



Be RESOURCE-ful

The Resource Center Newsletter
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Betty's Byline Spring into Action!

It's hard to believe - Easter is past and spring has arrived. It's time to plant that garden of new opportunities for growth in your church... different programs and studies, fresh approaches in worship, development of new avenues of mission and outreach. Just think of ALL the possibilities! Pentecost will be here before we know it. And what about plans for the summer? If you are stumped for ideas and inspiration, the RESOURCE CENTER is a great place to start. It's as near as your computer or telephone, if time or distance makes a visit difficult.

Latch on to Literature

If you have a small group in your church that is looking for some thought-provoking programming ideas, may I suggest 2 books that I read recently. Talk about discussion-starters! The first is "Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini. It has also been made into a movie.(and I wouldn't be surprised to see it come out in DVD in the not-too-distant future). Much of the story takes place in Afghanistan, a country much in the news these days. The powerful narrative is moving, riveting and unforgettable. It covers a myriad of moral issues, well-worth exploring. The other book, which has been read by a number of us in the presbytery office, is "The Shack" by William P. Young. In a world where religion seems to grow increasingly irrelevant, this book wrestles with the timeless question, "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" Eugene Peterson has remarked, "This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" did for his. It's that good!" Both books make excellent food for thought, whether used in a group (why not start a

book club in your church?) or read for individual enrichment.

Decade of the Child: 2001-2011

As we pass the midpoint of this denomination-wide emphasis and go into the final years, it is more important than ever that children move to the center of our churches and of our hearts. There are many resources at the Center that would make excellent material for both individuals and groups to use for both information and action. "Africa's Children: A Church Response to Children's Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa" is a new booklet and study guide for 3 sessions that you might consider. On the home front, be inspired by "Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic" by John DeGraff. Here's an excerpt from his book concerning raising kids who won't be "all-consuming".

1. Instill media literacy in your child. Talk about the purpose of commercials and help your child be savvy to marketers' intentions.
 2. Don't comfort your child with material goods. Use a listening ear and ready shoulder instead.
 3. Turn off the TV or sharply limit your child's viewing.
 4. Advocate to keep advertising out of your child's school.
 5. Support legislation to restrict advertising that targets children.
 6. Find time for meaningful one-on-one conversations with your child.
 7. Try to eat a meal together at least 5 times a week.
 8. Let your children try to find ways to amuse themselves when bored that don't involve a screen.
 9. Don't just give in to a purchase because your child is pestering you.
 10. Model non materialism yourself.
- Note: share these suggestions with parents in your church. Start a parenting class or support group.

The Great American Bake Sale kicked off its national campaign in America this month. Through this campaign across the country, communities hold bake sales to raise money for summer and after-school food programs and nutrition education programs for low-income families. To find out how to help end childhood hunger and participate in the campaign, go to greatamericanbakesale.org.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE CENTER?

Education/Nurture

YOUTH MINISTRY IN SMALL CHURCHES - Rick Chromay Group 162pp
Creative how-tos, plus 28 involving activities. Develop an effective ministry with only a few teens. Involves special dynamics. Learn what a small church can/can't do. Practical answers to tough questions. (A)

SUNDAY SCHOOL SPECIALS #4 - Lois Keffer Group 140pp
Quick, easy Bible lessons, especially designed for combined age groups. Kids love learning together, like a family. Great for combined classes in the summer, for family nights or study groups with kids in attendance who need to be occupied with their own activities while the adults are involved elsewhere. (A)

50 BIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR CREATIVE MINDS - Jenifer Hosch Concordia 64pp
Reproducible classroom activities for any Bible lesson. Helps children in grades 3-6 make the connection between Bible characters, events and themes and their everyday lives. For individuals, small groups or the whole class as they learn and share the message of God's love. (A)

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Delia Halverson
Abingdon 127pp
Answers many of the most frequently-asked questions by both new and veteran teachers and leaders. Helps leaders plan, manage and run their education program with ease and confidence. A practical guidebook that combines teaching tips with wisdom. Reproducible charts and handouts. (A)

THE 3 D PLAN: Eat Right, Live Well, Love God Parclete Kit
Includes the book "Your Whole Life" by Carol Showalter with Maggie Davis 281pp, a journal, "Meet the Authors" DVD, 3.50 minutes, sample prayer cards, pedometer, and publicity suggestions. A 12 week plan for health and wholeness for lay-led church groups that develop community and spiritual maturity while getting healthy in both body and mind. Designed for 1 hour sessions, once a week. (A)

STARTING SIMPLE - Bob Sitze
Albon Institute 192pp (A)
Shows how we can create change by becoming better stewards of our lives. Offers a multitude of creative ideas for finding and living what's really important.

I WONDER ... DID JESUS HAVE A PET LAMB? - Janette Oke
Bethany House 24pp
We don't know much about Jesus' boyhood. Explore the possibilities as captivating illustrations show scenes to draw out the fun of imagining His childlike pursuits. (C)



Evangelism

SEARCHING FOR SEEKERS: Ministry with a New Generation of the Unchurched - Mary J. Scifres Abingdon 177pp
We must understand who this new generation of the unchurched are, with their many different spiritual needs and hungers, and how to best minister to them. Contains samples of different kinds of seeker-friendly services. (A)

UNBINDING THE GOSPEL: Real Life Evangelism - Martha G. Reese Chalice Press 150pp
Based on careful research and extensive listening, the book avoids the gimmicks and traps of the latest church growth fad. Invites pastors and members to a relationship with Christ that overflows the banks of the often- cautious and reserved congregations. Filled with helpful suggestions.

Church

FASTEST GROWING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES: A Congregational Life Survey PC(USA) Deborah Bruce & Cynthia Woolever 21pp
400 of the fastest-growing churches in our denomination were invited to take part in this survey, with 104 agreeing to do so and 93 returned survey forms. A number of factors were explored and a number of strengths were identified. (A)

BEHAVIORAL COVENANTS IN CONGREGATIONS: A Handbook for Honoring Differences - Gilbert R. Rendle Albon Institute 126pp
Facing and dealing constructively with how we are to be in ministry in these tumultuous times. For pastors and church leaders. Insightful commentary and detailed practical resources that offer welcome

help for congregational covenants of behavior. An effective new approach to faithful civility in the church. (A)

CHRISTIANITY FOR DUMMIES - Richard Wagner Wiley Publishing 378pp
This friendly guide helps you understand the basic teachings of the Christian faith, exploring the common ground that all Christians share. Covers the differences among the major branches, the key events in Christian history, the theological issues and the many ways Christians live out their faith in today's world. (A)

Mission

WHAT JESUS WOULDN'T DO: Making the Blind Lambe - Dr. Michael Johnson Higher Standard Publishers 234pp
Collection of experiences of the first African-American family on this particular mission field in Kenya. Tells about cultural and racial imperialism in Christian American missionary work. Readers will become more excited about what we Christians can do in and through us to bring the world to Him. (A)

Note: Dr. Johnson spoke to the presbytery at the January 2008 meeting. The book is a gift from Judy Cseh. Many thanks!

Theology

GOD'S ECHO: Exploring Scripture with Midrash - Sandy Eisenberg Sasso Paraclete Press
Give expression to your innermost longings, deepest fears and most profound joys while studying Scripture. A wonderful use of stories and biblical interpretations to help grapple with serious issues in our lives. There is much to learn from this noted Jewish rabbi. (A)



MY BAPTISM BOOK - Sophie Piper & Dubravka Kolanovic Paraclete 64pp (C)
A delightful companion and perfect gift for a special child on the occasion of his/her baptism. A collection of prayers, psalms and Bible stories - charmingly illustrated.

WORSHIP WITHOUT WORDS: The Signs and Symbols of Our Faith - Patricia S. Klein Paraclete 255pp
The essential guide for understanding the rich world of Christian liturgy. Uses understandable language to explain the signs, symbols, gestures, vestments, calendar, architectural and sacramental elements of the liturgy. (A)

JOURNEY TO THE HEART: Centering Prayer for Children - Frank X. Jelenek Paraclete 32pp
Colorful, practical book that uses rhyme and illustrations to teach children how to practice prayer of the heart and centering prayer: For parents, teachers, educators, and children from ages 3-10. (I)

THE GENESIS OF IT ALL - Luci Shaw Paraclete 32pp
The Old Testament account of the creation story is imbued with a joyful, irresistible bounce, poetic talent and spiritual wisdom that combine to breathe new life into this familiar story. (C)

JESUS - video
Inspirational Films 85 minutes
Filmed at over 200 locations in Israel. A true-to-life film, making you feel that you are in 1st Century Palestine with Jesus. A most credible film about the life and times of Jesus taken from Luke's gospel account. Offers insights from His teachings and how they continue to impact our lives today. Gift from Bethany, Lancaster (I)

REHEARSING THE SOUL - Terry York Abingdon 62pp
52 devotions for the church choir that assist in choir members' spiritual preparation toward matters of faith and life. (A)

STORIES OF THE SAINTS - Joyce Dunham Paraclete 48pp
This skilled storyteller weaves tales from the lives of 14 Christian saints, 4 who were involved in the birth and life of Jesus, 2 who helped establish Jesus' church and 8 more who continued to carry the light of God's love into the world. (A)

Women

THE MYTH OF THE PERFECT MOTHER: Rethinking the Spirituality of Women
Carla Barnhill-Baker 190pp
A much-needed conversation about what Christian motherhood is really about - minus the guilt, information overload, and impossible expectations. Presents a positive biblical model. (A)

I'M TOO YOUNG TO BE THIS OLD: Surviving and Thriving in the Muddled Middle Years
Patricia Smith
Bethany House 186pp
Shows how to face your changing life with a spirit of fun and fearlessness. Offers inspiration and insight to turn those middle years into the best years of your life. (A)

DID YOU KNOW?

The presbytery has a 30' x 30' labyrinth - painted on sturdy canvas - that can be borrowed for your church's use. Information is also available in the center about its history and suggestions for use in a variety of settings. A wonderful tool for worship, prayer and spiritual development and enrichment. Call to reserve its use.



This newsletter is for pastors, Christian educators, C.E. Committee chairpersons and members, youth workers, Church School superintendent and teachers, plus all lay leaders in your church. PASS IT ON!

