

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Thank you to those who told me about their special events over the Advent and Christmas seasons. For example, one teacher of a Grade 5 class in the Fredericton area organised an Advent Angel breakfast, adapting it from the suggestions which were for Preschool. She acquired Advent calendar place mats from Creative Communications for the Parish - a great source of inexpensive materials (Call 1.800.325.9414 for a catalogue) Her family got excited about the project and her Mom provided little angel ornaments to put at each place setting to take home afterwards and her sister a beautiful pop-up angel book to be presented to Transition House along with the angels made by the children at the party. She reports that the children had a great time learning about the meaning of the season, playing games, eating and making their crafts.

Another teacher tells me her parish is enthusiastic about the Epiphany party they are planning.

Please keep me posted as to your activities, and it would also be good to see some pictures and articles in the NB Anglican so that the Diocese is kept aware of your great work with its children.

Think about the Outcomes

It is very easy in teaching to get side-tracked by the fun activities we want to incorporate into the lesson and forget what it is we are hoping to teach. We certainly want to make learning fun, but I think it often helps to sit back and ask ourselves what exactly we are hoping to accomplish this particular week or season. These pointers may help:

1. Ask yourself, "What do I expect the children to be able to do or to know after I have taught this lesson?" Of course, this will depend on the age group you teach, but examples might be: At the end of this lesson the children will be able to retell the story of the Good Samaritan or At the end of this lesson the children will know and be able to explain three symbols of Easter. If you keep a clear outcome in mind as you plan the lesson, the activities you choose will be more likely to help towards the goal.
2. Connect the new story or idea you hope to teach with what the children already know. If, for example, you are teaching about Jesus' baptism, you might ask the children to talk about baptisms they have seen, and what they think happened at them. If you use a

theme based curriculum you might review how last week's story focussed upon a certain aspect of the theme, and this week's goes a little further, or asks another question. Keep the intro brief or you will not get to the story!

3. Teach. Read or tell the story, or the information, in as exciting a way as possible, using drama, maps, pictures, models etc., if possible, to reach as many different learning styles as you can, without cluttering it too much. Ask questions to check on whether or not your intended outcome has been achieved.
4. Have the children show they 'got' what you taught by giving it back to you as a puppet show, in an art or craft project, by writing a song or a poem, or in any other creative form you can think of.
5. Closure. Review, making sure you re-state the aim in some way. E.g. Let's look at these examples of Easter symbols you've made. Bill's made this great decorated egg. Who can remember what is it about the egg that reminds us of Easter?
6. Suggest that the children teach what they have learned to someone else over the coming week.

The Lord's Prayer

Do the children in your class know the Lord's Prayer? Are you **sure** they know it? One child was heard to recite, "Our father, who does art in heaven, Howard is his name."

It is probably a very good idea to go over the words every year with children, with the prayer written on chart paper or Bristol board, and to take time to explain such words as 'art' (an old way of saying is) and 'hallowed' (holy, sacred - although 'holy' is a word open to mis-interpretation by young children, and the best you may be able to do is to say that 'hallowed' means very special and different)

Workshops

Would you like one in your parish, or deanery? Please call or e-mail the phone number or address above.

If you live in southern NB, I will be giving a one day ecumenical workshop in Pennfield on Feb 15 (call the Rev Mary Anne Langmaid, 755 3463 (h), 755 3029(o)), and a one day Building Blocks one in Saint John on Feb 22. Call Joanne Fitzpatrick, 657 7808.