

“Taking Sunday School to the Public Schools”

The Ministry of Released Time Education & Good News Clubs

Presenter: Sally Atkinson

I. Released Time Education– A Unique Ministry

- A. Through this ministry we have the unique opportunity to touch the lives of hundreds 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 3rd through 5th grades.
 - 1. Currently there are active programs in CA cities: Azusa, Bellflower, Chino Valley, Ontario, Orange, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Montclair, Pomona, and Yorba Linda and probably a few more in various districts.
- C. Currently there are Released Time Education programs across the United States.
 - 1. The Released Time laws for each state are listed on our web site www.rtce.org.
 - 2. School Ministries CA has a thorough website on how to start a program. www.smicalifornia.com

II. The Released Time laws.

- A. Allows for any religious faith-based entity to organize a Released Time Education program.
- B. RT must take place off the school campus.
- C. No school money or equipment may be used.
- D. No public personnel may teach RTE during school time.
- E. In most local school districts, the RTE program distributes registration materials to the 4th and 5th 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 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 are agreed upon between the Principal and RTE Director at each school. We do cooperate with their schedules, procedures, and guidelines for discipline.
 - 1. CA Ed code 46014 states that students may be released one hour a week for religious purposes.
 - 2. Many school districts have strongly urged RTE classes meet at lunchtime or meet after school on the teacher planning day (early dismissal day) where others still allow students to be taken out of class for the Released Time program.

III. Who teaches Released Time?

- A. Our teachers (through the Long Beach RTE 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 for 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 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)
 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 lifelong 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 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 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders.
 2. Invitations are posted on the school website or given out through the sponsoring teachers classrooms for parent permission.
 3. Our church, Calvary Chapel North Long Beach got involved at the persistence of a public-school 3rd grade teacher, eleven years ago.
- D. Teacher training and materials can be purchased through CEF.
 1. CEF has excellent on-line courses and songs at cefcmi.com.
 2. CEF Long Beach has live training at their office several times a year.
 3. 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 support materials such as 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, and one parent helper at what started to be much larger, but now 20 committed students. Another school started with 4 and now we have 12 committed students.

VI. Neighborhood Good News Clubs

- A. Good News Clubs can also be a weeklong backyard or home outreach.
 - 1. Consider this type of outreach to get started.
 - 2. It helps to have some access to neighbor kids that you or your kids have already gotten to know.
 - 3. Decide on location, day, time and how often you want to meet or a 5-Day Club.
 - 4. Curriculum and training
 - a. Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEFonline.com)
 - b. Released Time curriculum (RTCE.org) Audio sessions are posted on our website from several conferences we have provided teacher training.
 - 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
- 2. Biblica Direct www.biblicadirect.com
- 3. Bibles by the case www.biblesbythecase.com

B. Curriculum

- 1. www.rtce.org with free downloadable curriculum
- 2. Calvarycurriculum.com

C. Child Evangelism Fellowship cefonline.com Training: 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.

VI. Things we do to 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 several missionary stories that are broken down to 6-week cliff-hanging segments.
- 3. Many of the stories start when the missionary was kid their age and some didn't even know the Lord which was shown by their behavior.

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 number 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. Review game examples:
 - a. Tic-Tac-Toe (not your ordinary tic-tac-toe) Pieces are marked on the back where to place them. Both teams draw a game piece from their own set. If their game piece lands on yours, it comes off and you set it aside. First 3 in a row wins. We usually have 10-12 questions, so if a team wins and there is time, start over and have a re-match.
 - 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. Pick one for points or get Zonk and lose all.)
 - d. Charades (if other team guesses, you get bonus points)
 - e. Air ball thrown through a hula hoop for points.
 - f. Old Testament/New Testament names in bag to guess OT or NT for points
 - g. Roll for Points (Use big plastic dice from Dollar Tree) Add a "00" to score.
 - h. Calendar toss for Christmas review. Make numbered cards 1-25. 25 will be red and the others green or black. Lay them on the floor 5 in a row. Student tosses a bean bag or any object the doesn't roll behind their back. They win point value, but if it lands on 25, they get double value.
 3. Songs and signs to teach the memory verse
 - a. JumpStart3 www.jumpstart3.com (Scripture song demos)
 - b. Child Evangelism (CEF) www.onlinecefmi.com (Scripture song demos)
 - c. Seeds Family Worship www.seedsfamilyworship.com
 - d. Go Fish - Song "My God"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_eRnF0oXaE
(This is one of our favorites and the students love it)

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