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A networking newsletter for the Christian Education ministries of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the ELCA

Share Christ's Light through Your Vacation Bible School

By Judy Scharpenberg

Arise! Shine! Your light has come! Happy Epiphany! Following the celebration of Christmas, the birth of the Christ Child, our hearts and minds (and the church year) turn to getting the Good News out to the world: "Our Savior has come! Our God dwells among us!" What a fitting time to begin preparations for the traditional summer event called Vacation Bible School. Have you noticed how obsolete that title is? For how many families is the summer actually vacation time? How many curricula are available that emphasize a study of the Bible? Finally how

many of us are still organizing VBS as a school? Where is all this going and what does it have to do with Epiphany? Epiphany highlights the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child. Its significance is the affirmation of the Savior's coming to all people—Jew and Gentile alike. What a great reason for giving our congregations the opportunity to continue that process ... sharing the light and love of Jesus with each other and with their community! Is that the focus of your VBS? Are you planning in terms of education coupled with evangelism? Instead of being distracted by all the "bells and

whistles" offered in the different curricula, spend your time, resources and energy on things that match your focus. What an awesome opportunity VBS is to talk about and sing about Jesus, the Light of the World ... and then to let that Light shine through crafts, mission projects and inviting others to shine with you!



Very Busy Servants!

By Judy Scharpenberg

It's often said of the church 20% of the people do 80% of the work. Yes, there are some Very Busy Servants among us. Take for example Rob and Michele Freewalt at Grace in Columbia City, Indiana. Michele is the volunteer Sunday School superintendent "extraordinaire" because she also does the Christmas program, mission projects, and a Holy Week event. Plus, she and her husband work with the youth which includes not only Sunday night meetings but also a weekly breakfast at 7 a.m. at their home. In their spare time, they home-school their own five children. Consider this a salute and thanksgiving to God for the Freewalt's and all of you out there serving as volunteers in the area of Christian Education ministries.



Visit The Zoom Zone for VBS Ideas

By Karen Seykowski

Zoom in on VBS curriculum at: www.augsburgfortress.org/vbs. At this site, view products available to order for your VBS (even some downloadable samples of Bible storytelling), Bible stories from the Zone (5 for this summer), and how to zoom (what happens in the zone; checklists for planning, staffing, publicizing).

I'm Reproducible! Please copy this issue of **ed.network** and pass on to: Christian Education staff, committee members, teachers and volunteers.

Keys to a Successful VBS

By Jennifer Tinker

If you've never been in charge of Vacation Bible School (VBS) you may find the task a little overwhelming. Don't fret--here are some ideas to get you started:

◆ Start as soon as possible. Give yourself plenty of time to plan and recruit. Winter is a good time to start.

◆ Coordinate with church leaders/treasurer about funding. Ask if they would prefer funds to come from the church budget, a fund appeal or fundraising. Be creative about funds.

◆ Ask local merchants to donate or discount materials. Many stores are generous with church groups.

◆ Check with local schools and churches about their summer programming. Try to coordinate your VBS with their activities such as summer sports, summer school, and other VBS programs.

◆ Gather as many resources and curriculum options as you can in order to begin your brainstorming process.

◆ Recruit a team of several people to work along side you from the earliest stages of planning. The more you involve fellow volunteers in the planning the more ownership and higher commitment they will show.

◆ Encourage creative thinking and skies-the-limit brainstorming. In

the end you won't use all of the ideas, but the flow of ideas will inspire your team to key in on the approach or curriculum that is right for your VBS.

◆ Invite the community through a variety of means. Personal invitation is always best; consider a door-to-door invitation blitz. Ask for permission to pass out mini-flyers (four to a page on brightly colored paper) at summer ball games or parades.

Local stores will often allow you to display signs.

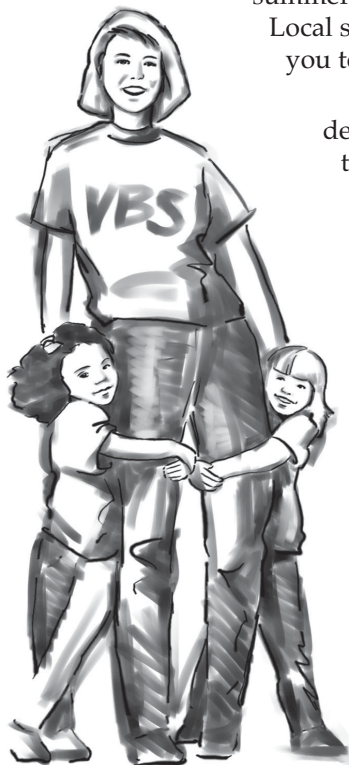
◆ Delegate, delegate, delegate! Resist the temptation to do it yourself. The program will be far better if you share specific tasks before, during and after your VBS. Older church members and men are resources waiting to be tapped.

◆ Communicate directly and often with your fellow volunteers. Give them clear instructions or job descriptions. Make them aware of deadlines and time constraints they'll need to work with.

Be available for any questions they may have.

◆ Don't stress! Keep your focus on sharing the Gospel with the kids and don't let little problems interfere.

◆ Affirm your volunteers throughout the process through verbal and written acknowledgments. After the program is over send handwritten Thank You notes to each volunteer.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

An Evening with Angie Briner

7p.m., February 26 in Fort Wayne
Briner's presentation will help parents and teachers teach children how to deal with conflict. The event, sponsored by the Northeast Indiana Family Life Ministry Council, will be at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne. Program and childcare at no charge thanks to a grant from the Lutheran Foundation.

VBS Curriculum Fair

March 1 in Indianapolis
To be held at the Resource Center at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. Please contact Susan McMahon for more information:
susan.mcmahon@cts.edu

Need Education Consultation?

Do you need help with the Christian Education ministry at your congregation? Are you looking for job descriptions, program development ideas, evaluation or gathering of curriculum, recruitment and training of staff? Contact Judy Scharpenberg (by telephone at: (260) 833-3651 or by e-mail at: kjscharp@fwi.com) and get information about the possibilities of individual attention for your unique congregation in areas in which you see the need for improvement or direction. Our Christian Education Committee has also purchased materials for a SELECT course entitled "Education in Lutheran Congregations" which could be brought to your individual congregation, a group of congregations or your whole conference. Ask for details when you contact Judy.