



PRESBYTERIANS ORGANIZED IN  
**Nurture & Teaching**

### **Creative Use Of Resources**

Members of Presbyterians Organized in Nurture and Teaching (POINT) gathered for training February 2008 in San Diego, California.

One of the activities at the event was to explore a variety of resources and brainstorm how to creatively use or adapt each for different congregational settings. The gifted people around the tables—church educators, pastors, resource center directors, presbytery staff, and volunteers—shared their ideas for making disciples.

Each resource is listed with annotation, ordering information, and suggested ways to use the resource.

***Above and Beyond: Hearing God's Call in Jonah and Ruth***  
by Carol M. Bechtel

The 2007–2008 Bible study from Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), asks the question: What does it mean to hear God's call? No matter where you are on your life's journey, this study will challenge you to ask, "What am I called to do? Who am I called to be? What am I called to say?" Contact Susan Jackson Dowd, Presbyterian Women Communications Coordinator, Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries, [susan.jackson-dowd@pcusa.org](mailto:susan.jackson-dowd@pcusa.org), for more information.

Order by calling (800) 524-2612 or at [www.pcusa.org/horizon](http://www.pcusa.org/horizon). The item number is PDS# HZN-07-100. The price is \$6.00.

**An intergenerational retreat**

Choose one of the characters portrayed in the study—Jonah or Ruth—and introduce the basic story of the character's life to the whole group. Divide into smaller groups to explore different aspects or chapter lessons from the study. Each small group is instructed to create their own unique way to bring the study materials or character to the retreat participants: write a drama, uncover a time capsule letter, compose a song, etc. Engage children, youth, and adults in age-appropriate contributions for the small group presentations—brainstorming ideas, script writing, scenery making, developing props or costumes, etc.—for the large group presentations.

**A mid-size multicultural church located in a declining urban area**

Both characters are going to new places and unfamiliar surroundings. Use this idea to generate dialogue between members of the church about what it is like to be in a new place, with a different culture, and to leave your comfort zone.

**A large 2000 member suburban church with classes for each age grouping**

Even though created for women's Bible study circles, use the resource for small group study or adult education. Have men and women explore the topic of hearing God's call through the examples of Jonah and Ruth. This co-educational study will provide more insights and depth for adult learners.

**A mid-week program with teens and adults together plus a separate children's program**

This resource, designed for a nine-session study, could be used for mid-week education for the entire family around the topic of "hearing God's call." Gather children, youth, and adults for a group meal with Jonah and Ruth (church members in costume). Create weekly dialogue for the two characters (maybe excerpts from their "diary") to introduce the study after dinner. Teens and adults continue the "conversation" around the study materials with "Jonah and Ruth" taking turns with younger children in activities of how to hear God's voice. Explore different types of prayer activities and other ideas. Bring all ages together for closing worship with the prayers and liturgy (adapted as necessary) from the materials. Give all ages the opportunity to provide leadership.

**Individual faith development**

Give the Horizons Bible study resource to adults for spiritual practice at home.

## ***Surely the Lord is in This Place***

by Steve Shussett

The 2008 Lenten Devotional Guide from *Presbyterians Today* is a book of devotional readings, prayers, and scripture passages for use by families and individuals during Lent. The daily meditations focus on places where God is encountered, both in scripture and in our lives. Watch for an Advent devotional guide coming later this year and a new Lenten guide for 2009. Contact Michael Schroeder, Mission Interpretation, Direct Response, Communications and Mission Funding, michael.schroeder@pcusa.org.

Order by calling (800) 254-2612 or at [www.pcusa.org/pt](http://www.pcusa.org/pt). Item number is PDS# 6827007017. The cost is \$3.00.

### **A small rural church of mostly adults with 2 or 3 children and a few youth**

Give the devotional guides to each household as an individual or family Lenten resource. Encourage use for personal and family reflection by introducing an element from the guide during worship each Sunday of Lent. Extend the use of the resources by publicizing corporate questions for the church to talk about each time the community gathers—in committees, Bible study, etc.

### **An intergenerational retreat**

Develop “a Lenten journey” in a weekend by using the resource for an all-church retreat. Let scriptures from the guide frame sessions for all ages. The weekend may be the first weekend after Ash Wednesday as an introduction to Lenten reflection or the weekend before Palm Sunday, leading to Holy Week. Include all ages in the plans using activities based on the multiple intelligences. Activities for children can be planned as activities with God’s children of all ages.

### **Individual faith development**

Put components of the devotional guide on the church website. Create a blog for members to share their insights during Lent. Have children and others who wish to participate create art for bulletin covers or to decorate the church during the Lenten season.

## ***Invitation to Christ: A Guide to Sacramental Practices***

By The Sacraments Study Group of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

***Invitation to Christ*** was created through the Office of Theology & Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2006. Believing that lived experiences deepen people's understanding, the Sacraments Study Group of the PC(USA) offers 5 sacramental practices for sacramental renewal. As outlined in the pastoral letter from the resource, the five simple disciplines are:

- Set the font in full view of the congregation
- Open the font and fill it with water on every Lord's Day
- Set cup and plate on the Lord's Table on every Lord's Day
- Lead appropriate parts of weekly worship from the font and from the table
- Increase the number of Sundays on which the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

Theological reflections and study questions are included in the resource.

Order this free resource through Presbyterian Distribution, (800) 254-2612, item #7043006001. You can also download a single copy from <http://www.pcusa.org/sacraments/guide.htm>.

### **A small rural church of mostly adults with 2 or 3 children and a few youth**

Invite participation by families by incorporating the children and youth in several of these practices. Involve them with their parents or in other "families". Ask folks to bring forward the "gifts" of water and/or cup and plate each week.

### **A mid-size multicultural church located in a declining urban area**

Use chalices and plates that represent different cultures. Provide different breads from different cultures. Bring forward ewers, pitchers, or containers used in different parts of the world to collect water. Use different fabrics for communion table or for wall hangings and banners. Ask folks in the congregation to pray in their native language, especially words of institution. These ideas would be very appropriate for World Communion Sunday (the first Sunday in October).

### **A large 2000 member suburban church with classes for each age grouping**

Using the same outline, adapt activities for age appropriateness. Each age group or class could take responsibility for a Sunday to set up the elements and participate in worship.

### **A rotation model Sunday school program**

"Camp Big Church" could use the five disciplines to prepare Kindergarten/Pre-Kindergarten children to participate fully in the worship of the congregation. Use *Children in the Sanctuary*, PDS #70250-02-924, as an additional resource. Introduce these rituals during "the gathering time" before rotation.

## ***Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table***

By Jennifer Halteman Schrock

Just Eating, providing a participant and a leader's guide, is a seven-session curriculum for congregations that explores the relationship between the way we eat and the way we live. The Presbyterian Hunger Program of the PC(USA) in partnership with Advocate for Health Care and Church World Service published the resource.

The study uses scripture, prayer and stories from the local and global community to explore five key aspects of our relationship with food that form our eating practices, as individuals and as faith communities.

Order through Presbyterian Distribution Services with these item numbers: Participant's Book, # 7436505362, \$4.00 each or 2 to 9 copies, \$3.00; Leader's Book, #7436505361, \$6.50.

### **A small rural church of mostly adults with 2 or 3 children and a few youth**

Using this resource would be a great opportunity to partner with an urban church. Create a 2 part series that would take place at the rural church and then at the urban church. Invite a Parish nurse to talk about "ministries of health" and good nutrition as an act of stewardship. Provide incentives for children and youth to sample "good" foods. Have adults sample foods that could reduce cholesterol, lower sodium, reduce sugar intake. Explore nutritional differences that may exist in urban and rural community life. Examine how each community could support better nutrition goals for members in each congregation.

### **An intergenerational retreat**

With the focus on childhood obesity and malnutrition among the elderly, concerns about a healthy diet could connect both groups. Conversations could include information about eating disorders. In *Just Eating: Practicing Our Faith at the Table*, it suggests assessing your congregation's eating habits:

- Does your coffee hour always feature sugary sweets?
- Are options available for diabetics at potlucks?
- Are ingredients labeled for people with allergies?

Assess issues that concern youth: Is fast food available at the school(s)? What other choices do the students have for nutritional meals and snacks? What information is available to them concerning fast food and soft drinks? As an intergenerational group, how can you affect change in your community and school?

### **A mid-size multicultural church located in a declining urban area**

This resource would be a great way to introduce the idea of partnering with other churches or planning your own program to set up a community garden. Youth and children would not only be helpful in preparing the space but would have an opportunity to see first hand how food becomes a gift from God. Creating community while caring for the food is an important action. In a multicultural ministry different ways of growing the same crops could be highlighted. Welcoming new members of the community into the community of the church would seem an automatic response. An after-worship lunch could showcase all the diversity in the crops and in the community.

**A rotation model for church school**

*We Believe Workshop*, Sunday school rotation model curriculum from Congregational Ministries Publishing through the PC(USA), offers useful suggestions for group actions. An intergenerational model can also be constructed with those same activities. All ages can participate in activities such as collecting can goods for a local food pantry or preparing new recipes that you have learned about in this curriculum. Examining your communal food practices could bring about changes in what is served at your fellowship activities. In a summer program field trips to a food bank or a soup kitchen would illustrate the need to share our resources.

## **Akaloo, discipleship for all ages**

Published by Augsburg-Fortress Publishers with a distribution agreement through  
Congregational Ministries Publishing

Based upon the process of lifelong faith formation, this curriculum offers segments for children, youth and adults. Three components provide for holistic learning to take place in a variety of settings: leader materials online, learner Web sites, age group handbooks. Subscription prices are based on average weekly worship attendance.

Visit [akaloo.org](http://akaloo.org) to sign-up for a free trial, to take a Web tour, to view subscription information and to subscribe, and to order print resources.

### **A small rural church of mostly adults with 2 or 3 children and a few youth**

In a small church setting, Akaloo lends itself well to a whole church summer event. You could use one lesson segment and one corresponding activity each week. For example, in the section on Local Servant from grades 7 and 8 curriculum, there are numerous activities for community involvement. Provide the biblical base for the lesson and then carry out the activity. One example is "5 Tasty, Hot Meals You Can Make and Deliver In a Flash." Let adults help the children and youth learn to cook and clean up the kitchen. Arrange for the entire group to deliver the meal to an at home member or someone who needs pastoral care! Take time for conversation with the recipient. Provide the opportunity for reflection and making meaning from the experience.

### ***Around the Moringa Tree, A Bible Study Curriculum***

Created by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the Presbyterian Hunger Program, PC(USA)

This resource introduces the amazing Moringa Tree and how it provides nutrition, sustenance, and health for so many hungry people in God's world. A DVD is included, featuring Moringa work in Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Activities are written for elementary-aged children, with intergenerational participation encouraged.

Order through Presbyterian Distribution Services, (800) 524-2612, item #2541207022, \$10.

#### **A small rural church of mostly adults with 2 or 3 children and a few youth**

Some of the suggestions for “take-home” exercises would work in a rural setting. Read Psalm 8 together. Make sure everyone has a Bible or a copy of the Psalm to take home. Talk about the God-given gifts that the writer illustrates in the Psalm. Ask these questions: What has God given to the mortals? Who are the mortals? What does it mean to be crowned with glory and honor? What kind of responsibility do mortals have for the creation? The take-home exercise talks out environmental projects that can be done in a group. Other activities might include a bonfire with marshmallows to look at the stars or a visit to a nearby planetarium.

#### **An intergenerational retreat**

A park setting for this retreat would be great! Begin the retreat with the reading of Genesis 1:11-13, the story of creation. One of the “creations” is the Moringa Tree, the tree of hope. Begin to learn the “The Amazing Moringa Song”. The DVD clip for Session 1 contains “The Extraordinary Ordinary Tree”. After watching the clip, go outside and identify some of the trees where you are; work in multi-generational groups.

### ***A Kid Started It: Children's Educational Hunger Kit***

From the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

*A Kid Started It* is a boxed kit containing hunger curricula from the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Bread for the World, Church World Service, Heifer Project International, and World Food Day. It is geared for children in K - 6 grades.

Order the resource by calling PDS, (800) 524-2612, item PDS #7436002309, \$20.

#### **A small rural church of mostly adults with 2 or 3 children and a few youth**

*Animal Crackers* is a resource produced by Heifer Project International that lifts up the concept of the global family. As an intergenerational series, tell the stories and use the activities that center around particular animals that help alleviate hunger for folks. Choose fish for Thailand or a pig for the Dominican Republic or a chicken for Cameroon and create a fundraiser for the group to purchase this animal. Using the theme of Noah's ark and the Heifer Project gift ark, a vacation Bible school could be easily planned.

#### **An intergenerational retreat**

Sponsor a retreat around Church World Service's Build a Better World I and II. During the retreat make plans to sponsor a group to participate in a CROP walk. To find out if a CROP walk is scheduled in your area, call (888) CWS-CROP or go online to [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org). Have adults sponsor a child for the walk or other folks sponsor an adult/child team.

One of the stories from the curriculum is "Journey from Sudan" that tells the story of a long walk by a group of Sudanese boys in dangerous circumstances. With the use of international symbols and placards, use the "A Long Walk" Instruction spaces during your neighborhood journey, i.e. *wade across a river with crocodiles...* Or set up a long walk that incorporates 20<sup>th</sup> century dangers for the participants, i.e. *walking past the bully in the school yard*.

Schedule a "hunger-thon" weekend. Use *A Fast that Lasts* from the Presbyterian Hunger Program. This is a 24–30 hour fasting retreat. The *Hunger Has a Cure* video is three segments with bible study and games and activities as well. Adopt a mission project to keep participants moving and busy, such as taking a group of senior citizens to the grocery. At the end of the 24 hours, serve a simple break-the-fast meal and possibly invite that same group to join you!

#### **A mid-size multicultural church located in a declining urban area**

Make contact with an English as a second Language (ESL) group and invite them to a mid-week meal. After the meal, gather any children and provide an opportunity for them to participate in music activities—singing, orf instruments, etc. In the adult group, ask some of the immigrants to tell their stories, to express their joys and frustrations. Together use the "Offering of Letters" packet located in "Making Hunger History" from Bread for the World to write a letter to your congressperson about hunger issues as well as immigration issues. Return the children to the large group for some hymn singing and, of course, issue an invitation to join worship on Sunday.

#### **A large 2000 member suburban church with classes for each age grouping**

For summer church school "Is There Enough?" can be used as an intergenerational program as well as workshop rotation. It is targeted for preschool to upper elementary children and provides many hands-on opportunities for the children. Using the lesson (#2) on the "common good", read the Exodus story about the spoiled "manna". Play the manna distribution game that will

deprive 2 children of their share. Talk about what God asks us all to do—share what we have. Then, substitute the manna with oatmeal cookies!

**A mid-week program with teens and adults together plus a separate children's program**  
*Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger* curriculum produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger Partnership is a great mid-week option for children, youth and adults. There are three levels to the curriculum for children and youth, but adults could participate in the secondary level. Read the Story of Miquel's Tomatoes; there are reproducible sheets for the children to color while listening. The story addresses the steps in the food system. The Food Systems Chart provides adults/teens with information to talk about the components of the system. Other suggestions and activities addressing food security are included. A good ending for this study would be to coincide with World Food Day, October 16 (or more information go to [www.fao.org/wfd2008](http://www.fao.org/wfd2008)) or World Communion Sunday, the first Sunday in October.

**2008 Vacation Bible School, Rainforest Adventure: A Tree Top Bible Blast**

Augsburg Fortress Publishers with Congregational Ministries Publishing, Presbyterian Church  
(U.S.A.)

(Specific starter kit including PC(USA) mission project)

The adventure starts here! Everything you need to get your Rainforest Adventure started is conveniently assembled in this easy-to-carry plastic tote. The starter kit includes: PC(USA) specific Director Guide, Preview DVD/Music CD Sampler, Canopy Crafts Activity site Guide, Green Tree Games Activity Side Guide, Rainforest Rhythm Activity Side Guide, Swing Vine Science Activity Site Guide, Sky High Storytelling Activity Site Guide, Tree Top Tunes Songbook, Leader Guide for Grades Preschool, K-1, 2-3, 4-6, Grades K-1 Kid Pack contains (K-1 Bible Book, Rainforest Adventure Pouch, and a set of 5 Tree Top Critters), Preschool Bible Story Foldout, Bible Book for Grades 2-3 and 4-6, Trading Cards, and samples of Attendance Chart, Iron-On Transfer, Volunteer Thank-You, Name Tag, Publicity Poster, Stickers, VBS invitation Postcard, and Kid Certificate.

Order you Starter Kit by calling (800) 524-2612, PDS #9780806661551, \$69.95.

**A small rural church of mostly adults with 2 or 3 children and a few youth**

Using the theological context of Boaz sharing with Ruth (Ruth 2:1-17), the rural church often is the example of the generosity of the harvest. Have one member do some pre-work to select a food bank that would like to receive produce; select several farms that could be a site to “glean” what is left after the harvest. Ask several families to provide a picnic lunch for their grouping; ask other families to provide transportation. As the group begins to gather, start learning “Share Every Good Thing”. Read the Worship Guide for Day 1; the adults will love the story as well. Say a prayer before serving lunch; eat in your small groups. Travel to the gleaning sites and begin working.

***We Believe Workshop***  
Congregational Ministries Publishing, PC(USA)

*We Believe Workshop* joins the popular *We Believe: God's Word for God's People* denominational curriculum as an online component of the curriculum. The online format speaks to flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and ease of use for its participants. *We Believe Workshop* shares the themes of *We Believe* curriculum: Law, Grace, & Wisdom: Our Faith God's Faithfulness (2005-2006); Providence: God's Creating Word (2006-2007); Redemption: The Word Became Flesh (2007-2008); Hospitality: The Word in our Hearts (2008-2009); People Who Tell God's Creation Story (2009-2010).

View available units and workshop prices, placing your order at <http://www.pcusa.org/webelieve/available.htm>.

**A small rural church of mostly adults with 2 or 3 children and a few youth**

Influenced by the liturgical calendar, *We Believe* makes the perfect scripture text for the “time with the children” during worship; additional materials from the workshop can continue that theme into the education hour.

**A mid-size multicultural church located in a declining urban area**

Use a midweek outreach program and, as in Joseph: God’s Dreamer, have the children experience moving from one culture to another.

**A mid week program with teens and adults plus a separate children’s program**

Use rotation for children with parallel themes for adults and youth.