his book *Planning for Teaching Church School* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1985), helps teachers understand the need for a variety of lesson plan activities. The activities we use in our classrooms are chosen to accomplish certain goals and objectives. Griggs says that there is a progression we will want the students to move through if they are to do more than merely memorize stories, facts, or truths. What we ultimately want students to do is to live as Christians in the world.

Griggs lists six objectives that our activities ought to help our students reach: remembering, comparing, interpreting, creating, relating, and influencing. Not all students will reach all of these objectives in every session, but they are targets at which to aim each week.

**1. Remembering.** Griggs says that remembering is not necessarily learning. It involves defining, describing, finding, listing, locating, matching, naming, recalling, or retelling. These are things that we can do and retain for a span of time, but are also activities that are not often retained for a great length of time unless reinforced by other activities.

**2. Comparing.** After we have remembered, we are ready to look for similarities and differences between the subjects. This requires the skill of analysis, a step beyond remembering. Analyzing would include categorizing, contrasting, debating, differentiating, distinguishing, outlining, relating, and reviewing. This second step will aid the student in remembering by requiring deeper thought. The fact is now being viewed in more than one dimension, with height and width.

**3. Interpreting.** Step two goes further down the path, but still does not require the student to internalize. In step three the student is going beyond information to finding some meaning in it. Interpreting includes concluding, discussing, explaining, illustrating, questioning, synthesizing, translating, and summarizing. It has become three dimensional.

**4. Creating.** We know students have grasped a subject when they are able to describe it in their own

words or in their own creative ways. In step four they are now reaching even deeper into the subject and beginning to express their ideas, feelings, beliefs, opinions, and values. Some of the ways of creating are constructing, designing, dramatizing, drawing, expressing, illustrating, revising, speaking, and writing. The creative right brain is being engaged.

**5. Relating.** The previous steps have not required an assimilation into the learner's life in any significant way. In step five, students are starting to see the connection between the subject and their own work or experiences, as well as those of other people. It is no longer a recitation of facts or even an expression of what they understand it to mean. Now they are applying, connecting, identifying with, observing, relating, seeing, and showing how it relates to their own lives.

**6. Influencing.** This step moves the student to the place most teachers say they want their students to be. They are not just being instructed or indoctrinated with information. The learners are being encouraged to look at their relationship with God and the way they live as Christians in the world. Teaching/learning activities that influence values, beliefs, and actions are ones in which the students will choose, decide, help, join, participate, serve, use, volunteer, or work.

As teachers we find it much easier to plan activities that emphasize remembering, comparing and interpreting. It takes more effort to plan activities that help students create, relate, and influence; yet this type of activity will go further by inviting them to put into practice what they are learning.

The studies of Edgar Dale of Ohio State University go hand in hand with Griggs's ideas. Dale studied different types of teaching activities and resources and discovered that the more directly involved students were in an activity, the more they learned and retained. For example, the goal or objective for a lesson on the Good Samaritan would be to encourage the students to be caring individuals who find ways to help needy people.

## *Tasks of Learning*

Activities to help students reach that goal might include the following:

1. Telling them to be caring people.
2. Showing pictures of people caring for others and urging them to do likewise.
3. Listening to a tape of someone talking about Mother Teresa's work in India.
4. Watching a video about Mother Teresa in action.
5. Looking at a display of pictures, articles, and reports, including a personal letter and items sent from Mother Teresa that tell about her work in India.
6. Having a street ministry person come and talk to the class about his or her work, including pictures, printed material, and anything that would illustrate the ministry.
7. Taking the class to a street ministry to see it in action.
8. Writing and putting on a play about street ministry in action.
9. Pretending they are street persons who are interacting with various kinds of people who are either helping them or looking down on them.
10. Planning and then going out and doing a street ministry.

Dale's studies show that being told (#1) was the least effective way to learn; hearing about it (#2-#6) was more effective; observing or role playing it (#7-#9) even more so; but actually doing it (#10) was the most effective of all. Total involvement also influences values, beliefs, and future action. Providing a wide variety of activities will encourage students to remember more and to better understand the relationship between that knowledge and living faithful lives.

## Appendix E. Forming a Guide for Selecting Curriculum

*Directions:* Give this questionnaire to a broad variety of church members. Compile their responses to form guidelines for selecting curriculum. Get session approval.

1. I believe the purpose of education in the church is . . .
  
2. The goal of learning in the church is . . .
  
3. I feel the best way to use the Bible in education is . . .
  
4. I feel the focus on teaching/learning material should be . . .
  
5. I think the main role of the teacher is . . .
  
6. The best kind of teaching aids are . . .
  
7. The approach to teaching I like best is . . .
  
8. I feel older students should participate by . . .
  
9. I feel the best kind of teaching/learning materials are . . .
  
10. The kind of teacher training needed is . . .

Adapted from *Developing the Congregation's Educational Program* (Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1976), pp. 39-42. Used with permission.

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## Appendix F. Space Requirements for Children in Classrooms

The space requirement for licensing day-care centers varies from state to state. Check with your state's department of education or human resources, or a similar agency to find out the requirements in your area. Often the local fire department is charged with enforcing these codes and will be able to provide this information.

The following general guidelines are based on the age of the students using the space:

- Adults need 10–12 square feet per person.
- Youth need 15 square feet per person.
- Elementary children need 20 square feet per person.
- Preschool children need 35 square feet per person.
- Nursery children need 35 plus square feet per person.

### Ratio of Adults Per Child in a Classroom

Accredited day care requires that there be no more than a certain number of children under care per adult. Again, check with your state government to find out the requirements in your area. The following list, from The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, may be helpful to church schools in planning how many children will be placed in a classroom.

- 3 babies per adult
- 5 one-year-olds per adult
- 6 toddlers (one-year-olds to two-and-a-half-year-olds) per adult
- 8 preschoolers per adult
- 10 kindergartners per adult
- 12 six- to eight-year-olds per adult
- 14 nine-year-olds or older per adult

*Please note:* In church school situations it is always advisable to have at least two people (one teacher and one aide or two teachers) in every preschool classroom. If there is an emergency in the classroom, a teacher alone in the room would have to take all of the children when leaving the room. When there are at least two adults or youth in the room, this will not be a problem.

# Appendix G. Preschool Materials for Interest Centers

## Blocks Center Basic

unit blocks, table blocks  
Legos, hollow blocks  
homemade blocks

## Additional Props

people

animals  
transportation (wooden airplanes, helicopters,  
cars, trucks)

## Dramatic Play

doll house with furniture and dolls  
gas pumps  
hats (construction, police, nurse, pilot, train engineer)  
toy carpentry tools  
castle blocks  
play money  
steering wheel mounted on a box

## House Corner

child-sized stove, refrigerator  
child-sized table and chairs  
doll bed, high chair, stroller  
rocking chair  
ironing board and iron  
full length, nonbreakable mirror  
dishes, eating utensils  
pots and pans  
cooking tools (serving spoons, ladles, sifters)  
teakettle or coffeepot  
cleanup materials (broom, mop, sponges)  
male, female dolls of various racial/ethnic  
backgrounds  
clock  
telephone  
blankets for dolls  
dress-up clothes (jackets, skirts, dresses, shirts, ties,  
scarves, shoes, jewelry, hats, wigs)  
suitcases, purses, briefcases, keys

## Table Toys

puzzles (wooden rubber insets, cardboard)  
dominos (picture and number)  
nesting blocks  
sewing cards  
games  
beads and yarn for stringing  
manipulative toys

## Sand and Water Play

muffin tins  
cookie cutters  
feathers  
shovels  
molds  
small cars and trucks  
dump trucks  
rolling pins  
whiskbrooms  
funnels  
cups

## Art Area

paint  
brushes  
clay, modeling dough  
colored chalk  
paper, crayons, scissors