



Keynote

Breathe New Life into Your Sunday School Ministry

Pastor Donn Dobberstein

Pastor Dobberstein currently serves as the Director of WELS Commission on Discipleship. Since growing up in Lutheran parsonages in the Midwest, Donn served mission parishes in Topeka, KS and Port Orange, FL for twenty-two years. Additional church-at-large experiences included the Nebraska District Mission Board and South Atlantic District Evangelism Commission. He chaired the WELS Commission on Evangelism from 2007 to 2017 before accepting the director call of WELS Discipleship (merger of adult discipleship and youth and family ministry). He's married to Beth an art instructor and doctorate student of urban education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. They have four children in their twenties across America and two adorable grandsons.



The Post-Christmas Blues

Andrea Kratz

How do you engage kids in Sunday School, especially after the excitement of Christmas? How do you make it fun and help the kids learn about the Bible at the same time? Join Andrea as she shares one way to engage your Sunday School students and encourage kids to get excited to attend Sunday School every week! For the past 3 years, Peace Lutheran has had the kids in Grades 3-8 write and perform a play. Topics have included the Lenten story, the miracles of Jesus, and the parables of Jesus. Andrea will share practical tools and tips for getting kids engaged in the excitement of writing and performing a Sunday School play.



Andrea Kratz started her "Sunday School career" teaching Sunday School in high school and continued teaching in college at the Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel. Later, she was the Sunday School supervisor at Chapel. Most recently, Andrea has taught Sunday School at Peace Lutheran Church in Sun Prairie for 8 years and has been the Sunday School coordinator for 6 years. She loves to find fun and unique ways to engage the kids in Sunday School.



Sunday School Music Makeover

Camp Phillip Staff

One way to breathe new life into your Sunday School is through music. Camp Phillip staff will take what they know about making music fun, relevant and Christ-centered and translate that to the Sunday School setting. Learn a song or two in this session to take back to your ministry and lead with confidence.

Camp Phillip provides relaxation in creation and renewal in Christ to youth, adults, families, churches and schools throughout the year.



Promoting Your Sunday School

Jacob Werre

Jacob will speak about various tactics for congregations to consider when promoting their Sunday School both within and without their church as well as factors related to messaging, timing and positioning.

Jacob Werre taught Sunday School for four years and has worked in marketing for over 10 years. He currently is an Account Supervisor at TRG Marketing and serves as president at his home congregation, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Holmen, WI.



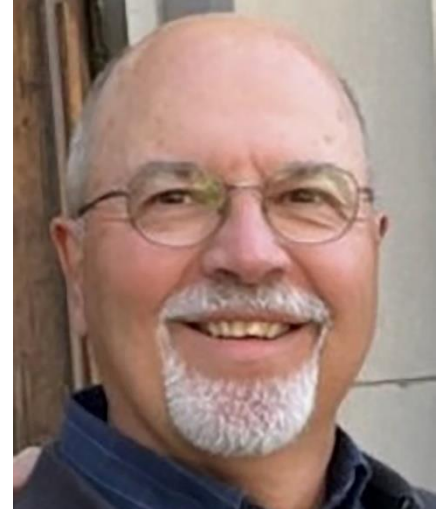


What Do We Want Sunday School to Be?

Dr. Joel Nelson

This session will explore whether Sunday School should be a place where kids “learn” about Jesus (Sit & Soak) vs. “experience” Jesus (Seek & Serve). A review of how kids learn and learning modalities, an inventory of every participants' own learning styles, and a review of how Jesus actually taught, will help participants reach the best answer.

Dr. Joel Nelson was the last full-time Administer for WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship. During that time he was instrumental in providing resources to over 1,000 WELS Sunday schools, assisting with District and regional SS conferences, and publishing a quarterly newsletter for Sunday school staffs that was subscribed to by over 5,000 SS staff members. Between 2009 and 2021, he served as Principal and Dean of Students at Garden Homes Lutheran School in Milwaukee (2009-2014) and then Director of Youth and Adult Discipleship at St. Paul's in Muskego (2015-2022). While at St. Paul's, one of his duties was to oversee the Sunday Morning Kids Club (Sunday School) ministry. In 7 years, Kids Club went from about 9 staff serving 30 or so kids to 29 staff serving over 100 kids. Most recently he has written a book (yet to be published) titled, "What Do We Do About Sunday School?: What 44 Years of Ministry Have Taught Me."



The Difference Between Law and Gospel

Pastor Scott Schultz

In the Difference Between Law and Gospel workshop, attendees will learn what the 3 uses of the law are and what the gospel is. They will get practical training on how to find the law and the gospel in their Sunday School lessons, and how to apply it to their student's lives.

For 18 years Pastor Scott Schultz has served Cross of Christ, Portage, WI where he and his wife, Jill, live with their four children. As pastor of a small congregation he has direct experience with mission work in his immediate surroundings as well as extensive hands-on experience with the Sunday School ministry.





How to Conduct Sunday School in a Small/Rural Congregation

Pastor Kevin Hundley

Pastor Kevin Hundley has served in an urban setting in Milwaukee, a mission congregation in Pennsylvania, and a large multi-site church of 1000 members with a K-8 school in Kenosha WI. He has also served the church body as a Christian Giving Counselor based out of Milwaukee. Currently, Pastor Hundley serves St. John Lutheran, the little white church along the interstate just outside of Lake Mills, WI. He also serves the community as a police chaplain.



Pastor Hundley remarks, "Yes, in PA we had 6 Sunday School kids or less. So coming out of Seminary I tried to do what I thought churches do. You have a teacher or two trying to accommodate kids from Pre-K to middle school. We did ChristLight. But I don't know that it was serving any real needs or hitting any "effective target" other than checking the box that "yes we have Sunday school..."

Now at St John, we don't have Sunday School. We have a two time a month Family Bible Time. There was a number of challenges facing this idea, but I think we've found some solutions and benefits from the idea. The purpose of this presentation is the help you explore options for ministry to children in a small church setting.

How to Restart Your Sunday School in a Mid-to-Large Church

Pastor Jonathan Hackbarth and Pastor Micah Schoeneck

We used to have a Sunday school, and now we need to get one going again! Now what?! Where to begin? What role does our LES play in Sunday school? This session will look at some of the challenges and opportunities of congregations that want to start (or restart) their Sunday school program, or have a Sunday school on life support that needs a kick-start. We'll look at the opportunities and challenges of working alongside the LES ministry, share some best practices, resource materials, and more, as we seek ways to elevate a congregation-wide Christian education program.



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Pastor Jonathan Hackbarth has 25 years of ministry experience in congregations in WI, MN, and CA, in large and small congregations, rural and urban settings. He has begun and overseen Sunday school ministries throughout his ministry. He and his wife Jenny have two college-aged children.

Pastor Micah Schoeneck has 2 years of experience as associate pastor at St. John's Lutheran in Sparta, Wisconsin being assigned there from the Seminary. He and his wife Sarah were recently blessed with the birth of their daughter Elliana.

Pastor Hackbarth and Pastor Schoeneck worked together to (re)start the Sunday school program at St. John's, and Pastor Schoeneck now oversees that area of ministry.



Growing a Sunday School from a Preschool PowerHour Program

Jessica Mlsna

Jess will be presenting on the ministry of Power Hour. These questions will be answered: what is it, how did it get started, and how could our (your) church utilize this program. Could a Power Hour at your church serve as a springboard from which to build an eventual Sunday School?

Jess has over 20 years of experience working with children and families. She has served in Sunday School as well as VBS and other programs at 3 churches. Most recently she serves as Power Hour Coordinator at St Paul's, Lake Mills. She and her husband Ben have three children, one at WLC, one at Lakeside Lutheran and one Sunday School age.





How to Teach a Sunday School Lesson

Principal Emeritus James Grasby

How does one teach a meaningful Sunday School lesson? Like most activities, it consists of a set of planned and organized parts. This presentation will walk you through those parts to assist you in constructing lessons that are both memorable and purposeful. At the same time, tips will be provided to help you engage your students.

Jim Grasby is a retired Lutheran educator who taught 46 years in our synod's elementary and secondary schools. In addition to holding graduate degrees from Concordia University Chicago and Marian University in Fond du Lac, he earned a Master of Religion degree at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. He and his wife, Nancy, live in Jefferson and are members of St. John's Lutheran, Jefferson.

