

Christian Education Content –

A Guide for Christian Educators Who Work with Children and Youth

The following pages are the result of a Christian Education Board brainstorming retreat and other input from seasoned Christian educators in the United Church of Christ. After many years of trial and error, many educators find that the scope of material available to be presented to children growing in the faith is somewhat cumbersome. These educators receive input from parents, pastors, colleagues, and education theorists as to what should be taught in the Sunday School, much of which is conflicting and based on personal opinion. So what exactly should be taught in the Sunday School? There is no definitive answer. Yet Christian educators and Christian Education Committees should have access to some guidance in this area. The following charts are offered as a part of this guidance.

Many thanks go to the Christian Education Board at First Parish Congregational Church, UCC in East Derry, New Hampshire for this endeavor. They asked me to lead them in a brainstorming retreat to create such a resource – a challenge I quickly accepted as I had been mulling over this concept for a good ten years, needing an outside push to get me to take the time to work with it again. I am also grateful to Ken Ostermiller (Minister for Curriculum Development, United Church of Christ) and Lynn Lenhart (Director of Christian Education, Wellesley Village Church, Wellesley, Massachusetts) for their additional input and suggestions.

Although what is listed here for each age group came about after a review of developmental age characteristics, there is always the potential for some debate about what children ought to be learning and when. *This is not a definitive document!* What is listed here is mainly Bible content, although there are some Christian concepts included as well. Please feel free to use this as a guide for your own church's educational program – adapting, adding, and subtracting in ways that fit the dynamics and traditions of your unique congregation.

Blessings on your ministries.

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By the time our children graduate from high school, what do we hope they will know about being a Christian?

Nursery & Toddler (birth – age 3)	Preschool (ages 4 & 5)	Younger Elementary (1 st & 2 nd Gr.)	Older Elementary (3 rd -5 th Grades)	Middle High (6 th -8 th Grades)	Senior High (9 th -12 th Grades)
<p>Noah's Ark Jonah and the Whale Christmas Story Jesus Enters Jerusalem on a Donkey New Life at Easter Parable of the Lost Sheep</p> <p><i>Welcome the children into a safe and cheerful environment, modeling God's love and care.</i></p>	<p>Seasons of the Church Year with related Bible stories</p> <p>Golden Rule Mission Worship Children's Bible Communion Prayer (Thank you, God, for...)</p> <p>Baby Moses</p> <p>Lord's Prayer (memorize) Baptism Psalm 150</p> <p>Noah Jesus & the children Zacchaeus Creation Jesus Feeds the 5000</p> <p><i>Through all of the activity in the classroom, a context of faith is created. Much of the learning is non-verbal – a modeling of the love of God and the teachings of Jesus.</i></p>	<p>Seasons of the Church Year with related Bible stories</p> <p>Golden Rule Mission Worship Children's Bible Communion Prayer (Thank you, God, for...)</p> <p>Moses</p> <p>Psalm 100</p> <p>Jesus & the children Young David The Parable of the Good Samaritan The Parable of the Sower Doxology</p> <p><i>"Conversation" with God and learning more about prayer can help children at this age to understand their still-emerging sense of right and wrong.</i></p>	<p>Seasons of the Church Year with related Bible stories</p> <p>Golden Rule Mission & Stewardship Worship What is the Bible Communion Types of Prayer</p> <p>Exodus (Red Sea)</p> <p>10 Commandments Lord's Prayer Baptism Psalm 23</p> <p>Great Commandment Bible heroes: Isaac, Moses, David, Mary, Ruth & Naomi, Esther, Noah, Joseph, Abraham & Sarah, Solomon Jesus' Disciples Jesus Calms the Storm Jesus Enters Jerusalem Pentecost Forgiveness</p> <p><i>The ability to comprehend a God that is creating, judging, forgiving, and loving is present in these children. Lift up these (and other) aspects of God as they become acquainted with more Bible stories.</i></p>	<p>Seasons of the Church Year with related Bible stories</p> <p>Golden Rule Mission & Stewardship Worship Bible structure & resources Communion Prayer styles</p> <p>Parables & Miracles</p> <p>Lords' Prayer (meaning) Gospel of Mark Local church history Great Commandment Bible heroes (see Older Elem. list) Sacraments Young Jesus at the Temple What Jesus says about our lives today John 3:16 John the Baptist</p> <p><i>Spiritual values become real in acts of co-operation, sharing responsibility, courage, kindness, fair play, sensitivity to others, and appreciation of beauty. Lift up these qualities in the stories and teachings of Jesus as well.</i></p>	<p>Seasons of the Church Year with related Bible stories</p> <p>Golden Rule Mission & Stewardship Worship Bible structure & resources Communion Prayer (making it their own)</p> <p>Parables & Miracles</p> <p>10 Commandments Beatitudes Acts, Paul Holy Week Psalms & Proverbs Call (discipleship) What Jesus says about our lives today</p> <p><i>Youth can see the Bible as a resource for spiritual growth. Other discoveries within the Bible can relate to how to become independent and responsible, how to relate to one's own sexual maturity, how to use one's talents and make a contribution to society, what to believe about life, failure, corruption, death, and life beyond death, for instance.</i></p>

Basic Songs for Church School

* = *The New Century Hymnal*

+ = *I'm God's Child* (available through United Church Resources, 800.537.3394)

Nursery & Toddler (birth – age 3)	Preschool (ages 4 & 5)	Younger Elementary (1 st & 2 nd Grades)	Older Elementary (3 rd -5 th Grades)	Middle High (6 th -8 th Grades)	Senior High (9 th -12 th Grades)
+*Jesus Loves Me +Jesus Loves the Little Children	Favorite songs from previous age group(s), plus: +Kum Ba Yah +The Whole World Is In God's Hands +*Away In A Manger <u>Refrains Only</u> *O Come All You Faithful *Angels We Have Heard On High *The First Nowell *Go, Tell It On the Mountain *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today	Favorite songs from previous age group(s), plus: *Let Us Break Bread Together +Shalom *Joy To the World *O Come All Ye Faithful *Angels We Have Heard On High *The First Nowell *Go, Tell It On the Mountain *Lord I Want To Be A Christian *Silent Night	Favorite songs from previous age group(s), plus: *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You <i>Songs that most often work best for this age group are those they have learned at your conference's outdoor ministries programs.</i>	Favorite songs from previous age group(s), plus: *Amazing Grace <i>Songs that most often work best for this age group are those they have learned at your conference's outdoor ministries programs.</i>	Favorite songs from previous age group(s) <i>Songs that most often work best for this age group are those they have learned at your conference's outdoor ministries programs.</i>

Note: The songs suggested above are common to many UCC congregations' traditions, but certainly not all. When choosing songs children can easily sing to supplement this list, be sure the songs have simple words, easy refrains, are short in length, and have repetition in both words/phrases and tune.

Confirmation should be a review of all that was learned in Sunday School, plus some further focus on:

The Lord's Prayer

Paul's letters

Holy Week

Baptism

Communion

United Church of Christ

Other faiths

Other denominations

Holy Spirit

Creeds

Great Commission

Weddings, funerals, other rites

Recommended Resources

Many of the areas listed above are broad and subject to personal interpretation. The following resources are recommended for further research into these areas that can be adapted to the people and programs at your particular church. Be sure to contact your area's church resource center for assistance with additional resources. A list of United Church of Christ resource centers may be found at www.ucc.org/marketplace/centers.htm.

Seasons of the Church Year

Come Worship with Me: A Journey Through the Church Year by Ruth Boling

Children in Worship

Children In Worship: A Planning Guide for Congregations by Elizabeth Sandell

Children in the Worshipping Community by David Ng and Virginia Thomas

Mission

Teaching Kids to Care and Share: 300 Mission and Service Ideas for Children Ages 3-12 by Jolene L. Roehlkepartain

Baptism and Communion

Come Unto Me: Rethinking the Sacraments for Children by Elizabeth Caldwell