

# “Taking Sunday School to the Public Schools”

## *The Ministry of Released Time Education & Good News Clubs*

Presenter: Sally Atkinson and Jane Nishimoto

- I. Released Time Education– 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 CA cities: Azusa, Bellflower, Chino Valley, Ontario, Orange, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Montclair, Pomona, Santa Ana and Yorba Linda and probably a few more.
  - 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. School Ministries CA has a thorough website on how to start a program. [www.smicalifornia.com](http://www.smicalifornia.com)
- II. The Released Time Education law
  - A. Allows for any religious faith based entity to organize a Released Time Education program.
  - B. RTE must take place off the school campus .
  - C. No school moneys or equipment may be used.
  - D. No public personnel may teach RTE on school time.
  - E. In most local school districts the RTE program distributes registration materials to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students through the public school classroom, **although** since the pandemic lockdown of 2020, some districts have new requirements.
  - F. Parents must sign the registration form 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 parked 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 Education 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 (early dismissal day).
- III. Who teaches Released Time?
  - A. Our teachers (through the Long Beach RTCE program) come from various Bible believing churches. Other established RTE programs have similar requirements.
    1. Volunteers must be born again and actively attending church and able to relate to kids.

2. Submit a written or on-line application, have a personal interview and fingerprinting which includes criminal background checks before involvement in an RTE class.
3. Teacher/Helper Training takes place at least 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. Our teachers put to use various means using pictures and objects to involve the senses and 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. (\*Word of Promise app excellent)
  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, songs, review games 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 decided that public school teachers may lead after school Good News Clubs which is a public school outreach of 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 Child Evangelism Fellowship in your area 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 and an occasional 1st grade sibling!
  2. Invitations are posted on the school website or given out through the sponsoring teacher's classroom 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, ten years ago.
- D. Teacher training and materials can be purchased through CEF
  1. Applications, screening and training is done through your local chapter of CEF
  2. CEF has excellent on-line courses for their materials at [cefcmi.com](http://cefcmi.com).
  3. CEF Long Beach has live training at their office several times a year.

4. Curriculum sets are colorful, innovative tools but there is a cost. They can also be used teaching elementary-middle school children's ministry. (we use CEF pictures, missionary stories and review games in our RTE classes)

E. Team involvement is encouraged.

1. Our team now consists of 2 public school teachers and 3 volunteers from our church, because the Lord has given us 30-40 regular students for one school. At another school we have 4 faithful students. You can start with 2-3 volunteers depending on how big the school is and how many grades you are targeting.

## VI. Neighborhood Good News Clubs

A. Good News Clubs can also be a weeklong backyard or home outreach, like VBS.

1. Pray about this as church outreach.
2. It helps to have some access to neighborhood kids that have already gotten to know **you, your kids or grandkids**. Keep your eyes open for children!
3. Decide on location, day, time and your target week. Holidays are great opportunities!
4. Curriculum and training
  - a. Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEFonline.com)
  - b. Released Time curriculum (RTCE.org) We do mini conferences and our audio sessions are posted on our website.
  - c. Calvarycurriculum.com has the entire Bible lessons and worksheets

## V. Resources

### A. Bibles

1. American Bible Society for free paperback (donation suggested) 888-32-BIBLE; Also Bibles 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)

1. **Children's Ministry Resource Bible** © 1993 by Child Evangelism

Fellowship is a wonderful resource with 104 Bible passages that have been fully outlined with teaching objectives and practical applications for teaching children in a classroom setting or at home.

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## How do we keep our students coming back for more?

### 1. Missionary Stories

- A. We have discovered that students love to hear stories.
  - 1. Missionaries and their adventures are true stories of real people.
  - 2. CEF has a number of missionary stories that are broken down to 6 week cliff-hanging segments.
  - 3. Many of the stories start when the missionary was a kid their age and some didn't even know the Lord and needed a savior the way they acted.

### 2. Review Games

- A. We have found that students listen better when they know there is a quiz - we use review games to make it fun for them.
  - 1. We make up questions having to do with the lesson. After answering the question the team or person (depending on size of your group) gets a certain amount of points for answering, then they do the activity for bonus points!  
**Note:** no prizes at end, just the satisfaction of learning and competition.
  - 2. Examples:
    - a. Tic-Tac-Toe (not your ordinary tic-tac-toe) Pieces are marked on the back where to place them. Both teams draw from their own set. If their piece lands on yours, it comes off and is set aside. First 3 in a row win.
    - b. Zero Hearts (card stock hearts with point values in a bag with two ZERO. Student picks one and can take a chance for another to add points. Zero loses all points. Hearts go back in bag throughout game.
    - c. Zonk (Very much like Zero Hearts. Playing pieces are little Bibles with point value on back with assorted several Zonk pieces put in a bag or pouch. Pick one for points or get Zonk and lose all.) Keep score for both teams.
    - d. Charades (if your team guesses, your team gets bonus points)
    - e. Small beach ball thrown through a hula hoop for points
    - f. Old testament/New Testament names in bag to guess OT or NT for points

### 3. Songs and signs to teach the memory verse

- A. Check out our favorite resources for demos and downloads (also, check You Tube)
  - 1. JumpStart3 [www.jumpstart3.com](http://www.jumpstart3.com) (Scripture song demos)
  - 2. Child Evangelism (CEF) [www.onlinecefcmi.com](http://www.onlinecefcmi.com) (Scripture song demos)
  - 3. Seeds Family Worship [www.seedsfamilyworship.com](http://www.seedsfamilyworship.com) (Scripture song demos)
  - 4. Go Fish - Song "My God" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2\\_eRnF0oXaE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_eRnF0oXaE)  
(This is one of our favorites and the students love it)