

## Things to Do in the Summer . . .

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## that will be a blessing to your education program in September

It can be fun and even refreshing on a hot summer day to enjoy lemonade and some shared work in the cool, church basement. Invite some friends to help you and make a party out of getting organized for September.

1. Sort out all the arts and crafts material. Make a list of what needs to be ordered for September.
2. Nearly every church I know has a messy, teaching picture file by the end of June. Sort it into categories—Old Testament, New Testament, modern day life, worship, charts and maps, Easter, Christmas.
3. Sort and put into labeled cardboard boxes all the "recycles" that come into your church for art projects (e.g. paper towel rolls, fabric, plastic tubs). Make a list of those that are in short supply and invite people to start dropping them off at church.
4. If you are responsible for the Sunday school, plan for teacher training and orientation in September. Even if you have only one or two teachers, it is important that they receive some training and orientation.

### Here are some options:

- One of the simplest things you can do for each teacher in your Sunday school is buy them a good resource/teaching book. A good choice is *32 Ways to Become a Great Sunday School Teacher*, Delia Halverson, Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Buy and use the book *Equipping the Saints* by Sara Coven Juengst (Westminster John Knox Press, 1998). This book has 39 do-it-yourself workshops for teachers and leaders. The author has arranged the workshops in three general categories—Basic biblical background, Foundations for faith (basic Christian belief), Timely teaching tips (practical help). All are brief and easy to use.



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- The national church offers a program called TLC (Teacher/Leader Courses). Contact the Education in the Faith department (800-619-7301) for a list of courses and how to arrange a TLC event for your presbytery.
- Watch for conference opportunities for your church leaders/teachers. APCE (Association of Presbyterian Church Educators) offers an excellent yearly conference with a wide variety of workshops. Canada Youth conferences offer a strong leader training component for youth leaders every three years. Other special Canadian Presbyterian conferences emerge from time to time and are listed on the church web site ([www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca)). Lay people may apply for one third of the cost of these programs through the national church's Lay Bursary Program (800-619-7301).
- For youth leaders, contact your regional staff for training events or borrow *Volunteer Youth Worker Training Course* (video and work books) and the Peer Ministry Video from church offices.
- Knox College offers several distance education courses for lay people ([knox.college@utoronto.ca](mailto:knox.college@utoronto.ca)).
- New teachers/leaders may be paired with more experienced teachers/leaders in a mentoring relationship.
- If the leaders are elders, contact the Elder's Institute for training options ([www.standrews.edu/elders](http://www.standrews.edu/elders); 866-794-8888, toll free). Every PCPak and the church website has an issue of *For Elders* which contains helpful articles and procedures for training elders. Back copies of this resource are available from the Book Room at church offices (800-619-7301).

As you plan for teacher/leader training remember that your regional staff can be a valuable help. (For a list of Regional Staff consult The Presbyterian Church in Canada national website [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca)). Also, for specific teacher/leader training advice contact the national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Education in the Faith Department (800-619-7301).

5. Prepare a job description for each of your teachers or leaders. A job description helps teachers and leaders understand their responsibilities. There is a sample on the next page. Adapt it for your context.

### Review:

*LifeKeys: Discovering who you are, why you're here and what you do best*

Kise, Stark, Hirsh, Bethany Press, 1998

Looking for a good resource for a retreat? LifeKeys can be used either in that setting or as an eight-week course for young adults or middle adults. Co-authored by a Presbyterian minister, a management consultant and a Myers-Briggs consultant, this resource uses all kinds of self-discovery tools to help people (or couples) explore their distinctiveness in God's Kingdom. I can imagine people saying, as they work through this program, "Oh! I never realized that about myself!"

The Leadership Kit, though good, is pricey (\$77.50). If you would like to preview before ordering, contact Matt Donnelly at church offices (800-619-7301); [mddonnelly@presbyterian.ca](mailto:mddonnelly@presbyterian.ca). This resource also comes with excellent promotional materials—posters and colourful bulletin inserts.

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## Ministry (Job) Position for Primary School Age (ages 6-12) Church School

### Teacher/Leader

(Insert your church/ministry name here)

**Title of the Ministry Position:** Church School Teacher for ages 6-12

**Responsible to:** Church School Superintendent/Coordinator

**Responsible for:** six children in a grade 4-6 class

**Main Goal:** (put your church's mission statement here) or something more general like, "To encourage children to follow Christ and serve faithfully in his church."

**General summary:** The Church School Teacher will oversee and facilitate the teaching of the curriculum in such a way that lives are changed and growth is seen in the children. This will include preparation of classroom activities and ensuring all necessary supplies are available for classroom time. The teacher will be responsible for record-keeping, care of the children and encouraging children in their walk with Christ.

**Roles, Responsibilities and Tasks:** (list the expectations of this position)

It is the responsibility of the Church School Teacher to:

- maintain a vital spiritual life
- plan and teach a weekly lesson
- maintain confidentiality unless the child is in danger
- participate in events and activities that develop leadership skills
- maintain accurate records of attendance
- attend bimonthly teachers' meetings
- advise the Sunday school superintendent of his/her absence and find a suitable replacement
- ensure that the safety issues presented in orientation are followed

**Gifts, Skills, Experience and Qualities:** (list all that are necessary for this task)

- gift of teaching, time management and organizational skills
- compassion for children and experience working with them
- patience and sensitivity to the needs of children
- creativity in sharing stories and personal experiences

**Screening Procedure:** In accordance with the *Leading with Care* policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, screening of all adults involved in ministry with children and youth includes completing a teacher/leader application form, and, in the case of prospective teachers/leaders, an interview by two people, a reference check, and a Police Records Check/Volunteer Screening Check for high risk ministries.

**Orientation and Training:** (list all training courses)

- mandatory fall orientation program
- fire, safety and emergency procedures
- bimonthly teachers' meetings (or whatever your training will be)

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## Support, Supervision and Evaluation

As a support to all adults/youth engaged in children/youth/vulnerable adult ministry, (insert name of church) will provide monthly visits by the Sunday school superintendent, self-evaluation opportunities at training events and regular prayer support.

## Schedule and commitment:

Team teaching with a rotation of every fourth Sunday off from September to June

### 6. Plan and run an orientation for all teachers and leaders in your congregation

Orientation includes the following:

- A review of ministry (job) position descriptions. Does everyone know what their job entails?
- What to do in the case of a sudden illness of either themselves or someone in the program. If ill, teachers and leaders should be given instruction about who to inform and how to find a replacement teacher/leader for their ministry/program.
- How to access supplies and equipment
- How to access buildings, cupboards, rooms
- Overview of training sessions that will be available in the year ahead. (These may be done with other congregations in the presbytery, through video or book resources or by leaders in your congregation. See p. 38 of this policy for suggestions.)
- Watch the video *Leading with Care in your Congregation*, available from church offices (800-619-7301). These videos were mailed to each congregation in the fall, 2004.
- Teachers/leaders must fill out a Teacher/Leader Form. (This form may be found in *Leading with Care*, under "Church Documents" at [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca). This form includes important contact information. Even in small congregations, you may not know a person's work number or who they would like you to contact if there is an emergency. In addition, filling in a teacher/leader form is an act of commitment to their ministry task.
- Safety issues such as fire procedures, transportation (if necessary), washroom practices and other safety issues which are specific to the situation (see pp. 19 & 46 of this policy).
- All teachers/leaders must be given a print form of "Information on Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Abuse." Information on abuse may be found in *Leading with Care*, under "Church Documents" at [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca).
- Teachers/leaders must be given a record book to record attendance carefully in case parents need to be advised about a health or safety concern. Attendance should be recorded at the beginning of each program and the attendance book taken to a central place.

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of preparing this resource, the *Leading with Care* policy has not yet gone for final approval to the 2005 General Assembly. However, the 2004 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada granted permission for congregations to use the draft copy of *Leading with Care* because many congregations had an immediate need for such a policy.