

Servants Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2015

Lecture by Fr. Shenouda

Sunday School Curriculum and Supporting our Children in a Challenging Environment

- Our children are exposed to many new values, ideas, habits and traditions that are different from our beliefs of how things should be in our home country.
- It has been noticed that the Sunday school curriculum needs to be revised to help our children to be able to function well with the diverse cultures and to cope with the surrounding environment that they live in.
- Therefore, the Sunday School curriculum was modified to help our children understand what behavior is expected from them when they encounter an unfamiliar value or situation.
- The lecture by Dr. Maged Kodosi last week concerning the mental and psychological health in our children (up to 12 years old) supports the idea that we need to learn and understand how to support our children in facing their challenges.
- The lecture has been recorded and posted on the website for people who could not attend, to benefit from the lecture.
- The current Sunday school curriculums are the curriculum from the Youth Service Committee of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate in Egypt and the Canadian curriculum from St. Mark church in Toronto.
- The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States has taken the initiative to revise the Sunday School Curriculum from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12. A group of servants from St. Mark church in Houston took the lead to complete this project. The project started 5 years ago.
- A Sunday School curriculum has also been designed to suite the children with special needs.
- The new modified curriculum was made in a way that observes the differences in surrounding cultures, beliefs and interests. The new curriculum focuses on the need to increase the knowledge of our youth of the bible.
- Visit Suscopts website @ [Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States](#)
- Click on this link [Sunday School Curriculum](#) to view the Diocese of Southern United States presentation on the new Sunday School Curriculum
- SMSJ will start implementing the new modified Sunday School Curriculum in September 2015.
- In addition we would also like to include lessons about theories of creation and apologetics.

Open discussion

Sunday school servants' experiences with the different age groups and the characteristics of each age group

Angels – SK

- The children in this age group are visual learners, like to be engaged and learn by doing activities.
- Lose attention quickly; the lesson has to be short, 10 minutes maximum.
- Repetition is also important but using different methods of presenting.

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- Voice tone and body language are important to make the lesson exciting to the children.
- Teach them to give, as at this age they take and do not give. If they do not learn to give they will grow up to be selfish.
- Avoid punishment; we should not punish children in this age. They may not control their behaviour because they still can't express themselves.
- Avoid favouritism; it creates jealousy among the children.
- Avoid threatening the children by saying Jesus will be mad at you or by saying I will tell Abouna. This unacceptable, as it may create hatred to the church.

Grade 1 & Grade 2

- The characteristics of the above age group apply also to this age group.
- They need to know that God cares for them and we care for them.
- Memorizing is very strong in this age. We need to stress on memorizing Psalms, prayers and verses from the bible.
- Talents start to show by this age. We need to discover their talents and recognize them.
- Stories of lives of saints need to be said in a way that focuses on their love and sacrifices rather than on the tortures and the methods by which they gave up their lives. Give simple examples of sacrificing for them to understand.

Grade 3 & Grade 4

- Logic thinking starts, we can start introducing dogma, rites and sacraments in a simple way.
- They need to learn and feel Gods power and strength.
- Good memorizing ability and by that age they have accumulated a wealth of information and bible stories, they can be challenged in their information.
- Friendship is built in this age.

Grade 5 & Grade 6

- Love movies and learn a lot through watching movies.
- Very sensitive to relationships.
- Self-esteem starts to develop, they want to feel respected.

All servants, including servants perp need to know the characteristics of the age group that they serve and prepare the lesson in a way that observes these characteristics.

Mental Health in Youth and Adolescents

- All servants are encouraged to attend the coming Mental Health Session in Youth and Adolescents next week.
- We will further discuss the challenges of youth and adolescents at the servants' team meeting on the following week.

Download the New Modified Sunday School Curriculum

- You can download the new Sunday School curriculum and start using it.
- Servants are encouraged to put their notes regarding the new curriculum and we can share it.

Administrative Items

Upcoming March Break Activities

- Three youth servants have registered to help in March break week (early drop off and late pick up).
- Youth servants will cover three days in Gr. 3- 8 and two days in JK – Gr. 2
- More servants are needed to help out.
- Supervision program will start at 7:30 am for Gr. 3-8 children.
- Parents are to drop off their children through the back door entrance. The front doors will not be open.
- The Gym is the drop off and pick up location.
- Use the gym exit doors to get on the church buses on the trips days.
- On Thursday, make sure not to do activities in the basement because there will be a divine liturgy prayed at St. Paul's Chapel in the basement in the morning.