

Vacation Bible School Open Houses

The Lighthouse, Fredericton.

Saturday, February 22, 9 am -12 noon.

Baptist Book Room, Parkway Mall, Saint John.

Thursday, February 20, 6:30- 9:30 pm.

These open houses are an efficient and fun way to assess the VBS curricula available for this summer.

Epiphany Party News

Avril Wood called me to say that when Sunday School started up again in her Parish of Westfield they tried the Epiphany Party ideas mentioned in last December's Newsletter and had a ball! The children even entered the church by one door and left by another to remember that the Wise Men went home another way after they had seen the Baby Jesus.

The Lord's Prayer

Last month I mentioned that children often make mistakes in the wording of the Lord's Prayer because they do not really understand what they are saying. Avril also told me that Westfield had found two activities described in the book, "**52 Ways to Teach Children to Pray**" by Nancy S. Williamson, Rainbow Books, very helpful for teaching the Lord's Prayer. One involves making paper chains with a different phrase of the prayer printed on each link and other links suspended from each phrase describing the meaning of the phrase. E.g. For "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name" links are added on which the children print all the names they can think of which the Bible uses to refer to God.

For the second activity, each phrase is represented by lighting a different coloured candle. The reason for the choosing of each colour is explained. E.g. Thy Kingdom come is represented by purple, which is a royal colour. God is the King of Kings, and rules over the whole world and in our lives. The book is available online from amazon.ca for \$ 13.12 plus postage or you could order it from Anglican House, 693-2295.

Big Books

These are a great way to engage the attention of the smallest children, ages 3-6. Big books are usually 16"X 20", and are easily seen by everyone in the class. A series of these is available from www.handsonbible.com/store. There are 24 titles covering both Old and New Testaments, e.g. Abraham, Daniel, David and Goliath, Jesus' Birth, The Miracle of Easter. \$US 15.99. Older children may also find it fun (and a great way of learning

the stories better) to make a Big Book or two for the younger children. You need to obtain some largish sheets of cartridge paper from an art supply store. 100 sheets of white cartridge paper, 18" X 24", cost around \$12. Divide the story you are illustrating into 'scenes'- 6 to 8 is plenty, and assign one scene to each child (or allow them to work in pairs) Have them draw a three inch pencil margin on the left hand side of their paper to allow for binding the book. Decide what to print to describe each 'scene,' and whether you will put the printing at the top, bottom or right hand side of the page. Leave a space sufficient for this, or do it first, printing on pencilled-in lines in large lower case letters. Draw or paint the scene. Make it large, bold and colourful if possible. Make bristol board covers and bind the book using staples, or punching holes and tying it with yarn.

Valentine's day ideas

If a particular verse is your theme for the Sunday before or after Valentine's day, print the words on large construction paper hearts. Cut the hearts into three to five puzzle pieces and distribute them to your class. The children then have to find the people whose pieces fit with theirs. You can pass out two or three cut up hearts at the same time, depending on the age of your class.

Make a "God is Love" door for you classroom. Cover the door with red, pink or white paper. Have the children make construction paper hearts in all different sizes to stick on the door, and add the words GOD IS LOVE across the top. To go a little further with this, suggest the children write in the centre of their hearts a way in which God has loved them during the week. E.g. My cold got better, my mom got a new job, we had a fun Valentine's party at school.

Valentine's jokes which should get some groans from your class

Knock, knock, who's there? Arthur. Arthur who?

Arthur any chocolates left for me?

Knock, knock, who's there? Oscar. Oscar who? Oscar if she likes me?

Next year

Now is the time to begin thinking about Sunday School staffing for next year. Is there anyone in your congregation who would make a great teacher, but may need more confidence to offer their help? Why not ask them to help you with your class a few times so they get an idea what goes on. They may love it!