Generations

Mission Statement

An Online, Open-Access, International Journal

Common Ground Journal (*CGJ*) is a publication of the CanDoSpirit Network, Inc. and is published twice annually as a resource for Christian congregations seeking to understand and faithfully live out their calling as the people of God in the world. The primary audience for CGJ is thoughtful Christians in congregations who are catalysts for growth within their own churches.

CGJ is devoted to the development of strong, faithful churches whose life and ministry grow out of the church's nature as the people of God. They are organized and led in a manner consistent with their nature and mission. They continually ask, "What does it mean to be a sign of the Kingdom of God in the world today?"

CGJ is a resource for congregational development. We invite scholars and thoughtful Christians in congregations around the world to stimulate inquiry, reflection and action around issues central to the life and ministry of the gathered community of faith. We invite those who serve as leaders in congregations, mission agencies, parachurch organizations, relief and development work, higher education, and non-traditional leadership development to apply their scholarship and expertise in these fields to the context of the local church. We encourage members of congregations to address the broader church with insights grounded in a thoughtful examination of Scripture, and in their own experiences as part of communities of faith in the world.

CGJ is international in scope. We draw on the rich resources of the church around the world to provide a variety of voices and perspectives on issues facing the church. Writers are encouraged to be specific to their own culture and context. In order to contribute to the development of indigenous literature, articles may be submitted in a language other than English.

CGJ is an electronic journal freely available to anyone with access to the worldwide web. The electronic format allows distribution to a wide and diverse audience, and enables the journal to be interactive in nature. Readers may engage in ongoing conversations about the topics and articles we print, and find links to other resources on the web.

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Submissions to the Journal

The *Common Ground Journal* welcomes articles from scholars and discerning Christians. Each issue will feature invited articles around a theme, as well as articles received through open submissions. Open submission articles are reviewed by members of the Editorial Review Committee who make recommendations to the editor regarding their publication.

General Guidelines

Common Ground Journal seeks to stimulate Christian Churches to thoughtful action around their calling to be the people of God in the world. All articles should be grounded both in theology and the life of the church. Writers are encouraged to write to and about their own cultures and contexts. CGJ invites submissions in the following categories:

- Articles that stimulate thinking and reflection on the nature of the Church

- Articles that link the nature of the Church to its life and work in the world

- Articles that explore the integration of theology and social sciences in relation to life and work of the Church

- Essays on truths gleaned from the interplay of theory and practice, theology and experience in the active life of faith

- Articles that present insights from congregations attempting to live out their identity as the people of God in world

- Articles based on responsible qualitative research designed to inform a local congregation's understanding of its life and ministry

- Articles that raise questions that the Christian community needs to explore in becoming the people of God in the world

- Reviews of books, journals, programs, web sites and related resources

Submission Guidelines

Common Ground Journal submission guidelines and protocols are based on the need of meeting web design standards that are compatible across multiple versions of both current and legacy web browsers. Please follow the standards carefully when submitting documents for consideration for online publication in the *Common Ground Journal.* Documents to be considered for publication should be e-mailed to the editor at: editor@commongroundjournal.org.

Article Length

Articles should be approximately 2500 to 3500 words in length. Book reviews and essays should be shorter.

Language and Foreign Languages

Articles should be written in clear narrative prose. Readers can be expected to be familiar with the language of the Bible and theology, but will not necessarily have formal education in these fields. Please avoid academic language and discipline specific terms. Provide clear definitions and examples of important terms not familiar to a general audience. Use explanatory footnotes sparingly; explanations and examples in the text of articles are preferred.

The best articles are clear and focused, developing a single thesis with examples and application. The successful writer translates complex ideas into everyday language without talking down to the readers. All articles should use inclusive language.

Biblical language terms and words in foreign languages should be transliterated into English. If foreign language fonts are used in lieu of transliteration, you must embed the fonts in the document so the text can be reproduced accurately. Instructions for how to embed fonts can usually be found under the *Help* menu of most word processors (keywords: embed font).

Style and Format

In matters of style and format, please follow the *Chicago Manual of Style.* You must include proper documentation for all source material and quotations using footnotes.

A "Bibliography" of works cited should be included at the end of the article. A "Recommended Reading" list or "For Further Study" list may also be included. Documents to be considered for publication should be submitted according to the following style protocols:

- Times New Roman font 12 point (important: you must embed any other font used in the document)

- Single-line space throughout

- Use only one space after any punctuation

- Indent paragraphs with only one tab—please do not use multiple spaces for any form of indentation

- Indent block quotations using the indent feature in your word processor instead of tabs or extra spaces to indent text

- Do not underline text, as underlining is reserved for documenting hyperlinks—use bold or italic for emphasis

- Do not use auto-hyphenation

- Charts, graphs, images etc. appearing anywhere in the document should be submitted in BMP, GIF, JPG, or WMF format—images should be as clear as possible

- Copyrighted displays, images or previously published works must be accompanied by a letter of permission from the copyright owner to reproduce the displays or images in the online *Common Ground Journal*

The preferred format is Microsoft Word. WordPerfect, Rich Text Format (RTF), or ASCII formatted documents are also acceptable. Articles will be published in converted to Word format and published online in Adobe PDF format.

Author Information

The credibility of an article is enhanced by a brief bio of the writer's credentials and/or professional experience. Writers must therefore include the following information with their articles:

- A narrative biography of three or four sentences identifying your name as you wish it to appear, the institution you work for or the relationship you have with the topic, your position, and other information relevant identifying your qualifications in writing the article

- A color (preferred) or black and white photograph of you (portrait style) in BMP, GIF, JPG, or WMF format

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Reader Response and Contact Information

Readers are encouraged to respond to articles published in the *Common Ground Journal*. This can be done in two ways. Formal responses to articles and themes or editorial matters may be submitted to the editor via e-mail or postal mail (see *Contact Information* below). Responses may be edited for length.

The following contacts can be used for any questions or recommendations for the *Common Ground Journal:*

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Our Fifth Year of Sharing Common Ground
By Linda Cannell

It is hard to believe that five years have passed since editor Laurie Bailey and I sat in a local restaurant discussing her vision for an electronic journal that would serve the CanDoSpirit Network. She envisioned a journal that would encourage men and women in various professional roles to write for "thinking Christians in congregations." Laurie has since moved on from her role as Editor of the journal to other CanDoSpirit Network activity; but we acknowledge with gratitude her vision, *and* the research and hard work she did to bring the *Common Ground Journal* into being.

From the beginning, Mark Simpson has provided the needed expertise to make an electronic journal work. He, with Laurie's input, designed the web site you see today; and Mark works skillfully behind the technological scenes to perform what has always seemed like magic to me in making it possible for articles to appear on my screen! Over the five years, he has made improvements in the way the site functions; and has created a format that allows you to more easily access, download, and/or print articles of interest.

CGJ now draws on a talented group of guest editors which allows us to focus on issues of particular interest. The Call for Articles in the recent email announcing the Fall 2007 issue, describes forthcoming themes, and identifies those who have agreed to serve as guest editors for each issue. In this way, CGJ continues its founding purpose as being for and by leaders in the Network (and beyond) who are interested in furthering thought and conversation related to the church's mission in the world.

As we begin the next five years, we invite you to participate in whatever dialogue CGJ helps to foster by submitting articles and stories pertinent to a theme. Add www.commongroundjournal.org to your list of favorite web sites and check it regularly!

Linda Cannell
Director, CanDoSpirit Network
www.candospirit.org

From the Guest Editors
By Jim Dekker and Mark Hayse

Generations

This issue of *Common Ground Journal* deals with "generations" from a variety of perspectives. Often, the generation gap is seen as something that keeps people apart—something that can't be bridged or that takes great effort to bridge. Clearly, as the articles in this issue suggest, there *are* differences among (the more than two) generations; and societal—and church—programs, structures and conventions have tended to keep the generations from meaningful contact. However, the concern in this issue is not so much to describe and offer ways to help the church *cross* a generation *gap,* a negative thing; but to suggest that there are many in any generational cohort who are not adverse to building significant relationships, serving together, learning together, worshipping together. What we need is greater understanding and appropriate venues to assist the church to be what it is—a *community* of faithful people, of all ages.

The dialogue with Jim Dekker and the article by Mark Hayse help us understand more about the youth culture. Scottie May writes out of her experience in creating opportunities within the church for families to learn and relate together as families. Laura Widstrom-Johnson demonstrates the value of mutual and authentic (read, demanding) service in bringing generations together. And then, finally, we have included some practical helps for facilitating intergenerational experiences.

The underlying message of this issue is that we can celebrate the generations, learn from the particular experiences of each, and find hope and pleasure in serving, learning and worshipping together.

About the Guest Editors

Jim Dekker is the Assistant Professor of Youth Ministry and Co-Director of the Center for Youth Ministry Studies at North Park University and Seminary. The Center is a partnership between the undergraduate liberal arts university, the seminary, and the Evangelical Covenant Church. Jim also is web master for the CanDoSpirit Network web site.

Mark Hayse is Associate Professor of Christian Education at MidAmerica Nazarene University (www.mnu.edu), Olathe, KS, USA where he teaches youth ministry. He is currently enrolled as a Ph.D. student in Educational Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, USA. His research interest lies within the area of video games as curricula for moral education. He has served as an Associate Pastor of Youth for 11 years, and is an ordained elder in the Church of the Nazarene.

Integrating Worlds: Youth Ministry in the 21st Century
By Linda Cannell and Jim Dekker

Linda. Jim, the reason for this dialogue is to get your perspective on what you and your co-director, Ginny Olson, have learned through your years of leadership with the Center for Youth Ministry Studies. I also want to get your "take" on what churches today need to know. Youth Ministry today is not the Youth Group of my adolescence is it?

Jim. (Laughing) No, that's for sure. It isn't even the youth group of my adolescence!

Linda. Describe the difference between youth group and youth ministry.

Jim. Youth group was what you and I experienced when we were teenagers.

Linda. Program oriented. Lots of activity. Maybe some service opportunities but generally not challenging in scope. Had to go to Sunday School. Usually all the kids looked like me. It was a comfortable place most of the time.

Jim. Right. Youth ministry today is not what you would recognize as your youth group. Youth ministry today is more of a cultural engagement. It's what Folmsbee, Yaconelli, Clark and others describe as a new kind of youth ministry[1]--a ministry not built on program but on the desire for transformation. For example, there is a trend in churches for youth to have their own worship services. Even though they may go to church on Sunday with their parents, they gather typically on a Friday night for worship, incorporating their own service elements: tithing, virtual elders and deacons, and so on. Though it's the youth ministry, they, in effect, have their own church. Parents and other members may be bothered by this; but the youth are experiencing church or remaking church in a way that makes sense to them. Friday church may be a way to help youth mimic adult culture; but they are sorting out their identity while engaging the existing Christian practices—for good or ill. The challenge is to help them reflect on what they are learning as they search for meaning. It takes a pretty mature youth minister (and congregation) to do this.

Linda. The youth minister also needs to be able to help youth with lifestyle challenges as well.

Jim. Yes. Youth pastors are often the first step in counseling issues. For example, among youth today there is a dramatic increase in cutting, or self-abuse, which transcends urban,

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[1] Chris Folmsbee. 2007. *A New Kind of Youth Ministry*. Zondervan/Youth Specialties; Chap Clark and Kara Powell. 2006. *Deep Ministry in a Shallow World*. Zondervan/Youth Specialties; Mike Yaconelli and Mark Oestreicher. 2006. *What I wish I Knew When I Started Youth Ministry*. Zondervan/Youth Specialties; David Chow, 2005. *The Perfect Program and Other Fairy Tales. THINK NavPress.*

rural, and suburban contexts as well as race and class. Youth are cutting themselves and telling their youth pastors; but parents don't see youth group as the place to deal with this problem…

Linda. …perhaps because they aren't aware of it, or they are in denial, or they still have their own images of the church's youth group.

Jim. Right. However, today's youth minister *must* be aware of these issues and has to learn some skills in how to deal with them. Youth *are* sharing their problems in drug abuse, sex abuse, self injury, and so on. The church that denies this behavior as "not my kid" is living in a dream world.

Linda. Are seminaries adequately developing today's youth minister?

Jim. I meet with the AYME (Association of Youth Ministry Educators). I find that most of the professors of youth ministry know that it is important to equip youth ministers for today's youth ministry; but most church leaders and parents are not aware that a transition is taking place in youth ministry. Churches still tend to look for an entertainer and programmer. These are Youth Group issues, and churches still too often ask Youth Group type questions when they look for a youth pastor. The assumption is that they need a young youth pastor who inevitably doesn't have the maturity to deal with the realities he or she will confront.

Linda. More like a cruise director than a youth minister.

Jim. And youth play into this entertainment, consumer model. They have been conditioned by the economic and commercial culture that they need to have fun, that it is their right to have fun. We know that they are also looking for meaning, but a young, immature youth pastor most often cannot deliver on that aspect of their development. He or she will give into the pressure of parents, church leaders, and the youth themselves for a fun oriented youth ministry. If they are involved in good clean fun, the presumption is that they are not in trouble. This is a flawed presumption. Most church members and even parents have limited awareness of what is going on in the life of adolescents. When confronted with the need to consider the "world beneath," for example, parents will often go into denial: "My kids aren't doing that!" "My kids aren't in need of that!" This disconnect from reality carries over into the way in which the church views youth ministry and the youth pastor.

Linda. And, then, this disconnect will ultimately affect the seminary—at least seminaries that are more responsive to the church. You indicated that youth ministry professors, generally, are more aware of these issues. In your judgment, is the seminary demonstrating awareness of issues inherent in today's youth culture?

Jim. For the most part, the theological curriculum is not suited to helping students in MDiv or MA programs develop awareness and the capacity to deal with what they will confront in their churches. For example, our seminary's MDiv program is unable to open up course blocks to address the more complex dynamics in youth ministry. The other MA programs will have less course hours and youth ministry can be perceived to be in

competition with other ministry courses (children's, family, justice, education, and so on). Our undergraduate program has more depth and breadth than what is possible at the seminary just now.

Linda. This curriculum problem is not unique to your seminary. It is generally conceded that the seminary curriculum is too crowded to do anything truly substantive in developing men and women for service in the church and/or society. Because the curriculum has become the repository for every professional undertaking desired by the church, theological schools can't do academic *or* professional development well. What else have you observed about the limitations in youth ministry leadership development?

Jim. I sense that there are moods regarding what is valued in the 'job market' of ministry. If you have an MDiv, you are more 'marketable'. If you focus on an MA in youth ministry, it is seen as a stepping stone and you're not really 'there yet'. Churches that want someone to address youth ministry needs tend to choose interns or temporary leaders with less educational expectations.

Linda. Why?

Jim. Because it's a second or third position to fund. I've met so many church leaders who think that if you're young and have counseled at camp a few summers, you should be a good youth minister. I cringe at the thought of what these churches are missing in relation to their youth. This attitude may work with youth group but not youth ministry.
I am concerned that there is insufficient attention given to youth *ministry* in our seminaries. Our students may not be as challenged to get beyond "what worked well for them programmatically" to the more uncomfortable area of "what God might want to do for youth in their diverse contexts." If youth ministry is about the divine transformation of young lives, then youth ministers need to be challenged and equipped to work within youth culture.

Linda. Let's go back to your understanding of Youth Ministry. At one point, you mentioned that there are problems that transcend socio-economic boundaries or categories. Are you suggesting that the traditional classifications are no longer helpful in defining youth ministry?
Jim. In the past, people have been able to define youth ministry by a single label, say by type (parachurch, under the steeple or community-based), or by geographical location (urban, suburban, town and country). Today, those classifications are too narrow. Youth workers are finding they need to broaden the definition of youth ministry in their community. For example, a young person might be in a rural setting but dealing with urban issues. Or a church may partner with several other churches to form a non-profit to reach out to neighborhood kids.

Linda. The historical precedents are still shaping the ways in which parents and church leaders think about youth ministry?

Jim. Yes, to a certain extent. There has been a historical disconnect between parachurch and church-based youth ministry. The church tends to think in terms of getting youth to *come to* established programs *in* the church. And the youth pastor is hired to take care of

the youth in the congregation. Some churches welcome youth from the community but, typically, those churches are evangelistic or outreach oriented across the board, not just with their youth ministry. If a church doesn't have that kind of mind-set, they can see youth who don't have a family connection to the church as being a threat to the well-being of their own adolescents. Interestingly, D.L. Moody, Billy Graham and others created institutes and parachurch efforts because the church structures couldn't accommodate the street culture, or the school culture for that matter. This pattern of establishing initiatives outside the church is continuing. The more familiar parachurch organizations working in the schools and the streets are Young Life, Navigators, and Youth for Christ, and so on. Though there is a slight trend between church and parachurch organizations, most churches still tend to do Sunday School and youth programming independently of these organizations.

Jim. To a certain extent, church programming is sustained by parents or other caregivers who want to keep their own kids safe. This is understandable. I have two daughters, and I understand the desire to want to keep one's children safe from the bad influences of the world "out there." But this attitude, and the practices that follow, don't help churches to fulfill their mandate to minister in all the world. The church is not thoroughly gospel when they are not looking for the transformation of the streets as well.

Linda. Does it follow that the definition of a "safe haven" for young people is that of conventional programming conducted in enclaves separate from the world "out there"?

Jim. OK. My natural instinct as a parent is to protect my daughters. This desire in some ways conflicts with the church's mandate to be God's reconciling agent in the world. The church can legitimately be a safe haven; but only in a certain sense. The church must be an outward moving, confident living, prophetic voice in society—otherwise it is no different from any other helping agency in society. Youth (and children) can find safety and challenge in a diverse, outward moving congregation; and also find opportunities in a parachurch organization that sees itself as an extension of the church for ministry, training, and support. A faith community that demonstrates what it means to minister in society, and participates in the opportunities that parachurch agencies provide, can embrace young people from the streets.

Linda. This goes back to your distinction between youth group and youth ministry. What I once knew as youth group within a welcoming church that was sometimes involved in its community, is not going to do the job today. Churches need to know what you are learning about the multiple worlds of youth, because their youth are being affected by these worlds whether they know it or not.

Jim. We need a way to think about this. Step back to the youth culture piece for a moment. What are we getting into when we engage youth? Youth culture is a constant moving target both developmentally and sociologically. Chap Clark[2] described youth as living in a "world beneath." He suggests that adults can sit at the doorstep of that "world beneath" and engage youth; but that it is the youth who make the decision about whether

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[2] Chap Clark. 2004. *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker

or not to let you in to their world. The implication is that there is a cross-cultural engagement taking place. And adolescents live in a variety of contexts each of which affects the formation of their identity. So when the church asks a youth pastor to do youth ministry, what are the entry points? The church doors or the various contexts the youth live in?

Linda. I'm getting the impression that youth ministry is a very complex undertaking! Given the complexity, and the observation that adults can enter the world beneath only by invitation, are we losing any hope for intergenerational relationships?

Jim. I'm not entirely comfortable with the implication that youth are eager to separate from adults. From my work, I feel that youth long for cross-generational relationships and feel the vacuum of not having it.

Linda. What contributes to this vacuum? And what can we do about it?

Jim. Nearly everything we do contributes to a relational vacuum. Family systems are changing which creates part of the vacuum. Churches reinforce it by separating age levels. We create it when we accept the myth that youth don't want to relate to an older generation. To feel that youth ministry does not need academic reflection creates a vacuum of theological responsibility. To suggest that suburban or rural youth are not affected by the urban culture creates a lack of awareness of what is really influencing our youth – a vacuum of awareness. To me the crux is authenticity. I know that is a buzz word but it holds true when addressing the vacuum. For example, I don't think age difference is the big deal we have made it out to be. It doesn't matter to most youth if you are 25 or 85. Youth don't expect me to rap or talk street. It isn't authentic to who I am. They may not always show it, but they want and need authentic, relational engagement regardless of age or other differences. Adults need to be comfortable being themselves around youth. But they also need to convey, in a spirit of humility, the desire to understand: "Help me understand. I may not always agree with the way you think or act, but I do need to understand." Without that opening, adults will not gain the respect needed to help youth reflect on their own attitudes, ideas, and behaviors. Youth are looking for people they can lean on who will provide value and meaning. They need this from adults. The question becomes, how will the church think in this new paradigm?

Linda. Do parents have any chance to be conversation partners with their youth?!

Jim. Here's my personal opinion. God created family with all of its power, and energy, for good or ill. Parents or caregivers do influence their children. It's a created order given. When a church has a youth ministry that is separate from families, and when youth do things on their own, parents nevertheless are the "silent partner" in the room. The family value system, for good or ill, is carried into youth ministry activities whether the parents are physically present or not. Bradford Brown has observed that parental influence is embedded in the choices youth make and in the groups they join.[3] They have to *deliberately choose* to be or do something different from family. In other words, it is

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[3] Bradford Brown *Peer Groups and Peer Cultures* in *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent* eds S. Feldman and G. Elliot (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1990).

not possible to extract the force and value of families by creating a programmatically separated youth ministry. Family patterns *will* exert an influence, even when parents aren't physically present. So, in my view, the fuss over family-based or non family-based youth ministry is wrong-headed; family cannot be extracted from the kids anyway. Let's talk about how families and youth ministry can really work together; not just through programs. Let's also consider sociological, developmental, theological, and other implications, even though the conversations may be more difficult.

Linda. I suppose one could say that parents are also going through a developmental transition.

Jim. Exactly. Parents go through a particular developmental phase at the same time as their adolescent children. Parents with teens are preparing themselves for launching their children, which is a definite shift from where they have been as parents of young children. Given our changing and crazy culture, parents look for rootedness and desire a predictable secure future. The parent is challenged to let go but doesn't want to let go. Parents live in their own world, too.

Linda. Let's go back to Clark's notion of the "world beneath." Do you accept that as a valid descriptor? What do churches and families need to understand about the roles youth assume in their various worlds?

Jim. Yes I accept the notion; but I would add that that this world is made up of many worlds and that youth play different roles in each world. Young people live in at least five different worlds and can be different people in each of those worlds. Society doesn't call them to live consistently across those worlds either. They play roles in their various worlds. They have different behaviors when they are walking in the malls or in the halls. In church they demonstrate a different set of roles. They tend to live out what they think is expected of them in each of their worlds. They don't see this as deceptive necessarily. They are experimenting with identities. Culture, after all, has said you can be anything you want to be. Culture gives them options – the church does too. Young people are then living lives of options and because they are in the early stages of identity formation they are experimenting. Therefore, Youth Group doesn't work as a place of identity transformation. It's just another world with another set of roles within a programmed set of expectations.

Linda. So, Youth Ministry has to be about more than programming because it is vital for youth to learn what they are doing as they live out all these different lives.

Jim. Youth Ministry pays attention to the youth system, for want of a better term. Youth pastors need to understand the many worlds occupied by adolescents. They need to know that if they do the Youth Group thing, they are simply creating one more world with a set of roles. But if they understand and respectfully engage youth in their several worlds, they may be able to help youth bring these worlds together under the Lordship of Christ, so that youth can live consistently. This is what it means to be Christian. Youth have to learn how to live in all their worlds with an integrated identity. Even adults have to learn how to be Christian, how to be an integrated person, across all the worlds we inhabit. So we recast awareness of youth ministry through a systems approach rather than a program

approach. We need to look at youth within their systems. For example, how does the educational system affect young people? Who is trying to control their minds for growth? How do they deal with stresses in their life—sometimes brought on by conflicting roles? Yes, entertainment is needed; but we need to look at all the systems that affect youth and help them learn how to live an integrated faith with integrity.

Linda. What do you see, then, as the particular contribution of the Center.

Jim. The Center for Youth Ministry Studies is not just an academic center. It exists to serve the denomination and churches with consultations, workshops, research, writing, and so on. We are a clearinghouse for ideas and information. Just last week we provided an opportunity for youth ministers to dial into a conference call where our Center staff provided focused attention to the issue of self injury (cutting). Another initiative is Youth Nexus where we invite 15 pairs of people: a youth pastor and one significant youth (Junior or Senior High) to North Park Theological Seminary for one week. There they rub shoulders with others from across the country as they consider significant topics relevant to living a life of discipleship. Each day they eat and worship together, experience a class and community project based on a topic of concern for the day such as justice, living in community and spiritual journey. They make connections with each other through the week, and become more aware of theological concerns and social responsibility. The hidden curriculum is to consider what God might be calling them to do and to be in the Kingdom.

Linda. Are the churches taking advantage of what you have to offer?

Jim. Not as much as we would like. Chicago *parachurch* agencies are excited about what we are doing. Perhaps we are not speaking in a way that connects with the church. Most parents and grandparents may think of youth today through their own past experience. I would like parents and other church members to see youth ministry as something different, and more comprehensive, than the youth group they may remember.

Linda. What you seem to be suggesting is that we need to find ways to help churches make the transition from Youth Group to Youth Ministry. What do you offer through the Center to help churches make this transition?

Jim. We can help churches think through the process of hiring a youth pastor—from understanding trends in youth ministry to developing feasible job descriptions. We can help them see that curriculum isn't simply about looking for the latest, best manual; it's really about fostering a culture of learning. We can help churches build bridges between the children's ministry and the youth ministry to assist children as they make the transition to adolescence and enter the youth ministry. Churches can contact us for ideas in planning service projects for youth.

Linda. It seems that more and more churches are taking youth on mission trips. What do you look for as indicators of an effective mission trip?

Jim. Many church-based youth ministries are giving a lot of attention to service projects and short term missions. In fact, mission trips have become a growth industry for

organizations in different countries. They offer to take care of all the details for a fee. The danger is that the trip will become just another program, or a tourist's excursion. Certainly, youth leaders want to take the youth where they will be challenged, and many young people are deeply affected by the experience; but youth need to be more than tourists experiencing the "wow."[4] What I look for in a mission trip is the extent to which the experience transformed the way youth understand culture and their responses to people in another culture. What have they learned about attitudes toward community development? To what extent did the trip contribute to the choices the youth themselves make about where they will serve *in the coming year*? For example, in the Chicago public schools, and some Christian schools, students have to do 40 hours of public service before graduation. To what extent has the mission trip shaped their choices for these service hours?

Linda. You want the church to be as diligent in organizing the reflection on the experience as they were with the trip itself.

Jim. Absolutely.

Linda. You've challenged us to think about a change in paradigm from youth group to youth ministry. There is one more area of Center activity that might interest our readers. You and Ginny have been interacting with the hip hop culture, and the Center has gained some respect from hip hop leaders because of your work. Even though hip hop is far from the experience of many evangelical churches, particularly in the Anglo community, what do churches need to learn from this movement?

Jim. You have to understand that though I have interacted quite a bit with the culture, I am still a white male looking at what hip hop is doing in youth ministry. I got interested in hip hop through my research in post modernism and the emerging church movement. I began to ask, "Where are the African American churches?" I learned that one of the driving forces in African American youth culture was hip hop. Though hip hop makes people cringe because of its emphases on power, misogyny, money, and so on, it helps to understand that hip hop was born in the 1970s in New York out of a desire to voice anger. In its early stages rap voiced emotion toward injustice in the life of street gangs. The "rap battle" was a way for gangs to confront each other without guns. It was, in other words, a redemptive way to deal with powerful emotions. Rap became a dialogical culture. One side would rap and the other side would rap back. It was a way to express people's stories. Out of the "rap battle" grew "consciousness rap", i.e., the dialogue over what is just and unjust. For example, there is a growing political movement being born out of the hip hop culture and Bakari Kitwana is an important voice in that community. He is using hip hop culture to speak out about political issues and to influence the African American vote. Thousands of African Americans attend conferences organized through the hip hop culture to gather people to deal with political issues. There are some hip hop churches. They are often rejected by the mainstream churches because of the ugly side of hip hop. It's similar to white churches who reject what they see as a worldly culture.

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[4] See *Missiology: An International Review*. Vol. xxxiv (4) October 2006 Special Edition: Short Term Missions.

Many African American churches are characterized primarily by a gospel music style. The hip hop style is radically different and some of it is objectionable; but if we reject it out of hand, we are potentially alienating ourselves from another of those cultures in which youth live and find meaning.

Linda. What concluding word do you have for our readers?

Jim. Young people need identity, significance, and purpose. How are we encouraging and supporting healthy identity? How does the young person answer the question, "Am I developing a growing sense of who I am?" How are we fostering a sense of significance? The young person may ask, "When I walk in a room does someone look at me as if I were important?" And purpose. To what extent do we help young people see themselves as important into the future? How do they see their identity, significance, and purpose in all their worlds? Ideally, we would want their own sense of identity, significance and purpose to have Christian integrity and consistency across all their worlds. Our heart aches for young people.

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Teaching and Learning Within a Video Game Culture
By Mark Hayse

For over 30 years, video games have made me think. When I play them, my first goal is always survival, and my next goal is mastery. However, my thoughts inevitably move beyond the game and toward the meta-game. In what implicit or explicit ways does the game design reflect the designer's worldview? To what degree does the simulation reflect "real" life? What potential does the game have for sponsoring moral reflection and action? What relationship exists between an in-game character—often called an "avatar"—and the identity of the game player? For some critics, video games do not merit such serious reflection. To others, like me, video games bear the same significance as film, television, music and other media forms.

How should the church respond to video games as popular culture? In the past, the church's response to other forms of popular culture has often followed this order:

1. **Fearful condemnation:** "We think that these (movies) are corrupting our youth"

2. **Alternative construction:** "We can make our own (movies) in order to propagate the Gospel among youth"

3. **Reflective integration:** "We now recognize that analogs for the Gospel exist in mainstream (movies)"

4. **Critical evaluation:** "We need to teach our youth how to discern the difference between appropriate and inappropriate (movies)"

5. **Redemptive (resigned?) engagement:** "We should educate youth who have a passion for making (movies) so that they can positively influence the whole industry."

Any meaningful conversation about video games and the church needs to begin with facts—not fear, disinterest or prejudice. Video games are an increasingly important part of global society. Perhaps at one time, video games were the exclusive domain of youth. For decades, however, youth have grown up into adulthood as video game players. Now, video games touch the lives of college students, adults and whole families as well.

In fact, the majority of video game players in the world today are adults
(www.theesa.com, accessed 07/20/07).

Analyzing Video Games

*Video games create a virtual play space that crosses generational lines. By taking
a closer look at the experience of video game play, the church might better
contextualize its educational practice.*

1. Social Demographics

Video games are available not only in the arcade but also on devoted home
entertainment consoles such as the PlayStation™ 3 and Nintendo™ Wii, on cell phones
and other handheld devices, on the Internet, in sports bars and in the classroom. In 2004,
US game software sales totaled 7.7 billion dollars, while US box office sales totaled 9.5
billion dollars. Although the popular press sometimes claims that video game sales have
surpassed box office receipts in the film industry, it would be more accurate to say that
the industry is growing at 4-8 percent a year (Kerr 2006, 47-52). Across the last decade,
studies of various sample sizes indicated that:

- 80% of US households provided "access" to a video game console,

- Male video game players outnumbered female video game players by a factor of
  two to one in Japan,

- Video games were played occasionally (less than an hour a day) by two-thirds of
  6-17 year olds in the UK, and

- The average amount of time spent playing video games among children in British
  Columbia, Canada was 5 hours per week (Kerr 2006, 106-112).

2. Moral Concerns

For some time, the entertainment media of popular culture have been viewed as
morally suspect. The earliest penny arcades often raised eyebrows as breeding-grounds
for pornography, gambling, sloth and other vices. Penny arcades spawned pinball arcades
which gradually gave way to video arcades during the 1970s. None of these ever fully
broke free of their shady image. It may have been parental concern over such "diabolic
places" that led parents to popularize the home gaming console (Huhtamo 2005, 12)!

Nevertheless, video games today are blamed for a variety of social ills such as psychological addiction (Griffiths and Davies 2005), physical violence (Goldstein 2005), social withdrawal and physical inactivity (Gunter 2005). However, in each of these studies, the researchers determine that the effect of video games is not wholly negative. Barrie Gunter, Director of the Center for Mass Communication Research at the University of Leicester concludes,

> As with many other forms of home entertainment, computer games need to be used sensibly in a carefully managed fashion. Where they represent part of a social scene for young people, their use seems to be generally controlled and related to positive feelings about self. Where they are used as a social distraction and a form of escape or withdrawal from social contact, they represent part of an undesirable behavioral syndrome that needs to be discouraged. (Gunter 2005, 154)

Video games are an easy scapegoat for social ills. However, research has not proven that video games irresistibly drive adolescents like lemmings over the cliff of immoral behavior.

3. Academic Interest

Are video games worth serious attention? Scholars around the world are beginning to think so. Several academic institutions are giving sustained attention to video games, including:

- the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
- the University of Wisconsin-Madison,
- the IT University of Copenhagen, and
- Utrecht University, the Netherlands.

In addition, several online associations sponsor lively and readable conversation among academics, industry leaders, and community members including the Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA, www.digra.org), the Serious Games Initiative (www.seriousgames.org) and the Digiplay Initiative (www.digiplay.org.uk). SAGE Publications produces a quarterly journal, *Games and Culture*. An international community of scholars publishes a peer-reviewed online journal at www.gamestudies.org. Henry Jenkins, Director of the MIT Comparative Media Studies Program writes that with this kind of academic criticism and with public support, video

game designers have the potential "of reaching a broader public, of having a greater public impact, of generating more diverse and ethically responsible content, and of creating richer and more emotionally engaging content" (Jenkins 2005, 187).

A number of scholars are beginning to ask significant questions about video games: questions about values, ethical behavior, and social change. If scholars and industry leaders want to talk about how to make video games that "matter", then shouldn't the church join the conversation? Video games may be a hot potato for some, but informed dialogue about video games may help us all turn a hot potato into a nourishing meal!

In summary, video games aren't just for kids anymore. Their influence cuts across generations as players of all ages enjoy them. Often, families and congregations want to scapegoat video games as a corrupting influence upon the young. However, careful research seems to indicate that youth aren't quite so suggestible. When managed well, video games can actually be a positive social influence. In order to maximize the potential of video games, careful discussion needs to take place among academic and industry leaders—and it is. Is the church ready to join the conversation?

Analyzing Play

Although play is normally identified with leisure activity, play is a part of all good work and a friend to faith. In particular, the experience of video game play illustrates the ways in which play, work, and meaning-making converge within the player's mind.

1. Features of Play

In his book The Ambiguity of Play (1997), play scholar Brian Sutton-Smith ties together more than a century of discussion about play. Sutton-Smith organizes play scholarship into seven "rhetorics" (or frameworks), suggesting that the post/modern world places particular significance on at least three[5]. These three frameworks present play as:

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[5] Sutton-Smith concludes that no single rhetorical framework can adequately explain the fullness of play. Instead, he suggests that "variability is the key to play" (Sutton-Smith 1997, 229). By this, he means that behind all frameworks, play reflects the elemental cognitive processes of flexibility and adaptation. As organisms face the ever-changing challenges of life, the brain "playfully" constructs new strategies for survival.

- **Progress:** Helping children to grow and develop

- **Imaginary:** Giving the imagination a chance to be creative

- **Self:** Reaching for the personal pleasure of peak experiences

Play not only helps children to become healthy adults, but also helps adults to stay healthy. Play not only helps children develop their imaginations, but also helps adults to "clear the cobwebs" in order to see life from a fresh perspective. Play not only adds to the happiness of childhood, but also to the joy of adulthood. Arguably, more children, adolescents and adults enjoy the leisure of play than ever before.

Increasingly, play involves media technology. For example, a 2002 Computer Entertainment Supplier's Association (CESA) study of average monthly expenditure on leisure/media activities in Japan came to ¥21159 (yen), or, well over $150 (USD) per person (Kerr 2006, 51). Also, a 2003 study found that seventy percent of American college and university students reported playing online video games regularly or occassionally, with the majority of those being women (Kerr 2006, 109-110).

As digital technology changes today's world, it changes play as well. As work heads toward the post-industrial and data-centered, it stands to reason that play would "go digital" as well. While "traditional" physical play isn't going away, "digital" play with video games continues to gain popularity.

2. Features of Video Game Play

As the industry continues to mature, video game play continues to broaden and deepen. Some of this is obvious, like the improvement of graphics and sounds. Other aspects of video game play are less apparent, requiring a closer analysis. While these qualities are many, we will look at only four:

- **Immersive:** Video games capture the attention of players. Some academic and industry leaders describe video game play as immersion within "virtual reality." When some video game players spend eight hour days (or longer) in front of the game screen, it's hard to disagree. However, other scholars contend that the term "immersion" falsely implies that the player fully believes that he has actually entered an imaginary world (Salen and Zimmerman 2004, 450-455). Even so, it is safe to say that video game players consciously and willingly "immerse" themselves within the experience of powerful feelings, even though they know that the game world is only an illusion.

- **Interactive:** When a video game player moves a mouse or pushes a button, the video game environment changes in response. As the game environment changes, the player responds in kind. This interactive loop endlessly repeats itself until the game ends. The interactive loop serves as the basis of all video game play. At their best, video games sponsor constant and immediate two-way communication throughout the whole process of play (Crawford 2003).

- **Narrative:** There aren't many hotter debates in the video game field right now than this one: "Are video games fundamentally stories or games?" That debate will not be resolved here. However, practically all scholars agree that video games use narrative structures and devices in order to make game play more compelling (Jenkins 2004, Juul 2005). Of course, not all video games explicitly use story as a part of their play. However, the number of video games that allow the player to "play out" stories by sequentially writing her own adventure or living a simulated life are too numerous to recount.

- **Social:** While critics often complain that video games are socially isolating, in fact video games may be readily understood as social occasions as well. Many video game players play together, not alone, either in the same room or across the internet. They "chat" about games during game play, exchange advice about games, tell stories about their game playing experiences and "mod" (modify) game files for sharing with each other. James Paul Gee, a video game researcher and professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison observes that "…young people who play video games often experience a more intense affinity group, leverage more knowledge from other people and from various tools and technologies, and are more powerfully networked with each other than they ever are at school" (Gee 2003, 194).

Video games invite players into a virtual "play space" where players often collaborate, creating new experiences and knowledge together. These play spaces are not only highly engaging but also highly responsive. Player choices often produce immediate feedback. Within the boundaries of the video game environment, players feel free to pursue their own goals as they make meaning out of their experiences. This experience of "bounded freedom" motivates players to dig deeper and deeper into the simulated worlds of video games.

3. Play and Faith

Play is central, not peripheral, to the life of faith. Many theologians believe that imagination and play can bring a rich dimension to faith that strict sobriety and work do not (Cox 1969, Keen 1969, Miller 1970, Moltmann 1972, Schall 1976, Pannenberg 1985, Berryman 1991). Often, the "Protestant work ethic" is caricatured as a joyless drudgery,

suppressing the self through denial and discipline. However, these theologians have come to understand that work and play are mutually exclusive in neither life nor faith.

In Jerome Berryman's *Godly Play*, he tells the story of Martin Luther's "conversion" to play as a way of faith. When Luther was young, strict devotional discipline oppressed his spirit. God was a taskmaster who could never be satisfied. Luther was a fearful slave who was never good enough. Through Luther's interaction with Johann von Staupitz—a spiritual director and a mystic—Luther was challenged to rediscover the joy and freedom of Christian vocation. At first, Luther inwardly resisted this spiritual direction although he outwardly obeyed. In time, however, Luther's soul found a new freedom as he discovered the playful grace and creative joy of pastoral care. Remarkably, it was through this struggle that Luther came to formulate the great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. Salvation came to be less a task to accomplish and more a gift to enjoy. For Luther, the artificial dividing line between duty and play was breaking down (Berryman 1991, 5-7).

How often does the church frown upon frivolity and play because the work of evangelism is "serious business"? How often does the body of Christ starve the spirit of lightheartedness, when this grace can open the door to deeper intimacy with God and others? How often do Christians neglect God's gifts of wonder and awe without realizing that they are the key to spiritual contemplation and wisdom?

Through viewing faith as play, Christians can rediscover an ancient way that enriches and complements the idea of faith as work. Both the way of imagination and the way of reason open helpful doors to more fully know God. The way of imagination isn't just child's play. If we will not receive the Kingdom of God as a child, we are in danger of missing it altogether (Mk 10:14-16).

In summary, play engages the imagination and calls for creativity. In particular, video game play enables high levels of emotional engagement and social interaction within a narrative framework. Increasingly, technology mediates play for young and old alike. However, play is often disparaged in contrast to work rather than seen as a dimension of all good work. Sadly, the church too often perpetuates this false dichotomy instead of preaching the complementarity of work and play. It is time for the church to recover play as a life-affirming, life-renewing experience, given by God for our enjoyment.

Contextualizing Christian Education

The church is now immersed within a "hyper-mediated" society. By taking a closer look at video game play, the church can better contextualize its educational practice. Paradoxically, however, video game technology is not necessary for the church to harness its power to teach Christians of all ages.

1. Imagining Learning as Play

Video game players must *learn* through play in order to win. Generally, those involved in playful learning are engaged,

- At their own pace

- Along multiple pathways

- Through direct, sensory experience

- With freedom to fail throughout the process of learning a set of competencies

- With permission to critically evaluate the worth of every object in the virtual environment

In contrast, learning in the stereotypical Sunday School lesson is not easily construed as playful. It may tend to look more like this:

- At the teacher's pace

- Along a single pathway

- Through abstract ideas disconnected from lived experience

- Without freedom to maintain tension or disagreement with authorities

- Without permission to critically evaluate the worth of diverse perspectives and commitments

To be fair, the actual health of video game players does not directly depend upon either their success or their failure within the virtual environment. On the other hand, the eternal salvation of children and adolescents *does* depend upon their sobriety in spiritual things…right?

What would it look like to create the Sunday School room as a "virtual" learning environment where playing is seen as evidence of engagement instead of as a counterproductive distraction? After all, even Sunday School isn't "real life." Not many

safer places exist for the exploration of diverse perspectives, free of immediate consequences. If allowed, Sunday School students might find new motivation to learn through unhurried, simulated experiences or case studies in which it is OK to "pick the wrong answer" in order to see what happens next. Obviously, planning a learning experience like this will require more effort than simply using a curriculum lesson with limited discussion, or with a series of rhetorical questions for which there is only one, obvious right answer. However, whether it's a Sunday School lesson or a game format, learners will not respond as well to learning activities that are "fixed." They're boring and participants or players quickly lose interest. For more discussion on imagining learning as play, see James Paul Gee's highly engaging and readable book, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy* (2003).

2. Sustaining Narrative Tension

Many of the best video games frame their action in terms of sustained narrative tension. By sustaining narrative tension, the game designer draws out a high degree of emotional engagement from the player. Within many games, players often interact with both fictional characters and other real-life players. Mysteries unfold as players gradually come to better understand the fictional characters that they encounter. Complexities increase as players work together to construct shared responses to the problems that they face. Players enjoy getting to know other characters—both human and virtual—and looking for "what makes them tick."

We like to tell stories when we teaching the Bible to children, but as they get older we move increasingly toward abstraction. We say to ourselves, "Old Testament stories are fine for kids, but eventually we need to move on to deeper things like the epistles of Paul." The trouble is that the moral principles of systematic theology are normally not as emotionally gripping as a well-told story! Thankfully, we really don't need to choose between the two. The Bible provides more than enough material to teach with both. Our popular culture is saturated with story, as is Scripture. Perhaps more than ever before, teachers need to learn the art of good storytelling. When the best stories are told, the storyteller knows how to intentionally pause in order to ask her hearers, "What do you think happens next?" Good storytellers suspend the narrative just long enough to invite group responses to the unresolved tensions before them. Perhaps in this way,

teachers might more effectively help students to actively and imaginatively immerse themselves within God's story.

3. Empowering Students as Designers

Within video game culture, players take "modding" for granted. "Mods" are video games in which game rules are tested to the breaking point in order to learn how to redesign those games as new experiences. Once a new mod is designed, it is usually shared with others over the internet. In fact, many (if not most) video games today are essentially mods of other games, literally built upon the "engines" of programming code for old games. Modding communities push games to levels of ever-greater sophistication as designers add their own personal touch to old code rather than starting over from scratch. While some mods are designed by professionals, most are not. For many, modding is merely a hobby. Once a player learns the "grammar" of a game, it is not unusual for him or her to want to use that grammar to design and express his or her own vision. Once that vision is coded and released, the whole gaming community determines its value.

What would it look like to invite students to "mod" their own lessons? For starters, teachers would have to accept the idea that it's alright for students to engage Scripture, looking for points of tension as well as agreement. Too often, teachers follow a curriculum which tends to give the impression that there is only one right way to read and teach God's Word. Perhaps we forget that our job is not to protect Scripture from our own students! When individual students interpret Scripture, they do so within the context of an interpreting *community*. God always guides the interpreting community to offer helpful feedback to students as they begin to find their own voices. When teachers act as if they alone, and not students, are qualified to interpret Scripture, they may send a message that God's wisdom is best left up to the "experts." On the other hand, teachers who invite and guide their students to read and research Scripture in order to teach their peers send a very different message: "God's story is *your* story. You'd better do your homework, because the rest of us are counting on you to help us find the way." Effective teachers already know that when students play a part in designing and facilitating their own learning experiences, they retain more than through passive reception alone.

When Christian education is contextualized for a video game culture,
learning can become more playful and more purposeful at the same time. Most teachers
would readily admit that they want their students to show more energy and creativity. At
the same time, however, most teachers struggle to effectively respond to the new and
emerging ways in which a digital world is retraining student learning styles and
preferences. Scholars like Henry Jenkins of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
refer to this new world as a "participatory culture" (www.digitallearning.macfound.org,
accessed 07/22/07). Jenkins et al. have written a well-researched, readable, and
immensely practical report on how to view traditional, passive educational learning
environments as participative and actively engaging.

The good news is that through more than 2000 years, the Spirit of God has
ordained and empowered the church to be a divine, participatory culture in which each
member makes a meaningful contribution to the whole. The bad news is that often the
church has domesticated its membership and dishonored its own participatory identity,
privilege, and responsibility. Clearly, video games are not "the" answer to an ailing
Christian education; but perhaps they might point a way ahead. Video games certainly
wouldn't be the strangest thing that God has ever used to make a divine point (Exodus
22:21-41)!

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Beyond the Christian Education Hallway
By Laura Widstrom-Johnson

Unexpected Blessings

It is a sight that I will not soon forget. Two gentlemen from my church congregation in their late seventies doing the "sprinkler" dance with about twenty-five of my high school guys. It was part of a talent show act during our annual Sr. High Workcamp, this year located in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Each summer, the youth ministry of our church hits the road, this year taking 70 high school youth along with 35 adults to serve the residents of a particular community by offering home repairs. The two gentlemen in their seventies were along as "troubleshooters", present to offer input and guidance on our tougher projects. More than a sixty-year gap existed between the two gentlemen and the youth surrounding them, but beyond the v-neck style undershirt that separated them from the rest of their fellow-performers in crew neck undershirts, they became simply a group of guys offering levity to our week.

Four years ago our congregation made an intentional change to program our own summer workcamp mission trip. For years we had attended camps sponsored by various agencies that do good ministry, but we believed that God was calling us to something more. Attending camp with the various agencies, we were required to bring one adult for every eight youth, and all spent the day serving on different worksites. Opportunities for building relationships with one another were limited because we did spend our days in different directions.

As the leadership of our congregation obeyed God's calling to venture out and begin our own workcamp ministry, we began making contacts with social service agencies and scouting homes for appropriate projects. In launching our first workcamp, the paradigm for participation shifted more significantly that we had anticipated. In addition to needing an appropriate adult/youth ratio to serve on work crews, we added the tasks of troubleshooter, cook, supply runner, photographer, videographer, program staff,

and director which required a new team of individuals to fulfill. Leadership for Sr. High workcamp was no longer limited to a handful of uniquely gifted adults who intuitively knew how to build a porch. Rather, we found ourselves instantly in need of adult leaders possessing a multitude of gifts and most significantly, willing hearts to serve alongside the youth of our congregation.

This year our workcamp team was comprised of 105 members. In a congregation of 1400 when you eliminate the children who are too young to participate and the elderly who are physically unable, this ministry involves a significant portion of our worshipping congregation. Everyone knows someone who is a workcamper. Today, Sr. High workcamp is the offsite ministry of our church that involves the greatest number of participants from the widest span of generations. From the thirteen year-old preparing to enter high school to the retired gentleman approaching eighty, the group joins together for one week and a common purpose.

The concept of intergenerational ministry is certainly not new, but in a culture that is exceedingly proficient at segregating its members by age, it is something rare enough to celebrate. Scripture could not imagine the hallway of a Christian Education wing where families are separated by the year of their birth. Rather, scripture's calling was that families participate in experiences of worship and ministry together. The traditional feasts of Israel were intended for the family unit to experience (Exodus 12, Leviticus 23, and Deuteronomy 16). Children were included for times of corporate rejoicing (Nehemiah 12:43), for times of weeping (Ezra 10:1), and in times of worship, the family would stand before God together (II Chronicles 20:13). The modern era has lost their vision for the potential of community, having made the sacrifice for a conceptual convenience.

Forming the Team

The first two days of our workcamp trip include both a measure of disconnecting and refocusing. Each participant comes from a different direction: a unique family situation, a different social network, a different vocational background, and with different concerns on their hearts. They leave the media saturation of their normal environment. They each leave the comfort of their home, and the food and routine they are accustomed to. Sleeping on air mattresses in a church gymnasium and using the shower facilities at the local YMCA create an ethos that breathes simplicity. The needs of the individual

must be traded in for the needs of the group. No longer are we 105 individuals, but rather, we learn to become one community. We become one not to sacrifice personal identity but in order to create a whole that is greater than its parts.

Thirty-six hours into the trip, youth and adults are assigned together into work crews and receive the name of the resident they will be serving. Forty-eight hours in, the groups head out to meet those residents and to discover the context in which they will be serving. For some, it is easy to see the need and to understand the reason they are present at the worksite to which they have been assigned. For the family of the five year-old autistic girl, the crew quickly realized that her care encompasses so much energy that maintenance on the house has been set aside. For the elderly woman whose home is dirty and where the warm greeting is absent, the reasons are more difficult to articulate. In each situation, the week progresses and the crews find their rhythm. Evening chapels and worksite devotions offer a theological framework for the experience and the opportunity to gain perspective amidst a context that often challenges and always pushes beyond one's usual boundaries of comfort. Workcamp is not a week free of frustration or tears, but nearly always, the tears that come are those of surrender as campers and leaders continue to refine their willingness to allow the ministry of the whole to supercede their individual will and the presence of God to work in and through them.

Lev Vygotsky (1926-1997) offers an interesting perspective to this conversation with his understanding of the socio-cultural perspective on learning. Vogotsky believed that psychological processes were not a product facilitated solely by biological function, but rather, they develop in the midst of a socio-cultural experience (Rieber and Carton 1987, 19). Learning is dependent upon the context of the learner. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 resonates with Vygotsky's thoughts as it offers a directive, particularly to parents, to take the commandments that God has given and to integrate them into every part of life. God's commandments were to be part of daily conversation, and we remember how the *shema* was kept on the doorpost of the home, tied to the forearm and forehead, and recited frequently. "Thus humans grow and learn in social settings where they utilize their mental tools interacting with other humans" (Allen 2004, 272). Vygotsky seems to be offering flesh to the biblical imperative. We cannot expect that the members of our congregation will naturally develop a well-integrated understanding of God and faith simply through an auditory intake of the word. Vygotsky and Deuteronomy remind that

learning comes through dialogue, relationship, and significant experience. Workcamp takes the lessons of scripture and the wisdom of theology and gives them flesh.

Intergenerational Relationships

The scene at the talent show of the older gentleman participating alongside the youth was not something that occurred haphazardly. One of the gentlemen has participated in four workcamps. The youth know him and have experienced his gentle wisdom at their worksite. They greet him in church year-round, and he has become a staple to our workcamp ministry. The other gentleman is new to this context, but as he visited various sites and asked youth to assist him in addressing various electrical concerns, he won their hearts quickly. In some part, the very willingness of these gentlemen to attend the camp paves the way for relationship. How often do gentlemen in their seventies choose to spend a week with high school students?

"…the bonding that the kids do amongst themselves are life-long bonds…I've done that with at least three kids over the years that you know—kids that you see a lot and are gone now, starting families, but they're just like relatives, and that's cool…the kids can say, this gal is paying attention to me, she's an adult, 30 or 40 years older than I am, what's up with that? Someone else cares about me? You know, so it gives the kids a little sense of worth, too, that there's another adult that is listening to them" (Personal conversation 2006).

The context of the camp paved way for a casual conversation in a hallway where the high school guys invited the older gentlemen to join them in brainstorming a routine for the talent show. Some post-talent show detective work discovered that a significant portion of the hysterical routine had been the idea of the older gentlemen, and the younger guys eagerly followed their lead. "The context of the workcamp experience took away the boundaries of age and allowed youth and adults to easily forge friendships with one another" (Widstrom-Johnson 2007, 86). There is no formula or equation that can adequately explain what occurred. Researchers frequently suggest that situations of experiential learning allow a context where communication and cooperation can be nurtured (Zuberbuhler 1995, 21). While that educational theory is valuable, the subtleties of the context elude qualification. Rather, it must be sufficient to say that the context of the workcamp experience created a space where the hearts of the participants were

receptive to the movement of the Holy Spirit within, and that God moved within hearts that were ripe.

"…as the week progressed, [male camper] and I established this great relationship, as he opened up things to me, telling me about his personal life, and man, this kid is awesome, just an awesome kid!…it's a reminder that as an adult who is not their parent, it's an excellent opportunity to have a relationship with a teenager, and it's not the parent, son or daughter, child relationship. We're somebody…hopefully, that they can talk to about stuff, but they don't have to worry about the parental influence or response…. We're in a role almost as a friend or possibly a mentor, and we understand a little bit differently. Sometimes the message is still kind of the same, you know. It's not like I'm going to change or sell myself out just because they're not my children. They're still going to get the same message, but maybe it comes a little differently" (Personal conversation 2006).

Life in Community

In addition to being a context where participants of several generations serve together, workcamp becomes a classroom in community that pushes against the expectations of modern culture and the traditional classroom. One of the crew leaders explained, "They encouraged each other. They helped each other. It was our group; it wasn't just one person. They were always part of the group. It was always, our crew did this, or our crew did this. It was not 'me' or 'I'" (Personal conversation, 2006).

A piece of the community mentality is fostered by the process of meeting times we employ during our excursions. En route to workcamp, it is the tradition of our church to participate in some fun activity as we travel. We have visited amusement parks, gone to professional baseball games, attended professional theatre, and visited historical landmarks. As we prepare for those visits, the routine is carefully explained. Youth and adults are free to visit the attractions during the time allotted, but everyone is expected to make a check-in time. En route to Minnesota, we stopped at a theme park, and a lunch time meeting was announced. The rule for those meetings is that everyone waits at the meeting location until everyone has checked in. The peer pressure for the stragglers who cause the rest of the group to wait and forfeit their leisure is quite intense. This year, several were 45 minutes late for the lunch meeting. The greeting they received by their

peers was not warm, but the call for community was heard and everyone made the dinner check-in on time.

While workcamp ends on a Saturday, we immediately gather the following morning to lead worship for our congregation. These experiences of worship have proven themselves to be very moving, and they carry a power that was not anticipated in our original planning. After one night of comfortable sleep, a hot shower, and a good breakfast, the participants begin to gain perspective on their experience. Several youth and adults stand before the congregation and offer testimonies that tell the story of God's presence in the midst of their week. We sing the song that a young composer in our congregation has created for the scriptural theme of the week, and the message is given by the pastor and youth director who have spent the week leading the camp.

It may be that the context of worship itself offers perspective as we step back and corporately offer it all to the Lord one final time. It may be the faces of the congregation who reflect the awe in hearing the story of what God has accomplished in and through us. It most certainly is impacted by the community. As the community shares of the ministry of workcamp, the individual begins to understand the perspective of not simply one personal mind, but rather, of the whole. Workcamp is not an individual experience, and to properly understand its magnitude, the individual must rely upon the community to gather perspective. Workcamp is not an individual activity, and thus it must be the community that offers proper perspective.

Perspective

Scripture describes the feasts and traditions of the nation of Israel where members of all generations were called to participate and to remember together the presence of the Lord in their midst. The context draws upon the Hebrew word *yada*, a word that describes a knowing beyond an intellectual compilation of information. Holly Catterton Allen suggests that our culture has shifted to a place where we study *about* being the people of God rather than focus on living as the people of God (Allen 2004, 270). "As children and teens danced, sang, ate, listened to the stories, and asked questions, they came to know who they were and who they were to be" (Allen 2004, 270). While that quote was initially authored to describe the biblical feasts, it also accurately describes the context of workcamp. As teens, adults, and grandparents came together for the week to

dance, sing, eat, listen to stories, and ask questions, they did come to know a little more of who they were and who they were to be. Workcamp ministry may be one example of a modern adaptation of the biblical tradition where the children of God come together in a unique context, invite God to be in the midst, and leave with far more than they offer. And maybe the responsibility of the church is to continue to look for similar opportunities where the traditions of scripture can take on modern flesh and call the families of our congregations out of their age segregated classrooms from the hallway of the Christian Education wing.

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About the Author

Laura Widstrom-Johnson serves as Director of Youth, Children, and Workcamp Ministries at Christ United Methodist Church in Rockford, Illinois. She holds a PhD in Educational Studies from Trinity International University and has an extensive background in camping ministry. Laura hopes to encourage ongoing dialogue between academic theory and the practitioners who serve in the trenches of ministry. Roofing is her favorite workcamp task.

Lessons Learned in Planning Intergenerational and Family Cluster Experiences
By Scottie May

For many years, Scottie has been committed to intergenerational learning as the logical extension of the biblical mandate that the church be a community—where members of all ages respect one another and live out their faith together. This article describes the development over time of family cluster experiences at her church.

In our earliest experiences with family learning (an intergenerational Sunday school some 20 years ago), we found after putting families into learning groups that the parents assumed the teaching positions. This affected the outcomes we sought. In time we learned that the intergenerational dynamics and relationships we sought were better accomplished when children, teenagers, and adults worked and learned *alongside* one another.

Years later, we developed series of family learning experiences that we called Celebrate Joyfully. Parents were members of the learning groups but provided physical assistance when young children needed it. We also found that the younger the children were, the more important it was for them to be in family clusters. (In other words, we would allow older children and teens to be with other mixed age groups if they chose to.)

These early experiences took place in the church late Sunday afternoons. Sometimes we invited families to participate (resulting in a waiting list); at other times, we just sent out a general invitation. The program consisted of a gathering time (learning games, songs, get acquainted activities), Bible presentation, a reflective time, and a response time. The closing response tasks were to bring families together in clusters where they could learn from one another. We organized response activities around Stones of Remembrance (remembering how God has worked in our family), Family Symbols representing redemption history (a symbol that reminds of God's acts among his people), Family Shields (a way to symbolize key and/or desired characteristics of our family) and Family History (a written or pictorial account of our family).

The Sunday afternoon gatherings evolved into a Thursday evening Family Cluster time that we called "Shiloh Gathering." Shiloh is a biblical location meaning "a place of peace." We started with a simple, prepared common meal. We charged $2 a person, but no family was charged more than $10 regardless of size. The experience drew two-parent and single-parent families, at risk families, singles, and many grandparent-age adults. One development we hadn't expected involved these older adults. Some single parents were distressed by their misbehaving children. The "grandparents" talked about what they could do. They decided to ask these parents if they could help with their children. The relationships worked like a charm! Children responded to these "grandparents" and the families made new friends. Over time, the experience included non-family units. We kept the option for whole families to be together, but incorporated other mixed age groups. We also designed simple activities where teenagers could help the young children so that adults visit before the gathering time began.

After meal clean up, we processed into the meeting room behind a banner and the Christ Candle. As we processed, we recited responsively a call to worship from Psalm 100. Each household also carried their own candle. An altar area was established by placing the Christ candle and the household candles on a table in front of the meeting room.

The family/group clusters sat on the carpeted floor in a circle. Those with physical limitations sat on chairs. We sang, and the story for the evening was told in a variety of ways. Often I was the storyteller. I used the "gold box" from the "I wonder" story experiences described by Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman. Following the Bible story, individuals were encouraged to reflect on a question or issue from the story. Then they grouped in clusters to do a reflective-response activity. (I should note here, that anyone could take the lead in designing and facilitating any activity of the evening—except for the Bible story. The storytellers were handpicked.) A couple of times we invited a liturgical dance artist to lead us in Jewish folk dancing. Even the 80 year olds with their four pronged canes, danced!

The one negative in the experience, was the diminishment in the number of fathers who came. It seems to be a North American male thing not to want to engage in experiences in this way, or perhaps to relate to children in this way. It is also possible that

a male leader would have made a difference, or perhaps different activities. In any case, this finding is something that needs to be observed and researched.

To end the evening, each family or group came to the table, extinguished their candle and recessed from the room, singing as they went. Outside the room a blessing was said with the reminder that the Holy Spirit will be with us.

Shiloh Gathering was organized around a limited number of families (as many as the space could accommodate) who covenanted to meet together for five weeks. The fact we had a waiting list indicates that families and individuals want to participate in family/intergenerational learning experiences. And when we finally ended the Shiloh Gathering, the people were disappointed. They wanted more. However, the leadership wasn't available to organize on an ongoing basis. For the time Shiloh Gathering existed, children and adults built relationships that made a difference in other contexts. They learned behaviors that were appropriate for family and mixed age groups.

Family Catechesis

(See Additional Materials section in this issue for "Intergenerational Experiences Prototypes" developed by Scottie May and her students for Family Catechesis: Good Shepherd Series)

When I tell students about the intergenerational experiences, they see immediately that program and curriculum have led congregations away from the biblical mandate of being the people of God. How are children to learn what it means to be part of the community of faith if they are not part of communities? How are children to learn the values of these communities if they don't see their parents, caregivers and other adults modeling those values?

Most of my students have grown up in churches where intergenerational experiences were not valued. Because they respond so strongly to the idea, I have had no problem getting them to help me with research! One of our research projects has been to conduct and write materials for what we call, "Family Catechesis."

In fall 2006, we invited families to participate in a trial run of Family Catechesis. They each expressed an interest learning how to do reflection, meditation, and contemplation as families. Five Anglo and one African American family accepted the invitation. The total of twelve children ranged in age from 3-10 years. We designed ten

weeks of Good Shepherd intergenerational learning experiences. Our intent was that parents and children would be equal participants in the experience. We wanted to enable parents to have an encounter with God in the same space and at the same time as their children. Obviously, working with families who had opted into the experience, made it a rich experience, though we observed that some parents had difficulty allowing their children to wonder and reflect on their own. We had to discourage some parents from coaching their children to give the "right" answers!

All the parents were amazed that their children responded with great interest to what we were doing. We changed the seating, however. At first we had parents and children seated opposite each other. We found that the response (of both parents and children) was better if they sat scrambled, not looking directly at each other. Parents were not necessarily seated next to their own children.

One experience with an emotionally damaged foster 5-year old child was instructive. The boy was considered to be such a problem that a caretaker came with the child. The child acted out. Then the child was brought to one meeting and left with a group. The caretaker stayed home. That evening, and every meeting following, the child was fine. We wondered if children tend to act into the role that they feel is expected of them. In other words, "if I have to have a keeper, then I am going to act out in a way that a person with a keeper acts." Generally speaking we have found that the intergenerational experiences have their own disciplinary value. It is not automatic (adults can't simply stand around the edges and watch), but when children are learning among groups of adults, there are different expectations.

For the Good Shepherd Series we created a space that fit the children, and then had the adults and children engage in activities such as journaling, sculpting, writing, drawing. We treated adults and children equally. For example, all sat on the floor (adults with stiff joints sat on floor pillows); all were invited to wonder and reflect on the story. Everyone was able to choose his or her own response activity. In the entire series, only two of the adults had trouble taking their attention off their own kids. They seemed obsessed with the need to ensure that their children were behaving properly. Most of the times of reflection, however, we saw whole families huddled together talking and working together.

The facilitator or "point person" for intergenerational learning needs to be relational, able to attend to both adults and children, to be welcoming, creative in response to the immediate, able to think on his or her feet, and unhurried. The only rules we had were We Walk Here; We Speak Softly Here. We found that children mirrored what was modeled for them.

The first session was orientation. All were oriented to the space, how they were to use the material, and how to put materials away. Before the Family Catechesis: Good Shepherd Series, we met with parents for one session to orient them. At first, the meetings lasted an hour. Very soon, we realized that we needed at least 90 minutes. However, more than 90 minutes seemed that it might be too much of a weekly commitment for the adults.

When the children realized that it was the last week of the Series, they were upset. They wanted to keep meeting. The older children were able to articulate what the experience had meant to them. Many adults don't believe that children will participate in reflective activity or attend to a story that calls out the response of "wonder." All I can say is, they can. Try It!

Certainly, children need to learn the Bible, and learn to live by the values expressed directly and indirectly through the stories in the Bible. But there is also a place for quiet, reflective learning through thought and meditation. I and several of my colleagues who have been involved in the "young children and worship"[6] style of experience, have yet to find a group of children where it doesn't work. We also believe that parents and other adults need to learn quiet, reflective behavior. However, these experiences are difficult for evangelicals who are used to verbal teaching and an "answering pedagogy." In the experiences I have described in this essay, it is difficult to see observable, measurable results. However, the participants do gain insight that unfolds at different times and in ways suited to their life experience.[7] A person committed to transmissive education will find experiential, unstructured learning uncomfortable. In

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[6] See *Young Children at Worship* (Westminster/John Knox, 1990). See also numerous resources by Jerome Berryman under general title of *Godly Play*, as well as two volumes by Sofia Cavalletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child*. One volume addresses young children, the other covers children six to twelve years.
[7] Beth Posterski describes in *Children Matter* (Eerdmans 2006, p. 237ff) an intergenerational experience that her church in Canada conducts on the fifth Sunday of each month. Not surprisingly they call it "Fifth Sunday."

response, I can only point to the numerous evidences of positive growth, and the mandate of Scripture itself to be in community. I suggest that you try it.

Additional Materials by Numbered Annex

Annex 1.   Intergenerational Experiences Prototypes

About the Author

Scottie May is Assistant Professor, Department of Christian Formation and Ministry, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. Scottie is an experienced church educator and developer of materials for children's ministries. For several years she was a Christian education consultant for a major curriculum publisher providing resources and workshops for about a hundred churches a year. More recently, she has researched the ways in which children come to faith and how the local church shapes that process. See *Children Matter* (Eerdmans, 2006); *Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Formation: Four Views* (B&H Publishing Group, 2007) and *Children's Spirituality: Children's Perspectives, Research and Applications* (Wipf and Stock, 2004). Interests include the effect of the learning environments in the church; the implications of the church as "the family of God"; and the importance of intergenerational worship and learning. She serves in elementary-age children's ministries at her own church. Scottie has three children and eight grandchildren.

Stories from Churches About Intergenerational Learning

By Common Ground Journal

> *Intergenerational learning doesn't have to be complicated. The church is one of the last organizations to have community at its heart. Unfortunately, programs and resources have tended to fragment the age groups. The church should demonstrate, for every other institution in society, the nature and values of a healthy, productive community. What follows are examples of intergenerational activity in congregations.*

A church in Massachusetts periodically sends an invitation to all church members, with or without family in the area, to participate in an intergenerational meal. Single seniors are seated with the families, and there is a wide range of ages at each table. After the meal, participants read the Bible verses on the table, and engage in conversation. A question sheet is provided to help with conversation. The first few questions are asked by the eldest person at the table, and the children answer. Some other questions ask about earlier times, and then the seniors answer. Arts and crafts activities follow which are sometimes managed by the seniors.

A church in Alaska created an intergenerational worship service by assigning each element of the service to small groups of mixed ages. As the people arrived they were divided into clusters of about 8-10 persons each. One group was given the task of preparing the call to worship, another, the task of preparing the Scripture reading, and so on. The groups had about 20 minutes to prepare their task. The worship leader called the groups together. Each group led the congregation in their activity according to a displayed order of service. In place of the typical "meet and greet" time the following activity was used. Each child was given an envelop containing the following questions: *What one thing do you remember about your childhood—in school, at home, or at church? What was your room like when you were a kid? What was your favorite thing or possession when you were a kid? What do you miss most about being younger? What has changed most about you since you were a kid? How did you meet your wife or husband or best friend? What were some of the rules you were expected to obey at home? What is*

one thing you remember most clearly about any of the adults who looked after you when you were a kid? The leader of the service invites any child to ask any adult in his or her small group any of the questions in the envelope. This activity creates a lively conversation and tends to break down the walls between the age groups. After this time, the service continues until all the groups have contributed their part.

A church in Canada made Family Camp a true family experience by using one of the Jewish feasts, in this case, the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths). An outline of the experience along with a worksheet are provided in Additional Materials.

Several churches have made use of a "menu" (see Additional Materials) as a guideline for family or intergenerational experiences.

A church in Canada (with about 100 members) turned one month of Sunday School Sundays into an intergenerational learning experience. Using Joseph as the story theme, they designed 10-15 learning centers and devised an administrative procedure that would get the people into mixed age small groups as they arrived. Each Sunday, the groups worked together at one or two learning centers. Additional activities were a story time, and a time for relationship building. (See Additional Materials). Three other sets of questions are included. Almost any game can be adapted as a Bible learning game and used with an intergenerational group or family cluster.)

Numerous churches plan activities for Easter and Christmas. For example, Family Advent or Families and Lent (where families work together to design activities they can use at home). Resources for Easter and Christmas can be found at most bookstores.

Additional Materials by Numbered Annex

Annex 2.   Menu for Family Learning Experiences at Church

Annex 3.   Feast of Tabernacles–Family Camp

Annex 4.   Feast of Tabernacles Worksheet

Annex 5.   Game Questions–Moses

Annex 6.   Questions–Joseph

Annex 7.   Game Questions–Esther

Annex 8.   Game Questions–Christmas

Reader Responses to the Common Ground Journal
Common Ground Journal

Response to "From the Editor" in CGJ v4 n2

Dr. Cannell's editorial included an intriguing evaluation: "As I read the articles on best practices, trends, and intercession, I reflected that the primary issue is not ministry/missionary training. Rather, the issue seems to be empowering men and women to make a difference and then helping them to identify those areas of training that become apparent *as they are serving*. *Preparing* people for mission or engagement in the world is a 20th century idea. Most of our educational energy is spent in preparation for some *future* activity or role."

After nine years directing extension education in higher theological education, I'm convinced of the incredible value of training-in-service. However, I'm not ready to cast off "preparation" as an outmoded idea suited for a past century. Is it merely an issue of semantics, or is there a danger inherent in the expressed philosophical viewpoint? One of the lessons learned from my doctoral mentor—undoubtedly bringing back memories to my colleagues—is that when confronted with an either/or decision, often the answer should be, "Yes, that's true, but there is more…." I think there is more here to understanding "preparation." Semantic changes should not be dismissed or unchallenged as they can forge a philosophy mindset that soon works itself out into real changes.

"Preparation" is often denigrated as limited because 1) it ends before ministry begins, 2) it tends to reflect a traditional, established curriculum quickly irrelevant to the cultural and cross-cultural societal changes, and 3) it is incapable of "empowering" people in ministry. But "limiting" is not a bad thing; it's an acknowledgement that there is more! All of our learning paradigms and "levels of learning" celebrate the limits, but it's nicer to call them "foundational." Too bad "preparation" became connected with "limitation"—if we could use "foundational for continuing development and exploration"

instead of "preparation," we might be able to escape the feeling that it is less significant. What I would argue for is a view of lifelong-learning that doesn't say life only begins later. Lifelong begins earlier—in an area called "preparation." And part of that "earlier" is preparation time to lay a foundation. "Lifelong learning" for a 2nd grader doesn't mean that only a 3rd grade curriculum is valid because it's future; that 3rd grader would not be successful without 1st grade. Do we call 1st grade "preparation" or can it have the privilege of being "lifelong learning?"

The best study done to date on missionary attrition (*Too Valuable to Lose*, William D. Taylor, William Carey Library, 1997) indicates that, without the pre-field preparation, the person doesn't remain on the field long enough to *become* empowered! Instead, too many first-term missionaries come back disillusioned requiring more extensive re-entry counseling. Those who have gone to the field from such incredible programs as The Center for Intercultural Training (NC) or Missionary Training International (CO) affirm that pre-field preparation *does* make a difference and is not a past century idea of a secondary nature. I would argue for the data that says, "Pre-field to get them there and to learn and understand their new cultural environment and calling, and empowerment (on-field training) to keep them there to know how to learn and apply what they can then contribute"—and it's all part of the same century (the 21st). Maybe, just maybe, it is BAD pre-field training that should be in the 20th century, and GOOD pre-field training that should be in the 21st century!

Jim Roche is Director of Operations for Crossover Communications International, a mission agency which trains and mobilizes church planting pastors in the least-reached countries to reach the unreached.

Annex
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Intergenerational Experiences Prototypes
Celebrate Joyfully--General Guidelines

A time to prepare our hearts

Welcome! If you have not already, share the information on this page with your family. Today we are celebrating that God is our Guide and Leader. This preparation time is a chance to remember how God has provided guidance for you and a time to make something that reminds you that God is leading you right now.

You can do this in a couple ways today:
- Through Journals. Read Psalm 23, write your thoughts, write a story, write a poem...
- God's name is beautiful. Take the sheet with God's name written beautifully and use it. Or I wonder how you would write God's name beautifully on your own.
- God is our guide and leader. Share stories of how God has been your Guide.

Just a reminder:
- You can choose to spread your blanket and choose your space in the gym with your family. Remember to respect the people around you and your family members.
- When the bell rings, finish your preparation. The second time it rings:
  - leave your work on your blanket,
  - put away your supplies,
  - take off your shoes if it is more comfortable and leave them in the gym,
  - take your family symbol with you,
  - walk downstairs to the gathering room,
  - take your family candle,
  - wait to walk in and celebrate our good God.

Celebrate Joyfully—Session One
God as the Provider

A. Preparation

1. Journal
2. Sensory preparation experiences
3. Writing God's name beautifully

B. Gathering - Psalm 100 processional

C. Centering

1. Songs
2. Family together focuses by
- Placing a family symbol on the community altar (not the first week)

- Lighting the family candle from the Christ candle
- Reading Psalm 23

D. Encounter

Scripture storytime: Tell story of Jesus feeding 5000 - John 6:5-14
- Community Response: Families paint clay pots with reminders of times that God has provided for their families.
- People to share what they will trust God with by saying, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. He will/has provides . . . "

E. Celebration

1. Hand washing, family candle at table, and prayer
2. "My cup overflows." During the meal, each table will pour beans into their clay pots and say things for which they are thankful to God
3. The Doxology is sung in closing.

F. Action

1. The family candle is brought to the altar
2. Action instructions are given
- Week 1: make a family symbol to bring back the next week
- Week 2: make a sacred space in their home together
- Week 3: make a sacred time to meet together
- Week 4: make a routine or a way to spend the sacred time together

3. Acknowledge that the Holy Spirit goes with us as we leave
4. Candles are blown out

G. Closing

1. Psalm 100 leads us out
2. Give a blessing outside of worship room

Celebrate Joyfully —Session Two
Our Good Shepherd Who Knows His Sheep

A. Preparation Time

1. Journal on the general theme
2. Write God's name beautifully - provide templates and examples of Praising God Who Knows Us
3. Tactile quiet time with yarn, cloth, and paper. People can choose to draw or make

themselves and the God who knows them with different materials.

B. Gathering

1. Two volunteers lead us into the room carrying the Bible and the Christ Candle
2. Psalm 100 is read and repeated by the community (call-response format)

C. Centering

1. Songs
2. A Scripture reading-imagery-reflective interaction from Psalm 23

D. Encounter

1. Scripture story time on the weekly theme: Read John 10:1-5, 14-16, 27 - present it
   the same way that a catechesist would - on a little larger scale, with cloth materials
   and reflective mood.
2. Community Response: Show how we know God and praise him for who he is. Prepare
   a wall of paper where everyone can write who they know God is personally (write his
   name in a beautiful way for about 5-10 minutes)
3. Read John 10:1-5, 14-16, 27 again - present it as a catechesist would but on a larger
   scale. At the end, substitute people for sheep
4. Community response: God knows who we are. He names us. In Revelation he tells us
   that he will give us a new name and write it on a white stone. The name is indicative of
   character, real or desired. In family groups, each family member will be "renamed" by
   the other members. Then the new names are written on the white stone.

E. Celebration

1. Hand washing, candle at table and blessing for the food
2. A simple meal is served
3. The Doxology is sung in closing.

F. Action (as above)

G. Closing (as above)

Celebrate Joyfully —Session Three
Our Good Shepherd Who is Our Protector

A. Preparation Time

1. Journal on the general theme
2. Write God's name beautifully - provide templates and examples of Praising God Who

is Our Protector
3. Tactile quiet time: make something with the play-dough that reminds you that God is your protector

B. Gathering

1. Two volunteers lead us into the room carrying the Bible and the Christ Candle
2. Psalm 100 is read and repeated by the community (call-response format)

C. Centering

1. Songs
2. A Scripture reading-imagery-reflective interaction from Psalm 23

D. Encounter

1. Scripture story time on the weekly theme from Mark 4:35
2. Community Response: make a safe place of celebration to show God as the protector of our soul
    • Make shields for each family out of precut cardboard. These are symbols of protection
    • Hang them on the wall to adorn our space
3. Write the new names on the white stone

E. Celebration

1. Hand washing, candle at table and blessing for the food
2. A simple meal is served
3. God is our Protector. Each person takes a cotton ball "sheep" from the container and thinks of something that is fearful. Each confirm that he or she will trust God with this fear, for he is the Protector, and places his or her "sheep" inside a "sheepfold" on the table.
4. Sing the Doxology in closing.

F. Action (as above)

G. Closing (as above)

Celebrate Joyfully —Session Four
Our Good Shepherd Who is Our Guide and Leader

A. Preparation Time

1. Journal on the general theme

2. Write God's name beautifully - provide templates and examples of Praising God
   Who is Our Guide and Leader
3. Tactile quiet time

B. Gathering

1. Two volunteers lead us into the room carrying the Bible and the Christ Candle
2. Psalm 100 is read and repeated by the community (call-response format)

C. Centering

1. Songs
2. A Scripture reading-imagery-reflective interaction from Psalm 23

D. Encounter

1. Scripture story time on the weekly theme from Psalm 23:2, 3, 4. Told with a shepherd's
   crook in hand
2. Community Response: Create a shepherd's/sheep's landscape out of felt with glue and
   scissors. Create pastures, water, hard places. Name the pastures, water, hard places that
   have been in their family's lives and write the names on the felt pieces
3. Share with family cluster groups when finished

E. Celebration

1. Hand washing, candle at table and blessing for the food
2. A simple meal is served
3. The Doxology will be sung as a closing to this time.

F. Action (as above)

G. Closing (as above)

Worshipping God our Guide and Leader

The Shepherd says (Psalm 23)
He leads me by quiet waters
He leads me in right paths, for His name's sake
His rod and His staff, they comfort me.

All: The Good Shepherd knows the best drinking places. Sheep are thirsty, restless/go to
small, dirty, muddy pools.

 The Shepherd says, *Come follow me.*

All: Sheep like to return again and again to pastures that they remember, where the good

grass is. They nibble the grass down to the roots, and finally eat the roots. The Good Shepherd has to keep them on the move.

The Shepherd says, *Come, follow me.*

All: Sometimes, in the hot weather the shepherd needs to lead them to higher ground where it is cooler. The pathway goes through valleys that seem full of shadows. There are dark, dangerous-looking places and the sheep are afraid, but they look at the Shepherd.

The Shepherd says, *Come, follow me.*

All: When the sheep don't want to follow, the Shepherd will nudge them gently with his crook, or sometimes he will press his crook alongside a sheep just to say, *I'm here.*

Worship God our Sacrifice

Review the previous story of Shepherd as Shepherd and Guide.

Sometimes, the sheep do the unthinkable. When the shepherd calls them to come, they say, *No, I won't. I want to go my own way. You can't tell me what to do.* Unthinkable!

When they go their own way, they get stuck in the bushes. When the Shepherd wants to help them, they say, *No, I won't. I want to go my own way.* And so they die, and that breaks the Shepherd's heart (Isaiah 53 *We like sheep have gone astray, we have each turned to his own way.)*

The Good Shepherd knows that only someone perfect, pure could take the punishment for the sheep. He was the one. And so He did the unthinkable. He gave up His life to save the sheep.
- He laid down his staff and picked up the cross and carried it outside the city.
- Instead of leading the sheep, he allowed the soldiers to lead him to his death.
- He was the one who had lifted up the sheep to a place of safety, but he was lifted up on the cross. He took on himself the sins of the world. He bore the awful weight of the sins of every boy and girl, man and woman. The sins were so heavy and dark that even his father could not look at him. *Why have you turned away from me,* he cried. And then he died.
- But the Good Shepherd could not say dead because he is the life-giver! He is life himself! In three days he came alive again. He took up his staff again, and he says, *Come, follow me. Come to the cross and bring your sins. Put them on me. I will forgive you and lead you in good ways.*

Celebrate Joyfully —Session Five
Our Good Shepherd Who is Our Guide and Leader

A. Preparation Time

1. Journal on the general theme
2. Write God's name beautifully - provide templates and examples of Praising God Who is Our Sacrifice
3. Tactile quiet time: When have said "no" to the Shepherd? Take a dark felt tip and darken a cotton ball (a sheep) to show that you have sinned. .

B. Gathering

1. Two volunteers lead us into the room carrying the Bible and the Christ Candle
2. Psalm 100 is read and repeated by the community (call-response format)

C. Centering

1. Songs
2. A Scripture reading-imagery-reflective interaction from Psalm 23

D. Encounter

1. Scripture story time on the weekly theme from Isaiah 53:6 (and review last week's time)
2. Community Response: Make a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice - a cross - with your family
3. Share with family cluster groups when finished

E. Celebration

1. Hand washing, candle at table, and blessing for the food
2. A simple meal is served
3. The Doxology is sung in closing

F. Action (as above)

G. Closing (as above)

Instructions for Building your Family's Cross

Decide on the length and width of your cross. Each family member chooses a stick to represent him or her. Each member places his or her stick onto the cross and tells/thinks of a sin that family members or Christ has forgiven; or mentions a sin that he or she would like other family members to forgive. When all the sticks are in place, tape the sticks of the beam and the crosspiece together. Tie the beam and the cross piece together crisscrossing the leather around the junction. Tie and cut the loose ends.

Just as each member contributed his or her piece to the construction of the family cross, the cross symbolizes that Christ died for the sins of each family member individually. Christ's cross is the place to go for forgiveness and the place to go when members need to

find the strength to forgive each other.

Place the cross on your family altar. If there is a rift in family relationships, a member who desires forgiveness can give the cross to another as they ask for forgiveness. After the offended person forgives, he or she takes the cross and places it back on the altar as a sign that all is well.

Celebrate Joyfully —Session Six
Our Good Shepherd Who is Our Restorer of Lost Sheep

A. Preparation Time

1. Journal on the general theme
2. Write God's name beautifully - provide templates and examples of Praising God Who is Our Restorer of Lost Sheep
3. Tactile quiet time: Use the play-dough and cotton balls to make a place for lost sheep

B. Gathering

1. Two volunteers lead us into the room carrying the Bible and the Christ Candle
2. Psalm 100 is read and repeated by the community (call-response format)

C. Centering

Families walk together down the center aisle with their family candle in hand. They each light their candle when they get to the table and then place it on the altar with the other candles. They place their family symbol on the altar and sit down.

D. Encounter

1. Scripture story time based on the lost sheep story found in Matthew 18:12-14
2. Community Response: Anointing of families - family members anoint each other, indicting that God will and is restoring us. Anointing signifies a sign of the Lord's favor, a mark that we are His sheep. Anoint families saying, "The good shepherd anoints you and your cup will overflow." Other families respond, "Surely goodness and love will follow you all the days of your life, and you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23:5, 6)

E. Celebration: a meal, music and dancing and being together.

Family Catechesis: Becoming God's People:

Purpose: Because God gathers his people for his purposes, we, as his people, must comply with God's intent and actions. Family Catechesis helps us *to be* the people of God, and *to do* what he intends, so that we can *know* that we are the people of God. (In recent generations we have reversed this sequence, assuming that "knowing" information must come first.)

We value
- the participation of all persons.
- corporate experiences.
- individual decisions.
- community and respect individuality.
- experiences as sources of understanding and wisdom.
- diversity.
- God's work in his people as a source of stories that need to be heard.

Patterns that we are becoming: (based on five historical Christian movements as identified by Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1998)
- Intimate with God through contemplation.
- Pure and virtuous through holiness.
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit through charisms.
- Just and compassionate through social justice.
- Established in the Word of God.
- Obedient to God's instruction to be faithful stewards of all that we are and have.

Family Catechesis Experiences (not necessarily in this order)
- Remember—Use a symbol (such as a Christ candle) to remind us who we are and to symbolize God's presence.
- Hear God's story—Listen to Scripture to discern God's character and his actions every time we gather.
- Hear the Stories of God's People—Listen to people's stories to discern God's character and actions.
- Reflect—Contemplate the significance of what we have heard.
- Respond—Identify how insights from the stories will help us become more like one of God's people.
- Relate—Experience feelings of connectedness and identity as people of God.
- Learn God's words—Memorize Scripture.

Curriculum for Family Catechesis is determined by the Church Calendar.

Context for Family Catechesis is a special place where the feeling of Sabbath-like rest and reflection can be experienced.

"Menu" for Family and Intergenerational Learning Experiences at Church

There is very little curriculum for family/intergenerational learning. However, it isn't difficult to create experiences. Most Christian bookstores carry idea/activity books for families. You can purchase 3-5 of these books and have a large selection of ideas to choose from. Then it is simply a matter of getting a team together to organize how the activities you have selected can be done with your church. The following categories are meant as a guide. Choosing activities in some or all of these categories will give you the variety and balance needed

<u>Guidelines for Preparing Family and Intergenerational Learning Experiences</u>
As you work with families and congregations over a period of time, you will want to develop a balanced "menu" of learning experiences. The following is offered as guide for the development of these experiences. Purchase or borrow a number of books or manuals that have been written to give parents ideas for activities at home. As you read through these sources, you will find activities that can be used in the following categories. Subheadings in each category are suggestive of the sorts of experiences you can create.

1. Bible Background
    X Present issues and draw on principles from Scripture to deal with the issues.
    X Use stories/characters from Scripture to illustrate Christian character, values, and so
        on.
    X Enhance Sunday School instruction through activities that lead to application of
        Biblical truth.
    X Provide overviews of Scripture, for example, ordering of events and people in a time
        line. Activities may integrate with the Sunday School curriculum.

2. Building Relational Skills
    X Understanding and dealing with emotions.
    X Communication skills–listening, confrontation.
    X Enhancing cooperation.
    X Appreciating others' unique gifts.
    X Learning to work together.
    X Learning to respect one another.
    X Encouraging behaviors that show respect, consideration, caring, sense of responsibility.

3. Practicing Skills That Become Part of Individual Family Life
    X Family devotions.
    X Family problem solving/decision making.
    X Family ministry projects.
    X Learning to have fun together (using leisure time effectively).

4. Family/Intergenerational Ministry
    X Build a network of families or intergenerational grouping to reach out to others.
    X Develop helping/service projects

5. Experiences for Special Days
    X Plan special Christmas/Easter celebrations.
    X Create special family celebrations.

The Feast of Tabernacles: In A Family Camp Setting[1]

Resource: Zimmerman, Martha. 1981. *Celebrate the Feasts of the Old Testament in Your Own Home or Church.* Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers.

Friday Evening

Time will be limited. The campfire is probably the most workable event. Activities around the campfire will include the following:

- singing
- brief explanation of Saturday's events
- registration--or someway of ensuring that we have everyone's names
- learning a Jewish song or two to use through the weekend
- have liturgical dancers teach the whole group a dance that could be used through the weekend
- storyteller to tell one of the more exciting stories from the wilderness wanderings. Let it be one where sound effects are possible. Each "team" listens for their part in the story and contributes the sound at that point. I could tell the story--but, if you have a good storyteller from among your older members I think that would be good. If necessary I can work with the person.
- simple group game (s).
- marshmellow roast

Saturday

Before morning have total group broken down into an appropriate number of smaller groups or "Tribes." 6-8 persons per group would be ample.

At some point in the morning, get the "tribes" together and explain the task of building the "booths." and the task explained. Write out the instructions to minimize the amount of talking time.

- tell each tribe where their "camp" is to be on the grounds
- each group will have to do several things through Saturday: come up with a name, make a "flag" or "banner" which will fly over their booth. Provide scissors, pencils, fabric scraps, fabric glue. If you have them, provide some banner making books for ideas.
- make posters (see ideas on p. 170 of *Celebrate the Feasts*). Provide scissors, colored pencils or crayons.
- make a sign for the "door" –something like Peace to All Who Enter Here.
- stake out the area for their booth (unless you need to do this for them)
- plan how they are going to make their booth--out of branches--without nails. We will need access to lots of branches, some tools for cutting, light rope or twine. They can use blankets for the sides if necessary. Tell the groups they are not to cut down trees or pull off live branches. There are sufficient cuttings on the grounds.
- make their booth

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[1] This intergenerational learning experience can be done with mixed age groups who are not related to one another, with intact families. The experience could also be modified for use in a church setting.

If possible, have a short demonstration session on how to tie knots, or do lashing. If no one is available who can teach this skill, each tribe will have to tie their branches together as best they can.

Explain that the Festival of Tabernacles (or booths) was one of the most joyous feasts. It commemorated the wandering through the wilderness and other acts of God's grace. It happened to fall at the time of harvest--so it became a thanksgiving festival as well. The booths were made of branches and twigs. They would also tie fruit or other produce into the branches to give color and to remind them of the blessing of the harvest. Our groups will simply weave colored pieces of fabric into the branches to give color.

Organize a simple, flexible schedule for the weekend, and allow plenty of time for the building of the booths. When the booths are completed, have supper in the area of the booths with a central campfire. Each group can take their food back to their booth if desired. After the meal, tell a story from the time of Israel's wandering in the wilderness, sing together, do a Jewish dance (if you have someone in your church who can teach this). *Alternative activity*: The groups clean up their booth (and whatever other duties need to be done after a meal) and dismiss for free time. Gather later in the evening for a campfire in the booth area for the singing, story and Jewish dancers.

A further activity for Saturday (if needed): Make a model of the wilderness wanderings. Stake out a sizable piece of ground looking like the triangle that marks out the area of the wilderness wanderings. Scratch in to the dirt, the areas for Egypt, Red Sea, and various other important places on the journey. Each group is assigned an area. They have to read the portion in Scripture that describes the event and, using materials they find around the camp, make their spot look like that event.

Groups can sleep in their booths if they wish.

Have copies of *Celebrate the Feasts* and other books useful for family worship and learning together available for sale. A local bookstore should be able to provide a selection that you can take out on consignment.

Sunday
The last day of the feast is the service of Simhat Torah. The Sunday "service" takes place in the booth area:

1. Each group will be in their booth (or if the booths are too scattered, gather as a large group around the campfire)
2. A "mother" says the blessing for the group (see page 174 *Celebrate the Feasts)*
3. A "father" reads a portion of Genesis 1 and another "father" reads a portion of Rev. 22 to symbolize that from beginning to end the Lord is with us.
4. Each group talks about the meaning of the feast. Provide some simple questions that each group has to answer about the Feast of Booths. See the description of Succot (the Feast of Tabernacles) at the end of this document.
5. The groups re-enact the time Jesus visited Jerusalem at the time of this feast (John 7). Re-enact the priest getting water from the Pool of Siloam and pouring it on the ground as a symbol of God's faithfulness. Jesus invited them to come to him and drink.

2

6. An adult reads a portion of Psalm 119 (see p. 177-178 *Celebrate the Feasts*) and another adult reads Proverbs 7:2. If possible, give each group a cored apple and a lit candle to represent these two Scripture selections.
7. Put the candle and apple down and gather all the children in each group under a white sheet. An adult will say the blessing for the children given on p. 178 in *Celebrate the Feasts*.
8. Time for the sharing of generations. Give the children questions they can ask of the adults. See the *Child to Adult* activity at the end of this document.
9. Benediction: A man or woman reads the benediction from Numbers 6: 24-26 phrase by phrase—allowing the children to repeat the each phrase after him/her.
10. Singing and the dance learned Friday night.
11. As the tribes dismiss from their booths, give candy to the children to symbolize the sweetness of the Word. (Psalm 19:8-10)

An additional activity for the weekend if needed (this activity is appropriate if you have done this festival with intact families—recognizing that families can be comprised of parents, single parents, caregivers, guardians, children:

Each family takes the time to think of a time in their family history which would qualify as a "feast time." Each family plans a feast which will take place at a certain time every year. Share the plans they have made with one another.

Succot (The Feast of Tabernacles)

The month of Tishri is crowded with festivals. Twelve of its days, excluding the Sabbaths, are holy days. The Succot is celebrated for seven days. This is the holiest day of the Jewish year and one of the happiest of all the festivals. The term >Sokkot' means >booths' or >tabernacles,' and is also called the >Festival of Ingathering.' The Succot originated with the Jewish ancestors who left Egypt and wandered for forty years in the desert before they reached the Promised Land. The Levitical Law reminds them to observe this feast in remembrance of the years of wandering and hardship.

In Palestine, the festival occurred during the autumn, so it became also a time of ingathering of the crops, a double celebration. In other words it became the Jewish Thanksgiving celebration. It was also a time spent in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

On the very night that Yom Kippur ends, the observant Jew begins building the Succah. The Succah is a simple one-room booth or hut built (without nails) of branches, twigs and leaves, and decorated with fruit and flowers. The Jew was to spend most of his time, and certainly to take all his meals, in this frail hut. While the Jews were scorned and humiliated by others, they were always under the guidance and protection of Yahweh. The frail hut reminds the Jews of their humble origins, and teaches them to be modest and mindful of those who are friendless and homeless.

Succot, like Passover and the Feast of Weeks, is one of the >three pilgrimages' in which the Israelites of old formed joyful processions from all corners of the Holy Land and marched to the Temple in Jerusalem, bringing thank-offerings from their flocks and from the harvest of their fields.

3

The rhythm of nature gives meaning of three of the festivals. Religious celebrations around the various harvests are meant to teach the people to be thoughtful, grateful for the gifts of life, and aware of their dependence on God. In the Succah, the Jew is reminded that happiness cannot depend on material things. Therefore, persons should build their lives wisely, neither on too grandiose a scale nor too subservient a pattern.

The reading of the Torah marks the close of this season of concentrated spiritual effort. The >Season of our Rejoicing' concludes with the song in which the cantor and congregation join in these words, ΑLet us rejoice and be glad with this Law, for it is strength and light for us.@ Education is both formal and informal to create unity, peace, happiness and goodwill, and to express eternal gratitude to God.

Child to Adult

Copy enough question sets for each child, cut the questions into strips, and put a set of strips into an envelope (one envelope for each child. Tell the group that any child can ask any adult in their group any of the questions in their envelope.

What one thing do you remember about your childhood—in school, at home, or at church?

What was your room like when you were a kid?

What was your favorite thing or possession when you were a kid?

What do you miss most about being younger?

What has changed most about you since you were a kid?

How did you meet your wife or husband or best friend?

What were some of the rules you were expected to obey at home?

What is one thing you remember most clearly about any of the adults who looked after you when you were a kid?

4

The Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths)
Worksheet for "Family Tribes"

The Feast was a celebration of harvest. However, it also helped the Israelites remember their years of wandering in the Wilderness.

Your Tasks:

1. Choose a name for your group. Use one of the names of the twelve tribes if you wish (you will find them listed in Genesis 35:23-26). Check to be sure some other group hasn't already selected the name.

2. Make a flag or small banner that will fly over your booth.

3. Make a sign for the doorway of the booth: "Peace to all who enter here"

4. Stake out the area for your booth. Consult with the other groups as you decide together on the placement of the booths.

5. Plan how you will make you booth or lean-to. Who will collect the branches? How will you set up the walls? Will you use blankets for the sides? How will you tie the branches together (you won't have hammer and nails!)? What can you put on the floor to make it more comfortable for anyone who wants to sleep in the booth Saturday night? How big will it have to be?

6. Make your booth.

7. If you have time, you might want to make simple costumes for your tribe.

8. The Israelites used to weave fruit or vegetables into the branches of the booth to give color and to remind them of the harvest. You could weave some colored cloth into the branches.

Weather permitting we will have supper in the booths.

Recreating the Wilderness Wanderings

Each group will have one story from the Bible which tells of the wandering of the children of Israel through the Wilderness. The open field (or open area) represents the desert. The coordinators have traced the outline of the desert. Each group collects materials and creates or "pictures" their story, placing it in the right place in the desert.

Group 1
You have to illustrate the crossing of the Red Sea. Find some way to show a "sea", someway to show that it was "divided", someway to show people crossing the sea. You might even find a way to show the chariots of Egypt racing to catch the Israelites. (Exodus 14)

Group 2
You will find a way to show the time when a thirsty Israel found a pond of water but found it bitter. Moses threw a tree in the pond and the water became sweet. Find a way to make the "pond" and show the tree in the water. (Exodus 15:22-26)

Group 3
You will find a way to show the manna on the ground. You will show the baskets, perhaps some people gathering the manna. (Exodus 16)

Group 4
You will gather materials to show the story of the time Moses struck the Rock and the water came out. (Exodus 17: 1-7)

Group 5
Your task is to build Mount Sinai. Find a way to illustrate the Ten Commandments,. (Exodus 19-20)

Group 6
Your task is to illustrate the story of the golden calf in Exodus 32.

Group 7
You will find materials that will you recreate Egypt at the time the Israelites were in slavery and before they crossed the Red Sea. You should build small models of pyramids, or a palace, or a throne room. You could find materials to show

buildings in progress with stick figures (or clothespin figures) to represent the slaves.

Who was Moses' successor?
ans: Joshua (Num 27:22)

Who married a Cushite woman?
ans: Moses (Num 12:1)

Who made a bronze snake?
ans: Moses (Num 21:9)

Of which tribe of Israel was Moses a descendant?
ans: Levi (Ex 6:19-20)

Of what material was baby Moses' basket made?
ans: papyrus/bulrushes (Ex 2:3)

What was the third miracle Moses was to perform to convince people that God had sent him?
ans: turn water to blood (Ex 4:9)

What was peculiar about the burning bush which Moses saw?
ans: it did not burn up (Ex 3:2)

With what did Moses cover his face when he came from God's presence?
ans: a veil (Ex 34:33)

Who said "I am slow of speech and tongue?"
ans: Moses (Ex 4:10)

What did Moses' mother use to coat the basket for her baby boy?
ans: tar, pitch (Ex 2:3)

Who was Moses' father?
ans: Amram (Ex 6:20)

Who accompanied Moses on his trip back to Egypt from Midian?
ans: his wife and sons (Ex 4:20)

Who spoke for Moses when he went in to Pharoah?
ans: Aaron (Ex 4:16)

Who taught Moses to be a better administrator?
ans: Jethro (Ex 18)

When Moses took the second census of Israel, how many were left of those who left Egypt?
ans: two (Num 26:65)

What was inside the Ark of the Covenant when it was brought to Solomon's temple?
ans: Moses' tablet of stone (I Kings 8:9)

Whose name was derived from a Hebrew word meaning "I drew him out of the water"?
ans: Moses (Ex 2:10)

For how many months did Moses' mother hide her baby boy?
ans: 3 (Ex 2:2)

Who found Moses floating in his basket?
ans: Pharaoh's daughter (Ex 2:5)

Who kept watch over baby Moses as he floated in his little basket?
ans: his sister, Miriam (Ex 2:4)

With which event does the Pentateuch close?
ans: Moses' death (Deut 34:5)

What name did Moses give his first son?
ans: Gershom (Ex 2:22)

Who put a veil over his face to hide the radiance of God from the Israelites?
ans: Moses (II Cor 3:7, 13)

For how many days did Israel mourn over Moses?
ans: 30 (Deut 34:8)

Of which tribe were both of Moses' parents descendants?
ans: tribe of Levi (Ex 2:1)

What did God turn into a snake in order to demonstrate his power to Moses?
ans: a staff (Ex 4:2-3)

What did Moses take with him when he left Egypt with the Israelites?
ans: Joseph's bones (Ex 13:19)

What substance did Moses use to make the snake which he put on a pole?
ans: bronze (Num 21:9)

To which land did Moses flee when he first left Egypt?
ans: Midian (Ex 2:15)

At what mountain did Moses encounter the burning bush?
ans: Horeb (Ex 3:1)

Where did Moses hide the Egyptian whom he killed?
ans: in the sand (Ex 2:12)

What did Moses tell each leader of the Israelite tribes to write on his staff?
ans: their name (Num 17:2)

Where did Moses and Aaron disobey God by striking the rock with a staff?
ans: Meribah (Num 20:24)

In which chapter do we find the first record of the Ten Commandments?
ans: Exodus 20

From which mountain did Moses look into the Promised Land?
ans: Mt. Nebo (Deut 3:27)

With what did Moses sprinkle the people after they agreed to obey the Book of the Covenant?
ans: blood (Ex 24:8)

What two names did Moses give to the place where he struck the rock to get water?
ans: Massah, Meribah (Ex 17:7)

In what desert was Moses when God asked him to count every Israelite?
ans: Sinai (Num 1:1)

In the days of Moses, if a man suspected his wife of adultery to whom was he to present her?
ans: priest (Num 5:15)

How many stone pillars did Moses set up at the foot of Mt. Sinai?
ans: 12 (Ex 24:4)

Name a Levite man who gathered a group of 250 men against Moses.
ans: Korah (Num 16:1)

How many elders of Israel saw God at Mt. Sinai together with Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu?
ans: 70 (Ex 24:9)

How many tablets of stone did God give Moses after speaking to him on Mt. Sinai?
ans: 2 (Ex 31:18)

How many days and nights did Moses stay on Mt. Sinai?
ans: 40 (Ex 24:18)

Who was Moses' brother?
ans: Aaron (Ex 4:14)

Who broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses made?
ans: King Hezekiah (II Kings 18:4)

God parted the Red Sea by means of_____.
ans: a strong wind (Ex 14:21)

To which country did Moses send spies?
ans: Canaan (Num 13:1)

What was the occupation of Moses' father-in-law?
ans: priest (Ex 3:1)

What was the first miracle Moses was to perform to convince others that God had sent him?
ans: change his staff into a snake (Ex 4:2-4)

What was the first thing Moses was instructed to put into the ark of the covenant?

ans: the covenant law/testimony
(Ex 25:16)

How many staffs did Moses place in the tabernacle before the Lord?
ans: 12 (Num 17:2)

Which two men held up Moses' arms so the Israelites would prevail over the Amalekites?
ans: Aaron & Hur (Ex 17:12)

What was the name of Moses' second son?
ans: Eliezer (Ex 18:4)

How old was Moses when he went to speak to Pharaoh?
ans: 80 years (Ex 7:7)

In what body of water was baby Moses' basket placed?
ans: Nile River (Ex 2:3)

How were Miriam and Aaron related to Moses?
ans: sister and brother (Ex 4:14; 15:20)

Who asked God to forgive Israel's sin or else blot him out of God's book?
ans: Moses (Ex 32:32)

What did Moses throw into the water at Marah to make it sweet?
ans: wood (Ex 15:25)

In which chapter of the Bible is the Song of Moses recorded?
ans: Deuteronomy 32

Who was allowed to accompany Moses up Mt. Sinai the first time he went up?
ans: Aaron (Ex 19:24)

What did Moses have to do so that the Israelites would win the battle against the Amalekites?
ans: hold up his hands (Ex 17:11)

With what disease was Miriam afflicted because she began to complain against Moses?
ans: leprosy (Num 12:10)

Who was Moses' aide when he ascended Mt. Sinai a second time?
ans: Joshua (Ex 24:13)

Who was Moses' mother?
ans: Jochebed (Ex 6:20)

What was Moses' first occupation in the land of Midian?
ans: shepherd (Ex 3:1)

What was Moses' last act of ministry to Israel?
ans: He blessed the tribes   (Deut 33:1)

What was the Lord's reaction when Moses asked Him to find someone else for the job?
ans: anger (Ex 4:14)

What were the Israelites doing when Moses descended from Mt. Sinai?
ans: dancing around the calf (Ex 32:19)

Questions for Joseph's Story

Most of these questions are multiple choice. Only one of the responses will be correct. The questions are organized in six sets. You could, for example, create a separate game for each set, or create a game where the teams have to draw from each set, or create a map showing the regions of the different sets and children have to move around the map as they are able to answer questions. The Scripture reference and answer are given at the end of the question. Print these on the back of each card.

Joseph in Shechem

Where did Joseph's family live?
  a) In Canaan
  b) In Dothan
  c) In Shechem
Genesis 37: 1 (a)

Why did Jacob want Joseph to go and find his other sons at Shechem?
  a) Jacob wanted to find out how many new sheep they had bought from the men in Shechem
  b) Jacob wanted Joseph to find out if everything was alright with the brothers and the sheep
  c) Jacob had heard that they had moved from Shechem to Dothan and he was angry
Genesis 37: 14   (b)

In what special way did Joseph's father show his love for him?
  a) He gave him a large flock if sheep
  b) He took him on a holiday
  c) He made him a beautiful coat
Genesis 37: 3   (c)

What was Joseph's father name?
  a) Abraham
  b) Jacob
  c) Isaac
Genesis 37: 1   (b)

What did Joseph's family do for a living?
  a) They were shepherds
  b) They were storekeepers
  c) They were ranchers
Genesis 37: 2   (a)

Joseph dreamed that the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to him. His brothers were angry at him because of the dream. Why?

a) They thought he had been star gazing
b) They thought he was saying that his mother and father and eleven brothers would one day bow down to him
c) They thought he was trying to become head of the family

Genesis 37: 10-11   (b)

What did Joseph do to his brothers when he was 17 years old and looking after the flocks with them?
a) He hid all the sheep to play a trick on them
b) He told them that he dreamed that the sheep would all be his one day
c) He took a bad report about his brothers back to his father

Genesis 37: 2   (c)

What was Joseph's mother's name?
a) Rachel
b) Miriam
c) Mary

Genesis 30: 22-24   (a)

How many brothers did Joseph have?
a) 11
b) 6
c) 4

Genesis 37: 9-10   (a)

Who was Joseph's grandfather?
a) Moses
b) Jeremiah
c) Isaac

Genesis 35: 27-29   (c)

Jacob rebuked Joseph for one of his dreams. Which dream made Jacob angry?
a) The dream where Joseph discovered that all the sheep would be his one day
b) The dream where the sun, moon and 11 stars were bowing down to him

Genesis 37:10   (b)

Jacob was angry because of one of Joseph's dreams, but he also had another reaction. What was it?
a) He was frightened
b) He wondered about the dream and kept it in his head
c) He was worried

Genesis37: 11   (b)

Joseph dreamed that he and his brothers were in the fields tying up sheaves of wheat. Why did his brothers get angry when he told them about his dream?
a) They thought he was making the dream up

b) They thought Joseph was saying that he would rule over them one day
c) They thought he was stupid to have such a dream

Genesis 37: 8   (b)

Why did Jacob love Joseph more than he did the other brothers?
a) The other brothers did not look after him as well as Joseph did
b) Joseph was the son of his old age
c) Joseph made him tasty dishes of meat brought in from the hunt

Genesis 37: 3 (b)

Joseph dreamed that he and his brothers were in the fields tying up sheaves of wheat. In his dream . . .
a) His sheaf stood up straight and his brothers' sheaves all bowed down to it
b) His sheaf ate his brothers sheaves
c) His brothers sheaves threw his sheaf into a pit

Genesis 37: 6-7   (a)

How old was Joseph when he received his beautiful coat?
a) Seventeen
b) Twelve
c) Seven

Genesis 37: 2-3   (a)

Why did Joseph travel to Dothan?
a) He didn't like the look of Shechem
b) A man told him that his brothers were there
c) He felt like taking a longer journey

Genesis 37: 16-17   (b)

Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?
a) He was more handsome that they were
b) He took better care of the sheep than they did
c) Their father loved him best

Genesis 37: 4   (c)

What was Joseph doing when a man at Shechem found him?
a) He was fighting with his brothers
b) He was wandering in the fields looking for his brothers
c) He was dreaming

Genesis 37: 15   (b)

Joseph at Dothan

How did Joseph know that his brothers were in Dothan?
a) God told him in a dream
b) His brothers left a message saying where they were going

c) A man told Joseph where his brothers had gone
Genesis 37: 17   (c)

Was Reuben with the brothers when they sold Joseph to the Midianites?
        a) Yes
        b) No
Genesis 37: 29   (b)

Why did Reuben say that the brothers should put Joseph in a pit, but not kill him?
        a) He planned to go back later and rescue Joseph
        b) He wanted to go back and kill Joseph himself
        c) He thought he would hold Joseph for ransom and get money from his father
Genesis 37: 22   (a)

Why did Joseph set out to find his brothers?
        a) They had taken his new robe and Joseph was afraid they might get it dirty
        b) His father sent him to find them
        c) He was bored and wanted his brother to play a game with him
Genesis 37: 12-13   (b)

How did Reuben find out what his brothers had done to Joseph?
        a) He went back to the pit to rescue Joseph and found that he was gone
        b) The brothers told Reuben that Joseph had been killed by robbers
        c) They said they had changed their minds and let Joseph go free
Genesis 37: 29-30   (a)

How were Joseph's brothers planning to explain how he had been killed?
        a) They would say a wild beast had killed him
        b) They would say a robber had killed him
        c) They would say that one of the Midianites had killed him
Genesis 37: 31-32; 37: 20   (a)

What did Reuben, the oldest brother, want to do with Joseph?
        a) He wanted to throw him into the pit after killing him
        b) He wanted to kill him and leave him for the wild animals to eat
        c) He wanted to put him into a pit, but not kill him
Genesis 37: 22   (c)

How did the brothers explain Joseph's disappearance to their father?
        a) They sid he tripped and fell into a pit
        b) The sprinkled his beautiful coat with goat's blood and said that a wild animal
             had killed him
        c) They said he had been killed by robbers
Genesis 37: 31-32   (b)

What is a caravan?

a) A huge tent
    b) A circus
    c) A group of people, with their camels, traveling across the desert
Genesis 37: 25   (c)

Joseph's brothers saw him coming to Dothan. What did they plot together to do to him?
    a) To hide so that he wouldn't find them
    b) To make him feel welcome
    c) To kill him and throw him into a pit
Genesis 37: 18-20 (c)

What did the brothers at Dothan feel when they saw Joseph coming?
    a) Hate. They wanted to kill him
    b) Relief. They thought he had been lost at Shechem
    c) Sadness. They knew Joseph was about to leave for Egypt
Genesis 37: 18-20   (a)

Where did the 11 brothers graze their sheep before they went to Dothan?
    a) In Shechem
    b) In the valley of Edom
    c) I the fields around their own tents
Genesis 37: 13 (a)

Why did Joseph's brothers take off his beautiful coat before throwing him into the pit?
    a) They wanted to smear it with blood so that they could tell their father that Joseph had been killed by an animal
    b) They wanted it for themselves
    c) It was too new to be thrown out
Genesis 37: 31-32   (a)

What did the brothers at Dothan call Joseph when they saw him coming?
    a) The little prince
    b) The dreamer
    c) The favored one
Genesis 37: 19   (b)

The caravan that Joseph was sold to was going to . . .
    a) Canaan
    b) Egypt
    c) Dothan
Genesis 37: 28   (b)

Joseph was sold by his brothers to the . . .
    a) Romans
    b) Midianites (also known as Ishmaelites)
    c) New York Yankees

Genesis 37: 27   (b)

Why did Joseph's brothers sell him to a caravan?
    a) They didn't really want to kill him
    b) They could get some money for him
    c) They were afraid he would escape
Genesis 37: 26-27   (b)

How much money did the Midianites (also known as Ishmaelites) pay for Joseph?
    a) Three hundred dollars
    b) Thirty shekels of silver
    c) Twenty shekels of silver
Genesis 37: 28   (c)

Joseph and the Dreams

Pharaoh, looking for someone who could tell him about the meaning of his dreams, was told a story about . . .
    a) A beautiful princess who talked in her sleep and told the meaning of dreams
    b) A young Hebrew in prison who could tell the meaning of dreams
    c) A man who heard voices out of burning bushes telling him the meaning of dreams
Genesis 41: 9-13   (b)

Why did Pharaoh make Joseph Prince of Egypt?
    a) Pharaoh saw that Joseph was a wise man and that God was with him
    b) Joseph had changed the water of the Nile River into blood
    c) Joseph had married Pharaoh's daughter
Genesis 41: 39   (a)

When Pharaoh asked Joseph if he could tell the meaning of dreams, Joseph said that . . .
    a) Moses would appear and give the meaning
    b) God would tell Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams
    c) The Bible would show Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams
Genesis 41: 16   (b)

Joseph told Pharaoh the meaning of his two dreams. He then gave Pharaoh this advice:
    a) Kill all the ugly cows in Egypt
    b) Build great dams so that Egypt will have lots of water
    c) Put a man in charge of the land if Egypt to store up grain during the 7 years of good harvest
Genesis 41: 33   (c)

Pharaoh told Joseph about his two dreams. Joseph told Pharaoh that . . .
    a) His two dreams meant the same thing
    b) He wasn't able to give the meaning

c)   He was going to be poisoned by the butler

Genesis 41: 25   (a)

The reason why the message was given to Pharaoh in two dreams was because . . .
  a) Pharaoh wasn't too smart
  b) God had decided to do this thing, and do it soon
  c) Pharaoh forgot the first dream

Genesis 41: 32   (b)

How did Pharaoh feel about his dreams?
  a) Happy
  b) Worried
  c) Angry

Genesis 41: 8   (b)

Pharaoh asked all the wise men and magicians in Egypt to help him find out the meaning of his dreams. What was able to tell him what the dreams meant?
  a) The magicians
  b) The wise men
  c) No one in his palace

Genesis 41: 8   (c)

Pharaoh had two dreams. One of them was about . . .
  a) 7 trees walking down to the Nile River
  b) 7 flowers swallowed up by 7 weeds
  c) 7 healthy heads of grain swallowed up by 7 thin and burnt heads of grain

Genesis 41: 22-24   (c)

What did Pharaoh do to let everyone know that Joseph was Prince of Egypt?
  a) He wrote a story for the newspapers
  b) He dressed Joseph in a robe of many colors
  c) He gave Joseph his ring, dressed him beautiful robes, put a gold chain around his neck, and gave him a chariot to ride in

Genesis 41: 42-43   (c)

Pharaoh had two dreams. One of them was about . . .
  a) 6 dog fighting with 6 cats
  b) 7 ugly, skinny cows eating up 7 healthy fat cows
  c) 7 rods turned into 7 snakes

Genesis 41: 17-21   (b)

Joseph told Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams. He said the dreams meant that there would be . . .
  a) 7 years of good harvests with lots of food, followed by 7 years of famine with no harvests and no food
  b) 7 good sons born in his palace, followed by 7 evil sons

c) 7 years of peace followed by 7 years of war

Genesis 41: 26-31 (a)

In what one way was Pharaoh greater than Joseph?
    a) Pharaoh was smarter than Joseph
    b) Pharaoh's chariot was bigger than Joseph's
    c) Pharaoh still held the throne

Genesis 41: 40 (c)

Who told Pharaoh about a man who could tell him the meaning of his dreams?
    a) The butler
    b) The baker
    c) The librarian

Genesis 41: 9 (a)

Pharaoh changed Joseph's name to Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him a wife. She was . . .
    a) The daughter of Potiphera, Priest of On
    b) Pharaoh's daughter
    c) Once a slave in Egypt

Genesis 41: 45 (a)

Joseph in Potiphar's House

What kind of work did Potiphar do?
    a) He was an officer in Pharaoh's army
    b) He tended the pigs
    c) He worked as a laborer on the pyramids

Genesis 39:1 (a)

How do we know that Potiphar really trusted Joseph?
    a) He gave him a new robe and put a ring on his finger
    b) He let him have his chariot any time he needed it
    c) He didn't concern himself about anything in his household, except the food
       that he ate

Genesis 39: 6 (c)

Where did Joseph live while he worked for Potiphar?
    a) In the servant's quarters
    b) In Potiphar's own house
    c) In a house that Potiphar gave to him after he had become his chief servant

Genesis 39: 2 (b)

Where was Joseph taken after he had been sold to the Midianites (or the Ishmaelites)?
    a) Egypt
    b) Arabia
    c) Midian

Genesis 39: 1   (a)

Why was Potiphar's wife attracted to Joseph?
      a)   He wore fine clothes
      b)   He was tall
      c)   He was handsome
Genesis 39: 6   (c)

Why did Joseph refuse the love of Potiphar's wife?
      a)   Because she was ugly
      b)   Because he was afraid of her
      c)   Because he was a loyal servant to Potiphar
Genesis 39: 8-9   (c)

What was the name of the man in Egypt to whom Joseph was sold?
      a)   Aaron
      b)   Potiphar
      c)   Pharaoh
Genesis 39: 1   (b)

What did Joseph do when he was sold as a slave to Potiphar?
      a)   He cried
      b)   He worked hard for Potiphar
      c)   He ran away
Genesis 39: 4 (b)

What proof did Potiphar's wife have to show that Joseph was supposedly in love with her?
      a)   She had a piece of Joseph's clothing
      b)   She had a ring she had taken from Joseph
      c)   She had forged Joseph's name on a valentine
Genesis 39: 16-18   (a)

What did Potiphar's wife do that caused Potiphar to put Joseph in prison?
      a)   She said Joseph was in love with her
      b)   She accused Joseph of stealing
      c)   She told Potiphar that Joseph hated him
Genesis 39: 17   (a)

What happened to Potiphar's household after Joseph took charge of it?
      a)   They rebelled against Potiphar for putting a Hebrew in charge
      b)   The Lord blessed Potiphar and his fields prospered
      c)   The Lord punished Potiphar for taking his servant Joseph as a slave
Genesis 39: 5 (b)

What was Joseph's position in Potiphar's house?

     a) He was overseer of all the affairs of the house
     b) He was the butler
     c) He was the cook
Genesis 39: 4   (a)

How did Potiphar feel after his wife told him that Joseph had tried to attack her?
     a) He was furious with Joseph
     b) He was sad because he knew his wife was lying
     c) He was furious with his wife
Genesis 39: 19   (a)

<u>Joseph in Prison</u>

Who was placed in charge of the butler and baker while they were in prison?
     a) The captain of the guard
     b) Joseph
     c) A centurion
Genesis 40: 4   (b)

What did Joseph say to the baker about his dream?
     a) That he would be returned to the palace to serve Pharaoh
     b) That Pharaoh would hang him
     c) That he would remain in prison for a long time
Genesis 40: 19   (b)

What did Joseph say to the butler about his dream?
     a) In three days you will be back in the palace serving Pharaoh
     b) Pharaoh is going to cut off your head
     c) You will remain in prison for a long time
Genesis 40:13   (a)

What did Joseph do when he saw the butler and baker the morning after their dreams?
     a) He asked them why they were so sad
     b) He ordered them to quit moping around and to get back to work
     c) He told the captain of the guard to let then have the day off
Genesis 40: 7   (a)

Who did Joseph say could interpret the butler's and the baker's dreams?
     a) Joseph
     b) The Lord
     c) Pharaoh
Genesis 40: 8   (b)

Why were the butler and baker worried about their dreams?
     a) There was no one to tell them what the dreams meant
     b) They didn't like having their sleep disturbed

c) They thought the dreams meant bad news for them
Genesis 40: 7-8   (a)

What did the baker's dream mean?
    a) In 3 days the baker would be hung and the birds would eat the flesh from his body as he hung from the tree
    b) That he would be made captain of the guard
    c) After 3 days he would be returned to his former job as Pharaoh's baker
Genesis 40: 18-19   (a)

How did the prison keeper show that he trusted Joseph?
    a) He left the door unlocked
    b) He allowed Joseph to be in charge of the other prisoners
    c) He let him have visitors
Genesis 39: 22   (b)

The baker's dream can be described as follows:
    a) He saw a whole chain of bakeries in Egypt with his name on them. Pharaoh would release him and set him up in business
    b) He and Joseph would be released. He saw himself sitting in the palace writing out Joseph's orders
    c) He saw 3 baskets of bread on his head. The top basket contained breads for Pharaoh and the birds were eating out of it
Genesis 40: 16-17   (c)

What favor did Joseph ask of the butler?
    a) That he ask the captain of the guard to free him
    b) That he pray for him
    c) That he remind Pharaoh that he was still in prison for no reason and to ask Pharaoh to have him freed
Genesis 40: 14   (c)

Why was the baker so eager to share his dream with Joseph?
    a) He was sure that he and Joseph were to be great rulers in Egypt
    b) He saw that Joseph had given the butler good news about his dream
    c) He wanted to get it over with
Genesis 40: 16   (b)

What did the butler's dream mean?
    a) In 3 days the butler would be released and returned to his former job
    b) He would be drowned in the Red Sea
    c) He would be the one to rescue Joseph from the pit
Genesis 40: 12-13   (a)

How did the Lord show his love for Joseph while he was in prison?
    a) He allowed Joseph to escape

b) He sent an angel to visit him
c) He made Joseph a favorite with the keeper of the prison

Genesis 39: 21   (c)

Why did Pharaoh put his butler and baker it prison?
a) They were found stealing food and wine from the kitchen
b) Pharaoh got a new butler and baker
c) They offended Pharaoh

Genesis 40: 1-2   (c)

The butler's dream can be described as follows:
a) He saw Joseph in a pit and his brothers sneering down at him
b) He saw a vine with 3 branches. Blossoms grew and ripe grapes appeared. The butler took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup
c) He saw Pharaoh reaching down into the prison to get him. He saw himself with Pharaoh's army going into the Red Sea

Genesis 40: 9-11   (b)

Why did the prison keeper put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners?
a) The Lord gave Joseph favor in the eyes of the keeper
b) Joseph was strong, so he could control the other prisoners
c) The prisoners liked Joseph

Genesis 39: 21   (a)

What was unusual about the dreams of the butler and baker?
a) They were nightmares about Joseph
b) They both had their dreams on the same night
c) They couldn't remember their dreams

Genesis 40: 5   (b)

What was special about the third day after the dreams of the butler and the baker?
a) It was Pharaoh's birthday
b) It was the anniversary of the day Joseph was sold into slavery
c) It was the day of the dedication of the pyramids

Genesis 40: 20 (a)

Why did the chief butler not remind the Pharaoh that Joseph was in prison for no reason?
a) He forgot
b) He was jealous of Joseph and wanted him left in prison
c) Potiphar warned him not to tell

Genesis 40: 23   (a)

What did Pharaoh do on his birthday?
a) He had a huge party and invited all of Joseph's family
b) He cut the ribbon to mark the opening of the pyramids
c) He had a feast for his servants, executed the baker, and gave the butler his old job back

Genesis 40: 20-22   (c)

Joseph in Egypt

Two sons were born to Joseph by his wife Anenath. There names were . . . .
   a) Moses and Aaron
   b) Abraham and Jacob
   c) Manasseh and Ephraim
Genesis 41: 50-52   (c)

How old was Joseph when he became a prince in Egypt?
   a) 20 years old
   b) 65 years old
   c) 30 years old
Genesis 41:46   (c)

Why was Joseph upset when Jacob put his left hand on Manasseh's head and his right hand on Ephraim's head?
   a) Joseph was embarrassed by the old Hebrew custom
   b) Manasseh was the older son and Jacob should have placed his right hand on blessing on his head
   c) Joseph was afraid that the boys would be cursed because of the mistake
Genesis 48:18   (b)

Why did Joseph turn away from his brothers and weep when they came to him in Egypt?
   a) They didn't know that Joseph could understand them when they spoke with one another about the time they sold him into slavery.
   b) Joseph hadn't seen his brothers in a long time. They were hungry and sick looking. Joseph felt sad because of this.
   c) Joseph thought his brothers had come to take him back to Canaan. Joseph liked Egypt and didn't want to leave.
Genesis 42: 22-24   (a)

How did the brothers feel when they discovered that the Egyptian prince was Joseph?
   a) Happy
   b) Very sad
   c)   Frightened, terrified
Genesis 45: 3   (c)

How were the brothers treated when they were taken by the steward to Joseph's house on their second visit to Egypt?
   a) They were served a meal and Benjamin got five times more food than anybody else.
   b) They were locked in a bedroom and left without supper.
   c)   They were fed a meal in secret so that the Egyptians wouldn't know that Joseph had been entertaining Hebrews.

Genesis 43: 33-34   (a)

Was it just the people in Egypt who were hungry?
   a)   No, the whole world was suffering from a famine.
   b)   No, Africa also felt the effects of the famine.
   c)   Yes.
Genesis 41: 57   (a)

In what area of Egypt were Jacob and all his family to live?
   a)   The Nile Delta
   b)   Midian
   c)   Goshen
Genesis 46: 34   (c)

What was the last thing Joseph said to his brothers as they loaded up their gifts and
prepared to leave for Canaan?
   a)   Don't lose my silver cup.
   b)   Don't argue with each other on the way home.
   c)   Find me a nice Hebrew wife
Genesis 45: 24   (b)

Jacob wanted Joseph to do something for him before he died. What was it?
   a)   Jacob wanted to be buried in Pharaoh's tomb.
   b)   Jacob wanted to be buried in Canaan.
   c)   Jacob wanted his ashes spread on the Nile River.
Genesis 49: 29-30   (b)

What did the Egyptians give to Joseph in exchange for good after their money and
livestock were gone?
   a)   Themselves and their land
   b)   Their chariots
   c)   Their houses
Genesis 47: 19 (a)

What did Joseph do during the 7 years when there were harvests?
   a)   He stored the food grown in the fields in cities.
   b)   He went to the Nile River a lot
   c)   He made lots of money.
Genesis 41: 48-49 (a)
What reason did Jacob give for placing his left hand on Manasseh's head and his right
hand on Ephraim's head?
   a)   Even though Ephraim was younger, he would be greater than Manasseh
   b)   He was confused and apologized to Joseph
   c)   He preferred younger sons because he was the younger son in his family
Genesis 48: 19-20   (a)

What trick did Joseph play on his brothers as they got ready to return home after their second visit to Egypt?

      a) He had their money put back in to their grain sacks. He also placed a silver cup in Benjamin's sack.

      b) He put gravel in their sacks instead of grain.

      c) He hid Benjamin from his brothers so that he could keep him in Egypt.

Genesis 44: 1-2   (a)

How did Jacob know how to find his way out of Egypt?

      a) Joseph sent him a road map.

      b) Jacob sent Reuben to Pharaoh to ask for directions

      c) Pharaoh sent 600 of his best soldiers to guide Jacob

Genesis 46: 28   (c)

What punishment did Joseph demand after his silver cup was found in Benjamin's grain sack?

      a) Joseph commanded that Benjamin become a slave; the rest could go home.

      b) Joseph commanded that all the brothers were to be thrown into prison.

      c) Joseph commanded that Benjamin be give up his robe of many colors in payment for the silver cup.

Genesis 44: 12, 17   (a)

Once upon a time, Joseph dreamt that his brothers would bow down to him. Did his brothers remember those dreams when they met Joseph in Egypt?

      a) Yes, but they were too afraid to care

      b) No, because Joseph had never told them about his dreams

      c) No, because they did not recognize that this Prince of Egypt was their brother Joseph

Genesis 42: 9-10   (c)

Did Joseph tell them as soon as he saw his brothers that he was their brother?

      a) No, he pretended to be a stranger and accused them of being spies.

      b) Yes, because he wanted to see his father right away.

      c) No, because he wanted to put them in prison so they could suffer without knowing why.

Genesis 42: 7, 9   (a)

Why did the brothers have to return to Egypt a second time?

      a) To get Simeon

      b) To get more gold

      c) To bring Joseph home

Genesis 43: 2, 14   (a)

Why were Joseph's brothers worried after the death of their father, Jacob?

      a) They believed Jacob had given Joseph some secret instructions concerning their future.

b) They thought that Joseph would now punish them for what they had done to him in the past
c) They thought that Joseph would make them stay in Canaan to watch their father's tomb.

Genesis 50: 15 (b)

How old was Joseph when he died?
a) 110 years
b) 58 years
c) 86 years

Genesis   50: 26 (a)

Why didn't the Egyptians eat with the Hebrews?
a) the Hebrews ate different food
b) The Egyptians ate their meals at a different time
c) The Egyptians did not like to eat with the Hebrews because they were shepherds

Genesis 43:32; 46: 34   (c)

Where was the tomb that was to be Jacob's grave?
a) In Ur of the Chaldees near the Euphrates River in Mesopotamia
b) On Mount Nebo near the Jordan River in Canaan
c) In a cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in Canaan

Genesis 49: 29-32 (c)

Why were the brothers frightened when Joseph put them into the keeping of his steward n their second visit to Egypt?
a) They recognized him as Joseph and were afraid that he was going to kill them
b) They had heard that Egyptians fed foreign prisoners to the lions
c) They thought they were going to be punished because of the money they found in their grain sacks after the first visit.

Genesis 43: 16-18   (c)

What did the Egyptians do for Jacob after he died?
a) They floated him down the Nile River in a basket
b) The doctors took 40 days to embalm and all the Egyptians mourned him for 70 days
c) They buried him in Pharaoh's tomb because he was a man of great honor.

Genesis 50: 2-3   (b)

How did Pharaoh treat Jacob's family when he was told they were shepherds?
a) He cast them out of his presence
b) He asked them to prepare for their part in the Christmas play
c) He gave them the land of Goshen and asked that some of them look after his own animals

Genesis 47: 5-6 (c)

What did the Egyptians use to buy food with after their money was gone?
   a) clothing and jewelry
   b) gold
   c) their livestock: horses, sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys
Genesis 47: 16-17 (c)

Why did Joseph have to start selling the food that he had stored up in the cities?
   a) Pharaoh needed the money
   b) The people wouldn't pay their taxes
   c) The seven years of famine had begun. No food would grow.
Genesis 41: 56 (c)

Why did Joseph's brothers feel that they were being punished by the Prince of Egypt?
   a) Because they had forgotten Benjamin
   b) Because they had left no one to care for Benjamin
   c) Because they had not listened to Joseph when he was pleading for his life
      from the pit
Genesis 42: 21-22   (c)

Why was it important for Pharaoh to know that Jacob and his family were shepherds?
   a) Joseph wanted his people to settle in the rich pasture land of Egypt
   b) Pharaoh needed to know who he could get to act as shepherds in the
      Christmas play
   c) The Egyptians liked shepherds
Genesis 46: 31-34 (a)

What did Joseph do when he saw his younger brother Benjamin?
   a) He made Benjamin commander of all his armies
   b) He commanded his servant to take the brothers to his house and prepare a
      meal for them
   c) He told Benjamin who he was, but locked the other brothers into prison with
      Simeon
Genesis 43: 16   (b)

What was Jacob's funeral like?
   a) Very simple because Jacob was not an Egyptian
   b) There was a great parade because was to be buried in Pharaoh's tomb
   c) All the important people of Egypt, chariots and soldiers, and all Jacob's
      family when to Canaan to mourn Jacob and see him buried
Genesis 50: 7-9   (c)

What happened to the Hebrews in Goshen during the years of the famine?
   a) They starved and had to return to Canaan
   b) Joseph made them slaves
   c) They acquired property and their numbers increased
Genesis 47: 27   (c)

Who became slaves to Pharaoh during the years of the famine?
- a) The Hebrews
- b) The Egyptians
- c) The Arabs

Genesis 47: 20-21   (b)

Why were the brothers so worried when they found the silver cup in Benjamin's granin sack?
- a) The silver cup was Joseph's promise that Benjamin would become rich and powerful
- b) The servant said that the cup was Joseph's drinking cup and the one he used for finding out the future
- c) Te silver would make the grain in Benjamin's sack rot

Genesis 44: 5 (b)

What did God say to Jacob in the vision at Beersheba?
- a) "go back to Canaan, the Promised Land"
- b) "Don't be afraid, I will make you a great nation in Egypt and Joseph will be with you when you die"
- c) "Go to Egypt and I will use you to bring ten plagues on the Egyptians"

Genesis 46: 3-4   (b)

What did Joseph do to the brothers when they came to Egypt for food?
- a) He hid from them until they had left for home
- b) He accused them of being spies and had them executed
- c) He called them spies, put one of them in prison and said that the rest were not to return to Egypt unless they brought Benjamin with them

Genesis 42: 14-19 (c)

How many members of Joseph's family settled in Egypt?
- a) 70
- b) 100,000
- c) 110

Genesis 46: 27   (a)

What did Jacob do when he was told that Joseph was still alive?
- a) He was furious with his sons for having lied to him all these years
- b) He was furious with Joseph for playing tricks on his brothers
- c) He felt better than he had felt in a long time and decided to go to Egypt

Genesis 45: 27-28 (c)

Who were the two family members Joseph seemed most concerned about when his brothers visiting him the second time?
- a) Simeon and Judah
- b) Rachel and Reuben

        c) Jacob and Benjamin

Genesis 43: 27, 29-30   (c)

How did Pharaoh feel when he found out that Joseph's brothers had come to Egypt?
- a) He wanted to punish them because he knew they had sold his friend Joseph in to slavery
- b) He was worried because too many foreigners were entering Egypt
- c) He was happy because Joseph and his family were together again.

Genesis 45: 16-18 (c)

Which of the brothers did Jacob not send to Egypt and why?
- a) Benjamin was kept at home because Jacob was afraid he might get hurt
- b) Reuben stayed home because Jacob had never forgiven him for losing Joseph
- c) Jacob kept Simeon at home because he couldn't do all the work on the farm by himself

Genesis 42: 4   (a)

What instructions did Jacob (or Israel) give the brothers as they prepared for their second trip to Egypt?
- a) To take gifts of rich honey, spices and nuts; to take double the money; and to take Benjamin
- b) To take him to Egypt so that he could please for the freedom of the imprisoned Simeon
- c) To take Moses and Aaron with them so that they could cause ten plagues to come upon Egypt

Genesis 43: 11-13   (a)

The Egyptians heard loud weeping from Joseph's house after the brothers had been brought back with the missing silver cup. Why?
- a) Joseph finally made himself known to his brothers. He wept loudly.
- b) Joseph beat the brothers so badly that they wept loudly
- c) Benjamin was weeping because he didn't want his brothers to leave him in Egypt

Genesis 45: 1-2   (a)

What did Joseph command the brothers to do should they ever have to return to Egypt?
- a) They were to return the money
- b) They were to bring Simeon a change of clothes
- c) They were to bring Benjamin with them

Genesis 43: 3-4   (c)

What did Pharaoh do for Joseph's family?
- a) He gave them the best land in Egypt and replaced all their old things with the finest in Egypt
- b) He gave them wagon loads of grain so that they could live in Canaan forever and not starve
- c) He built a chain of restaurants in Canaan called Pharaoh's Palaces

Genesis 45:18-20 (a)

Why did Jacob send his sons to Egypt?
- a) He heard that Joseph was there
- b) He heard that there was food in Egypt
- c) There was no work in Egypt

Genesis 42:1-2 (b)

Which brother did Joseph keep in prison whole the rest of the brothers returned home?
- a) Reuben
- b) Simeon
- c) Benjamin

Genesis 42: 19, 24 (b)

What did Jacob say about Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh?
- a) They would always be outsiders.
- b) They would never go back to Canaan.
- c) They would be considered as sons of Jacob and would inherit land equally with the other sons of Jacob.

Genesis 48: 5-6 (c)

What was unusual about the meal Joseph gave for his brothers on their second visit to Egypt?
- a) They were served American food.
- b) They were seated in order of their ages; Benjamin got five times more than anybody else; the Egyptians, Joseph, and the brothers ate in separate places.

Genesis 42: 32-24 (b)

Why didn't the brothers want to go home without Benjamin?
- a) They were afraid that their father Jacob would take away their inheritance.
- b) They did not want to see their father caused any more grief because of the loss of another son. It made them sad to think about Benjamin being a slave to Joseph.

Genesis 44:20-29 (b)

How old was Jacob when he came to Egypt?
- a) 65 years of age.
- b) 130 years of age.
- c) 83 years of age.

Genesis 47: 9 (b)

What happened when Joseph's missing silver cup was found in Benjamin's grain sack?
- a) The brothers killed the steward and ran for Canaan.
- b) The brothers tore their clothes, returned to Egypt, threw themselves to the ground in front of Joseph and argued that they were innocent.

c) The brothers loaded their donkeys, returned to Egypt and sold Benjamin to be a slave in Potiphar's house.

Genesis 44: 13-16   (b)

What did Jacob do for each of his sons before he died?
a) He gave each of them a robe of many colors.
b) He blessed each of his sons and told them what was going to happen to them.
c) He gave each of them a new camel.

Genesis 49:1   (b)

What happened when Jacob stopped to offer sacrifices to God as he journeyed to Egypt?
a) God appeared to Jacob in a vision (or dream) at night
b) All his cows and sheep ran away before he could catch one to sacrifice
c) Joseph appeared to Jacob in a dream and told him not to be afraid

Genesis 46: 2   (a)

Which group of Egyptians did not have to sell their land to Joseph in exchange for food?
a) The priests, because they received money from Pharaoh
b) The soldiers, because they fought for Egypt
c) The shepherds because they could eat the sheep

Genesis 47: 22 (a)

What special instructions did Joseph give to Jacob when he arrived?
a) Build you homes on the north side of the Nile River
b) Be sure that you send the Egyptians expensive presents so that they will accept you
c) Tell Pharaoh that you are shepherds and have been all your lives

Genesis 46: 33   (c)

Why did Joseph tell his brothers not to be afraid after they discovered he was their brother?
a) He wasn't going to kill them or sell them into slavery
b) He was pleased, because when the brother had sold him into slavery they had made it possible for him to become very rich
c) He realized that God had used the brothers to get him to Egypt so that many lives could be saved

Genesis 45: 5   (c)

What promise did the brothers make to Joseph's servant if he found the silver cup in any of their sacks?
a) They would send half their grain back
b) They would kill the one with the cup and the rest would become Joseph's slaves
c) They would kill the servant and run for Canaan if he told

Genesis 44: 9   (b)

What took place I the meeting between Jacob and the Pharaoh?
   a) Jacob ignored Pharaoh, making him angry
   b) Pharaoh asked Jacob how old he was and Jacob blessed Pharaoh
   c) Pharaoh told Jacob that he would never see Joseph again
Genesis 47: 9-10   (b)

Where did Jacob stop on his way to Egypt to offer sacrifices to God?
   a) Jerusalem
   b) Beersheba
   c) London
Genesis 46:1 (b)

What did Joseph ask his family to do for him after he died?
   a) To build a pyramid in his name so that he would be remembered
   b) To take his bones from Egypt when the time came for the Hebrews to return to Canaan
   c) To give his coat of many colors to his oldest son, Manasseh
Genesis 50: 24-25   (b)

How did Joseph's brothers greet him?
   a) They shook his hand and hugged him
   b) They bowed down before him with their faces to the ground
   c) They were too afraid of Joseph and spoke only to his servants
Genesis 42: 6   (b)

How did the Egyptians feel about shepherds?
   a) They believed them to be members of the upper class
   b) They hated shepherds and wouldn't live near them
   c) They feared them because sheep carry disease
Genesis 46: 34 (b)

What arrangement did Joseph make with the Egyptians after they had sold him their land in exchange for food?
   a) They would have to build the pyramids before they could get their land back
   b) They would be given seed to grow grain. One fifth of the crop they would give to Pharaoh; four fifths they would keep for food and future crops
   c) They would overthrow the government and make Joseph the new Pharaoh
Genesis 47: 23-24 (b)

Esther Game Questions

1. Who was Queen Vashti's husband? *King Xerxes* *1:1*	2. What was the capital city of Persia during Esther's time? *Susa* *1:2-3*	3. What went on for 180 days? *King Xerxes great banquet* *1:3-4*

4. What did Xerxes do for the people of Susa after the great banquet was finished?
He gave them a banquet for 7 days.   1:5

5. What did Queen Vashti do during the seven days of King Xerxes' banquet for the people of Susa?
She gave a banquet for the women. 1:9

6. What order did King Xerxes give on the seventh day of his banquet?
That Vashti be brought before him wearing her crown. 1:10-11

7. Why did King Xerxes order Queen Vashti to come before his guests on the last day of the banquet?
So that he could show off her beauty. 1:11

8. How did Queen Vashti respond to King Xerxes' order?
She refused to come.   1:12

9. How did the king feel when Queen Vashti disobeyed his order?
He was furious, angry. 1:12

10. Why did Queen Vashti's refusal to obey the king worry King Xerxes and his advisors?
Other wives might follow her example. 1:17

11. What happened to Queen Vashti because she refused to obey the king?
She was expelled from the kingdom. 1:19

12. Why did King Xerxes begin a search for beautiful young women?
Queen Vashti was gone and he wanted a new queen. 2:1-4

13. What happened to the winners of King Xerxes' beauty contests?
They were brought to the palace and given a year of beauty treatments. 2:3

14. What had Mordecai done for Esther after her parents died?
He adopted her. 2:7

15. Mordecai was Jew. Why was he living in Susa?
His grandparents were taken from Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar. 2:5-6

16. What was Esther's Jewish name?
Hadassah. 2:7

17. What special things happened to Esther when she went to live in the palace?
She was given special food, her own room, and seven maids to look after her. 2:9

18. Mordecai warned Esther not to tell anyone that she was a _____.
Jew. 2:10

19. How did King Xerxes react when he saw Esther the first time?
She attracted him more than any other woman. He made her his queen. 2:17

20. While sitting at the king's gate, Mordecai overheard two men talking angrily. What were they planning?
To kill the king. 2:19-21

21. Who did Mordecai tell about the plot to kill King Xerxes?
Esther. 2:22

22. What did Esther so with the information about the plot to kill the king?
She told the king, giving credit to Mordecai. 2:22

23. What did the king do when Esther told him about the plot to kill him?
Had the two men hanged and entered Mordecai's name into the history books. 2:23

24. I was given a position of honor by the king; and the king commanded all his royal officials to bow down to me. Who am I?
Haman. 3:1-2

25. I was the royal official who refused to bow down to Haman. Who am I?
Mordecai. 3:2

26. The royal officials told _____ that Mordecai would not bow down to him.
Haman. 3:4

27. Mordecai told the royal officials that he was a _____ and this fact was passed on to Haman.
Jew. 3:4

28. How did Haman feel when he learned that Mordecai would not bow down to him?
He was very angry. 3:5

29. What did Haman do to "get back" at Mordecai?
He plotted to kill all the Jews. 3:6

30. Name one of the three reasons Haman used to convince the king to destroy the Jews.
They keep themselves separate; they have different customs; they do not obey the king's laws. 3:8

31. How did Haman decide the day and month to kill all the Jews?
He cast lots; he cast the pur. 3:7

32. How did Mordecai and the other Jews react to Haman's plot?
They put on sackcloth and covered their heads with ashes. 4:1-3

33. Esther sent me good clothes to wear. I guess she doesn't like sackcloth and ashes. Who am I and what did I do with Esther's nice clothes?
Mordecai, refused to put them on. 4:4

34. What did Esther do when Mordecai refused to take off his sackcloth and ashes?
She sent a servant to find out what was bothering him. 4:5

35. Mordecai dressed in sackcloth, is visited by Esther's servant. What message does Mordecai give him for Esther?
Haman is going to kill the Jews. You must go to the king and plead for her people. 4:6-8

36. Esther didn't want to go into the king's presence after she received the message from Mordecai. Why?
If she went into the king's presence unannounced she could be killed. 4:11

37. I am about to go into the king's presence and he hasn't asked for me? Who am I? Why am I afraid? And what is the only thing that can save me?
Esther. She could be put to death. If the king holds out his gold scepter to her. 4:11

38. When Esther told Mordecai she was afraid to go in to see the king, Mordecai said: And who knows but that _____ have _____ to _____ position for such a _____ as this?
you, come, royal, time 4:14

39. What did Esther ask all the Jews in Susa to do before she would go in to see the king uninvited?
Fast for her for three days. 4:15-16

40. Who said: "If I perish, I perish."
Esther. 4:16

41. The palace officials must have held their breath as Esther walked into the king's throne room uninvited. What did the king do?
He held out his gold scepter to Esther. 5:2

42. What did King Xerxes say to Esther when she touched the tip of his gold scepter?
Ask me what you want. I will give you up to half my kingdom. 5:3

43. The king told Esther she could have half his kingdom if she wanted it. Now is the chance for her to ask for the lives of the Jews. What does she ask the king to do?
Come to a banquet at her place, and bring Haman. 5:4

44. How many banquets did the king have to go to before Esther would say what she wanted?
Two. 5:8

45. What did the king find out the night before Esther's second banquet--the night he couldn't sleep?
That Mordecai had saved his life and that he hadn't been rewarded. 6:2

46. Haman had just come into the palace to ask the king to hang Mordecai. What question did the king ask him?
What should be done for the man the king wants to honor. 6:5-6

47. What did Haman think when the king asked him what should be done for the man the king wants to honor?
That he was the man. 6:6

48. Why was Haman so upset when the king told him to dress Mordecai in his finest robe and lead him through the city on a horse?
He thought the king wanted to honor him. 6:7-9

49. What happened to Haman after Esther had exposed him as the enemy?
He was hanged on his own gallows. 7:10

50. The king's law that the Jews were to be destroyed could not be broken. What new law was written that saved the Jews?
They could fight back and save themselves.   8:11-13

What was another name for Bethlehem? ans: town of David (Luke 2:4)	Where did Mary lay Jesus when he was born? ans: in a manger (Luke 2:12)	What was the name of the town where Jesus was born? ans: Bethlehem (Luke 2)
Name the angel who visited Mary. ans: Gabriel (Luke 1:26)	Who was the mother of Jesus? ans: Mary (Matt 1:8)	Who had to die before Mary and Joseph could return to Judea from Egypt? ans: King Herod (Matt 2:15)
In what province was Jesus born? ans: Judea (Matt 2:1)	To whom did the angel say that the baby was to be called "Jesus"? ans: Joseph (Matt 1:21)	Who told Joseph to flee to Egypt with Jesus and Mary? ans: Angel (Matt 2:13)
Who was Jesus' earthly father? ans: Joseph (Matt 1:18)	At the time of Jesus' birth, where did everyone have to go for the census? ans: native town (Luke 2:3)	At what time of day did the angels appear to the shepherds of Bethlehem? ans: night (Luke 2:8)

Where did the shepherds decide to go after the message of the angels?	What town was Mary living in when an angel visited her?	Where did Mary go after Gabriel's visit?
ans: Bethlehem (Luke 2:15)	ans: Nazareth (Luke 1:26)	ans: Elizabeth and Zechariah's home (Luke 1:39-40)

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