

October 8, 2017

ONE STEP: Christian Education

Psalm 19, Philippians 3:4-14

Welcome to October! We are a few weeks into the school year so many of our schedules and habits are set. Last week we began our midweek youth programs. This week we begin our Wednesday Supper and Service.

Today is Sunday. Sunday is a go to church day. Why? Why are you here? Are you here because you chose to be here? Are you here because someone dragged you here? Are you here because you grew up going to church?

People come to church usually for two reasons: they grew up in the church or someone invited them here. Which are you?

The same answer goes for Sunday School (adult or children). Either you grew up in the church or someone invited you to go to Sunday School.

Today's topic is on Christian Education. Why Sunday School?

Jesus admonished Peter three times to feed His sheep as an act of love. How important it is for all who wear the title "Christian" to live out what they believe. If we love the Lord, then we need to obey the Lord. To obey the Lord we need to know His Word for us. Studying the Bible - God's Word - is essential to faith. The more we understand that Word for ourselves, the more confidently we can obey His commission to "feed" others.

An active and vibrant Bible study class will challenge you to become more proficient in God's Word.

We go to Sunday School, Bible Study Groups, Youth groups to learn. Learn about God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, prayer, Loving others...

We go to Sunday School to learn what our scripture for today tells us:

More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3)

Sunday school gears Bible teaching to a specific age group (Deut. 31:12). It means a wiggly four-year-old can discover great biblical truth by acting out a Bible story, completing dot-to-dot pictures, singing fun songs, and obeying parents. During the same hour, adults may discuss whether their relationship with their spouse or responses to daily crises reflect their trust in God. Both age groups leave Sunday school with specific applications for the week.

We go to Sunday School to learn.

Our steps for today are:

S- I am not ready to take a class

B- I have not taken a class, but am willing

S- I have or am taking a class

L- I have or am open to leading a class (adult or children)

It is important to learn and be a part of a class. Why? I'll show you using my wonderful skills of juggling.

SO... what do you think of my juggling skills??

I can't juggle... why? No one taught me!

Same goes for Education. Can I count to 10 in German? No... why? No one taught me.

Same goes for Christian Education. Can you pray? Out loud? No... why? No one taught you.

Can you turn in a Bible right to a passage that will give your comfort? No... why? No one taught you.

That's why we want everyone to be in small groups... to be in children/youth/adult Sunday School... or part of our midweek program...

We are here to educate your mind, fill your spirit, and touch your heart.

We live in the midst of a large spiritually yearning public. The mission field is no longer overseas. It is in our neighborhoods and schools. Statistics tell us that as many as 50 percent of the children in your neighborhood may not attend a church. We also know that many parents, faced with the realities of drugs and violence, limited resources and increasing demands, are looking for help in bringing up moral and responsible children. Our congregation can be a community of hope and healing in a hurting and need-filled world. Our congregation can be just what your neighbors are looking for!

Do you have peace in your heart knowing that God loves you? Yes... why? Because someone taught you. Shouldn't we pass that on to others?

I encourage you all to be a part of a small group or Sunday School class. Continue to learn about God and God's love. Then maybe you'll be ready to take the next step and lead a class.

But no matter which step you are on... Invite someone! So they can learn about God too!

How can we invite people to church or Sunday School?

Here are three tools for inviting others to church:

Invitation Cards: In your bulletin you will find an invitation card. It has all the pertinent information about the church on it. Give it to someone and invite them to church.

This starts with a simple question: "Would you like to go to church with me?"

Ask yourself, who do I know – friend, neighbor, co-worker, family member, acquaintance – that God is putting on my heart to invite to church? Then do it! Some people need to warm up to the idea and need to be asked more than once. Don't give up! Try inviting to a VBS, Trunk or Treat, the Children's Christmas program, or other events that happen here at church.

Research shows that only 2% of church goers invite an unchurched person to church, but that 82% of the unchurched are likely to attend if invited!

Facebook: Use your Facebook connections to invite your friends. You can also "share" our church's Facebook status updates. Make sure that you go on and like our page. Also, "check-in" when you are here to let people know that church is an important part of your life. Result? Hundreds of people in your city/network will hear about your church and God every week!

Your Children: Encourage your children to send hand-made invitations to their friends. When your children go to our midweek program, encourage them to invite their friends.

Why People Bring Children to Sunday School (Edward Rauff, Why People Join the Church, 1979)

#6 Influence of the Pastor

#5 Searching for Community

#4 Experiencing personal crisis

#3 Congregation offers special programs

#2 Seeking help with family relationships and responsibilities

#1 They were invited!

Do you have peace in your heart knowing that God loves you? Yes... why? Because someone taught you. Shouldn't we pass that on to others?

Don't we want everyone to learn about God... better than I can juggle? Amen.