

# **“Taking Sunday School to the Public Schools”**

## *Welcome to the Ministry of Released Time Education*

Presenter: Sally Atkinson

- I. Released Time – A Unique Ministry
  - A. Through this ministry we have the unique opportunity to touch the lives of thousands of students in the Southern California school districts.
  - B. Many of our local school districts already have allowed this program where we offer *Bible Education* with the gospel of Jesus Christ to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders.
    - 1. Currently there are active programs in Long Beach, Compton and Los Angeles, that we are directly involved with and throughout California.
  - C. Currently there are Released Time programs across the United States.
    - 1. Released Time laws for each state are listed on our web site [www.rtce.org](http://www.rtce.org).
    - 2. See brochure on how to start a program.
  
- II. The Released Time law
  - A. Allows for any religious faith based entity to organize a Released Time program.
  - B. RT must take place off the school campus .
  - C. No school moneys or equipment may be used.
  - D. No public personnel may teach RT on school time.
  - E. In most local school districts the RT program distributes registration materials to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students through the public school classroom.
  - F. Parents must sign the materials in order for their child to attend.
  - G. The teaching sites may be a church, a home or park near a school or if available a mobile classroom is arranged to be there at the curb of the school one day a week.
  - H. The time and day is agreed upon between the Principal and RT Director at each school. We do cooperate with their schedules, procedures and guidelines for discipline.
    - 1. Released Time allows for students to be released during school.
    - 2. Many school districts have made us meet at lunch time or on the teacher planning day.
  
- III. Who teaches Released Time?
  - A. Our teachers (through the Long Beach program) come from various Bible believing churches. Other established RT programs have similar requirements.
    - 1. Volunteers must be born again and actively attending church and able to relate to kids.
    - 2. We have a written application, personal interview and fingerprinting before involvement in an RT class.

3. Training takes place for 4 weeks to one year helping with an active teacher.

#### IV. Our students

- A. The majority are learning about biblical truths for the very first time.
- B. We have developed a curriculum to present an overview of the Bible.
  1. We put to use pictures and object lessons to involve the senses to bring life to our lessons and personal application to our students' lives. Occasionally, I will play portions of the dramatized audio Bible for Bible events that are more dramatic, i.e. David and Goliath.
  2. Our curriculum has been written to accomplish the primary goals of our program: to educate students about **God's Word, the Bible**. As students learn about God's redemptive plan for boys and girls and men and women, it is our prayer that they come to know Jesus Christ in a real and personal way. (Our curriculum can be freely downloaded from our website: [rtce.org](http://rtce.org))
  3. Our program exists to exalt and make known the person of Jesus Christ. One of the main blessings you will experience as a Christian is leading a child into making a life long commitment to Christ.
  4. Lastly we emphasize Bible memory with incentives and awards to help keep them hiding God's Word in their hearts.

#### V. Good News Clubs and Equal Access

A. U.S Supreme Court decision in 2001 that public school teachers may lead after school Good News Clubs (Child Evangelism Fellowship)

B. GNC is an after school club agreed upon by the school principal and a sponsoring teacher for use of their classroom.

1. Contact a Child Evangelism Fellowship for a school near you

C. The grades reached will be determined by CEF director in cooperation with the Principal and team involved.

1. Our club includes 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders.
2. Invitations are given out through the classrooms for parent permission.
3. Our church, Calvary Chapel North Long Beach got involved at the persistence of a public school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, five years ago.

D. Teacher training and materials are provided by CEF

1. CEF has excellent on-line courses for their materials at [cefcmi.com](http://cefcmi.com)
2. CEF Long Beach has training at their office also every month.
3. Curriculum sets are colorful, innovative tools but there is a cost. They can also be used teaching elementary-middle school children's ministry.

E. Team involvement is encouraged.

1. Our team now consists of 4 public school teachers and 4 volunteers from our church, because the Lord has given us 60 regular students. You can start with 2-3 easily though depending on how big the school is and how many grades you are targeting.

## VI. Neighborhood Clubs

A. Start a club with your neighborhood kids at your house.

1. Pray for how, when, who, and what. (If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives liberally and without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5)

2. It helps to have some access to neighbor kids that have already gotten to know **you or your kids**.

3. Decide on location, day and time and how often you want to meet.

4. Curriculum and training

a. Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEFonline.com)

b. Released Time curriculum (RTCE.org)

c. Calvarycurriculum.com for the entire Bible lessons and worksheets

5. Short story about Pam (she started a neighborhood Bible club after school at her house because her neighbors boys wanted Bible lesson because they didn't go to church. The boys invited some other boys from across the street, who in turn gave their lives to the Lord. After that school year their mother died suddenly and because the dad wasn't involved in their lives, they were given to relatives to live with and Pam had no contact with them. Very sad, but we were so glad they had the Lord and that tremendous foundation of His Word in their lives.

## V. Resources

### A. Bibles

1. American Bible Society for free paperback (donation suggested) 888-32-BIBLE; Also Bible as low at \$1.99 each. [www.Bibles.com](http://www.Bibles.com)

2. Biblica Direct [www.biblicadirect.com](http://www.biblicadirect.com)

3. Bibles by the case [www.biblesbythecase.com](http://www.biblesbythecase.com)

### B. Curriculum

1. [www.rtce.org](http://www.rtce.org) with free downloadable curriculum

2. Calvarycurriculum.com

C. Child Evangelism Fellowship [cefonline.com](http://cefonline.com) Training: [online.cefcmi.com](http://online.cefcmi.com)

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Also Check out CART, Californian Released Time for more specific details on starting a Released Time program in California [www.careleasedtime.com](http://www.careleasedtime.com)

## **Released Time Education**

Many parents of public school students desire biblical and spiritual instruction for their children. Ten of thousands of public school students have virtually no exposure to any kind of biblical or spiritual instruction. All they know are the secular values that are propagated in the public school setting, many of which clearly contradict the Bible. Even students who come from religious families are succumbing to the ongoing bombardment of secularism and are adopting a secular world view that foregoes any accountability to a supreme being or any adherence to religious values.

The Big Question...

Is there a way to address this disturbing trend?

Is there a way to accommodate parents who want religious instruction during the public school experience?

Are we locked out of the public school or is there a way to put the Bible back into the hands and hearts and minds of students in our public schools?

Yes...

There is a door that remains open to accessing public school students during the school day. Through this access they can receive spiritual and biblical instruction. This access is called Released Time Education

Released Time is legal...

In 1952 the Supreme Court passed legislation allowing for Released Time Education. (*Zorach vs. Clauson* 343 U.S. 313, 1952) It has been a strategic opportunity for over 60 years to teach the Word of God and present the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to public school students.

“Taking Sunday School to the Public Schools”  
How we do Released Time by Sally Atkinson

Emphasis on ~

1. Word of God (generally 75% of our students have never opened a Bible)
  - Establish as our source, our manual for life, infallible
  - Our curriculum gives an overview of Bible and God’s plan
  - Application to our lives
2. Personal relationship with God through Jesus (generally 75% unchurched/40% Catholic)
  - Show the gospel displayed through OT through NT
  - Through survey of OT, origin of sin and why we need a savior
  - God’s great love for us!
3. Get to know our flock by name
  - Registration passed out through classrooms, we pick up the names
  - Parent contact by phone to tell when, where and introduce ourselves
4. Bible memorization
  - Nametags by room number with numbers 1-25 for verse memory
  - Every five verses learned, receive awards.
  - We also have been using Jumpstart3 Bible songs which have been very affective.
5. Prayer – teaching the students by example; having them share their requests
  - Many students have never prayed, we explain that it is simply *talking to God*
  - We share the posture isn’t required, “pray without ceasing” but in class to focus our undivided attention, hands together, bow heads and close eyes
  - Prayer request cards for private request
  - After a few weeks of our example, we ask for volunteers and many want to pray
6. Praise & Worship – “God inhabits the praises of His people”
  - CD with praise (up beat songs) and worship (quieter, more personal)
  - Hand motions to emphasize words and help the shy kids to not feel awkward
  - We’ve edited some of our songs for time restraints and usually do one.  
Sometimes the song is actually the memory verse which helps them learn verse
7. Facilitating
  - RT is legal but has to be done off-campus – in a church, a home, a park, a backyard, a mobile classroom.
  - You have about 30 min. teaching time so every minute counts. We listen to verses on the way to class, outside of instruction time.
  - Pray up and be ready for the Spirit to work because “the Word of God is living, powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword”.