Curriculum is the focus of this issue of Episcopal Teacher. We are looking at it from the perspective of actual materials created to help people learn about and explore their faith. It is part of the broader view of curriculum that encompasses the whole church—from the Maria Harris definition that weaves together community, worship, prayer, service, and education.

The Center for the Ministry of Teaching staff has looked at familiar formats of curriculum, including lectionary-based and thematic (scope and sequence) curricula, as well as the pros and cons of rotation, a format used by most Vacation Bible School (VBS) publishers and by many church schools everywhere.

Another article about using worship as a basis for the formation of children and youth grew out of our work with small churches with few children and wide age gaps. My former students in South Africa, who had access to the article, were interested in the concept for their churches, most of which are made up of large numbers of young people.

As I watch how readers take ideas from Episcopal Teacher, and from our web platforms Key Resources and Building Faith, and make them their own, I am reminded of how different and unique churches are throughout the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. At the same time, the common language we speak through our liturgy and traditions allows us to share ideas and resources across continents and even cultures.

To round out the curriculum theme is a review of *Deep Blue*, a new resource for children from the Methodist tradition. In this issue you will also find the first of a two-part series about Episcopal schools based on the parable of the Lost Treasure. Patricia Lyons, an upper school chaplain and teacher for more than 20 years, challenges schools to use the treasure of faith to share the life-giving message of the Gospel. An article from The Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE) describes an online resource to help people go deeper into Advent wherever they may be.

On the back page is a description of a book and website called *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*, the latest work from editor John Roberto. Kyle Oliver and I both contributed chapters to the book and an accompanying journal with specific ministry options for adult formation.

We hope in the busy-ness of this autumn season you find time to listen to and be with God.

Go in peace!

Dorothy Linthicum
Point/Counterpoint: Rotation-Based Sunday School

Point: Rotations encourage interdisciplinary learning

By Kyle Oliver

When we decided to do a point/counterpoint about rotation-model Sunday school, I was a natural choice for the pro position. My education prioritized hands-on, project-based, interdisciplinary, student-empowered learning. I wrote jingles and parodies as a participant in Odyssey of the Mind and Destination Imagination, months-long creative problem-solving competitions. I built towers and trebuchets out of nothing but ropes and poles as a Boy Scout. I performed music and theater and produced big events as a member of garage bands and pit orchestras and student play festival teams. And I helped create monthly newspapers and a yearly literary magazine as a well-mentored student journalist.

At the same time all that was happening, especially in the later years of it, my church was encouraging me to learn like this: by sitting in a room and talking. Maybe at youth group we got to break out the guitars if the leaders were UK with us interspersing the occasional Beatles song amid “Sanctuary” and “Peace Like a River.” Once, the middle-schoolers got to produce their own play, but that was while I was still in elementary school. What has in recent years become known as the Maker Movement has been around as long as people have been learning by doing. And it’s always been part of the best Sunday school programs.

What I love about the rotation model (sometimes called the workshop rotation model) is that it puts Maker-style learning front and center. During each session in a four-to-six-week cycle, groups visit a different room and engage the Bible passage or story through a different medium: drama, visual arts, games, computers/apps, etc. Several stations run simultaneously each Sunday depending on the size of the program.

In each rotation, children find a mentor skilled in the medium and willing to explore and co-create with them to help bring the story to life. Not every station will resonate with every learner. Indeed, the model is predicated on the theory that different kids learn best in different ways. But over the course of the cycle, there’s a good chance a particular discipline will help everyone really connect at least once.

As with any curriculum, the implementation of the rotation model is a lot more challenging than it sounds. And as with any curriculum, there are drawbacks to the approach. It certainly won’t work for every church and size of program.

But if I were asked to run a Sunday school tomorrow, you can bet I’d start recruiting collaborators for a rotations-based program. At its best, the model engages learners by activating their creativity, honoring their agency, and trusting that the Spirit can work through any medium or discipline to touch the life of a young disciple in lasting ways.

Counterpoint: Spirituality often is checked at the door

By Dorothy Linthicum

In a perfect world, the rotation model offers one of the best teaching methods for interdisciplinary and intergenerational learning for children and youth. Talk to parents in churches where rotation is used, and they will tell you—enthusiastically—the difference it has made in getting their children to church.

As Kyle noted, rotation offers different learning methods and fully immerses a child in a biblical story or passage, even if attendance is sporadic. It also passes one of my tests for success: rooms and hallways filled with sounds of excited voices, laughter, and conversations.

Alas, we don’t live in a perfect world. Group size and physical facilities rule out rotation models for many small churches and even larger churches that lack adequate or flexible space. Rotation advocates note that small programs can adapt by offering one station a week for the entire group, but that doesn’t eliminate the need for a fairly large cadre of volunteers to make it work.

Churches can, of course, deal creatively with small numbers and space issues. My concern is focused more on how the rotation model addresses the spiritual needs of children. In the programs I have observed over the years, spirituality gets lost in the busy-ness of the organization and recruitment of volunteers.

Most rotation programs begin by recruiting a long list of “mentor” leaders who have certain skill sets, such as drama, art, dance, technology, cooking, among others. The next most important task is finding all the materials to make each rotation station work each week. Administration and communication tasks insure that every child has a place to go every week.

The final step in many programs is recruiting shepherds. I argue that inviting shepherds should be the first step. That’s because shepherds provide continuity and the relational ministry that is critical in Christian formation.

The shepherd is the person who greets each child in the group by name, who knows when there is an illness in the family, who sits with the children and engages fully in each activity, who asks the questions that tie the biblical story to each child’s life, who stops the action by asking where God is in the story, and, most importantly, who prays for each child throughout the week.

The training of shepherds is critical, but from my observation rarely occurs. Many are treated and see themselves as babysitters or observers keeping the peace. The rotation model provides many opportunities for discovering God in the world, but too often the pace is so fast that these opportunities slide by.

The rotation model is just that, a model. It is teaching and learning grounded in experiential learning theory. When the logistics serve the spiritual formation of young people through Sunday School, it can be dynamic, substantive, and appealing to people of all ages. Let’s be sure we give the Spirit credit.
Lately I’ve been suggesting that churches consider using worship as the center of formation for young people. My thinking grew out of a conversation with a former rector, now retired and doing consulting in his new home in Florida.

Liturical churches have by their very nature the means to pass on scripture, tradition and reason through worship and the books that guide and shape their corporate gatherings. Pick up the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer and leaf through it. It has prayers, scripture, words of healing and celebration, and clear statements of belief in the Catechism section.

A worship-based formation program is a natural segue in churches that use Godly Play or Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for younger learners. Already immersed in the rhythms of liturgy, these children are prime candidates to broaden their learning through actual experience and hands-on participation during corporate worship.

My conversation with my old friend and mentor in Florida about a worship-based formation experience began with acolytes. Training for these young people will only increase their knowledge and understanding of our faith. In my mind’s eye, I can see how their proximity to the activities at and around the altar make the Sacrament of Eucharist come alive—not an abstract discussion in a classroom, but an unfolding drama about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Youth members of an altar guild could have the opportunity to learn the practical language of faith. The formal names for the cup, the plate, and other parts of the Eucharist can become part of their vocabularies.

Similarly, the rhythms of the seasons and the special feast days start to make sense with the changing colors of the altar cloths and other hangings. Adult or older youth mentors can be primed to talk to younger youth about the different names and functions of each part of the altar area.

Perhaps the best learning opportunities come from preparation for lay reading. Each week the entire lector group, young and old, could gather to learn about the passages that will be read the following week. Careful instruction about the context of each passage and discussions relating to common themes in each reading make for a lively Bible study.

At the cathedral that I attended regularly during my year in South Africa, young people were encouraged to be lay readers during worship services. They were required, however, to meet with the lay reading coach, a retired drama lecturer from the local university. Young men and women from nearby townships and private boarding schools participated in this program. They began their coaching sessions by exploring the scripture passages they were assigned to read. Then they practiced walking from the pews to the lectern—pacing themselves carefully so their approach did not add an unnecessary distraction.

When they reached the lectern, they sometimes pulled over a small stool to stand on and then made sure the microphone was properly set. The coach taught them how to pace their reading and maintain a pleasant cadence.

Watching these young South Africans mature over the year as they gained confidence and assurance was heartwarming for everyone in the congregation. Youth who want to explore prayer disciplines more deeply might work with a mentor to prepare the weekly Prayers of the People read during worship. They would not only be scheduled with other readers each Sunday, but they would also be responsible for certain parts of the content.

Other places to combine formation with worship participation include ushering, which might incorporate stewardship sessions, and singing in the choir. Music invites people to explore poetry and scripture in hymns and anthems with more depth and perception.

In each of these service components, there is an element of service. Not only are youth learning about their faith and the traditions of the church, they are also giving of themselves. Working with youth in the different worship areas can also be a high point of learning and relationship-building for adults involved as mentors and teachers.

Instead of sending young people away from the center of corporate worship experiences, look for ways to form their faith around the richness of our liturgical traditions.

“Instead of sending young people away from the center of corporate worship experiences, look for ways to form their faith around the richness of our liturgical traditions.”

Resource:
The Rite Place: Kids Do Church! Adults Do, too!
By Shawn M. Schreiner and Dennis E. Northway
Morehouse Publishing, 2014
Lectionary or Thematic Curriculum: Strengths and Weaknesses

LOOKING AT LECTIONARY CURRICULUM
By Dorothy Linthicum

In a liturgical setting, curriculum based on lectionary readings makes sense. It allows all members of a congregation to explore the passages of the day, which are most often from the Revised Common Lectionary, the work of two ecumenical bodies who provide resources for churches.

Clergy often lean toward lectionary-based curriculum because it’s in their comfort zone. They know exactly what is being taught in classes on any particular Sunday morning or at any week-day Bible studies.

Lectionary readings are also arranged to the seasons of the Church Year. From the prophecies read in Advent, to the preparatory passages in the Gospels in Lent, to the descriptions of the Pentecost in Acts, the faith journey of believers occurs each year.

A cross-fertilization of ideas can occur when everyone is on the same page. A scenario frequently scattershot scope of the topics taught each week. Since many people don’t attend formation classes with great regularity, this may not be a problem. But the wide variance of topics makes it difficult to introduce the larger themes of the Bible. The bigger historical picture that illustrates God’s involvement with God’s people sometimes gets lost.

A strong positive in using the lectionary as a basis for curriculum is its use in a viable intergenerational study for all ages. Participants of all ages could gather for opening prayer and dynamic introduction to the day’s lesson before breaking out for developmentally- and age-appropriate study and activities. A final gathering might offer opportunities for sharing before everyone is sent into the world to make disciples.

TEACHING WITH THE LECTIONARY
From a teacher’s point of view, there are two drawbacks to using lectionary curriculum.

The first is a curriculum’s selection of a focal passage each week. For the most part, lectionary curriculum is heavy on the Gospels, and light on Hebrew scripture, with almost no New Testament epistles. Because of this, everyone misses out on the rich stories from the Hebrew scripture, poetry from the psalms, the power of the prophets, the letters of Paul, and stories about the early church. In addition, some of the gospel topics just aren’t developmentally appropriate for young children and difficult to relate to the lives of adolescents.

The second drawback is the scattershot scope of the topics.

LOOKING AT THEMATIC CURRICULUM
By Amy Dyer

Choosing a church school curriculum can be overwhelming. Christian formation programs that are theme-oriented have many benefits for the development of faith formation in children, youth and adults that churches are looking for.

A thematic approach, or what is sometimes called scope and sequence, means that the materials are organized around particular topics throughout the year. The topics can be different each week or placed in units that have a particular focus.

A thematic approach provides continuity for the learner, as stories are shared from week to week. The student who misses a session can easily be included with a brief review of the previous week’s work. Learners can work on long-term projects that can be added to over time and illustrate the ongoing nature of the story. Timelines, plays, and artwork can help the learner make the story their own.

Often thematic curriculum focuses on biblical themes as an overall concept, which are then divided into groups of stories that reflect the history of our faith as related in scripture.

An Old Testament unit might trace the history of the Hebrew people through the stories in Genesis and Exodus. It could begin with the story of Abraham and his travels through the desert, continue with the story of Jacob and his 12 sons, and conclude with the story of Moses leading the people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Rarely does any other organizational approach spend as much time on these significant stories of our faith.

Similarly, the stories of Jesus from his birth in Bethlehem to his Resurrection, which are distributed throughout the year in the readings heard in worship, can be studied in sequence. Understanding the entire life of Jesus of Nazareth is essential to developing our faith as Christians.

Another form of thematic curriculum may center on the traditions and celebrations of our faith. This type of curriculum allows time for learning about prayer, worship, the lives of the Saints, and special celebrations, such as Epiphany and All Saints’ Day, through out the church year.

Dr. Amy Dyer teaches Christian formation at Virginia Theological Seminary and is editor of The Episcopal Children’s Curriculum.

The Center for the Ministry of Teaching’s recommendations for lectionary curricula:

ALL AGES: Living the Good News, Seasons of the Spirit, Feasting on the Word

CHILDREN: Whirl

THE CENTER FOR THE MINISTRY OF TEACHING’S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEMATIC CURRICULUM:

CHILDREN AND YOUTH:
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
Godly Play
Shine
Holy Moly
Connect
Weaving God’s Promises
The Episcopal Children’s Curriculum

YOUNG ADULTS:
Animate
Celebrating Advent with the Brothers

By Jamie Coats

The Season of Advent often gets lost in the busy-ness of holiday preparations, travel, parties, and other events. A digital resource created by the Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE) can help individuals and congregations recapture the wonder of this season of waiting and preparation.

#AdventWord is a global Anglican Communion Advent Calendar created by daily submissions on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram during the season of Advent (www.anglicancommunion.org/adventword). Participants are encouraged to spend time thinking about a daily word provided by the SSJE community, meditating, or praying over the meaning of that word in the context of the Advent Season. Then they are asked to post an image or text reflecting their notion of the Advent word via Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

In 2014, with guidance from the Office of Communication of the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, the monks of the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based SSJE and the Anglican Communion Office in London teamed up to launch the world’s first global crowd-sourced Advent Calendar – #AdventWord.

By Christmas Day 2014 there were more than 15,000 #AdventWord images on Instagram, and the hashtag #AdventWord had been viewed 1.6 million times across social media. An estimated 1,700 people posted an average of nine times. About 50,000 different people worldwide viewed the meditation word and images.

Brother Geoffrey Tristram, Superior of SSJE, on viewing #AdventWord remarked, “Watching the calendar is watching global prayer unfolding before your eyes.”

#Remember was one of the words from the 2014 version of #AdventWord. People posted images of deceased relatives, a picture of a man with his two young children standing next to his father’s grave, red images of the poppies in the moat of the Tower of London, and AIDS remembrance images, among others.

On Twitter, visitors could experience thoughts from Uganda with @NDunigan, who posted in response to #Encourage: “Here in #Uganda, we say ‘Thank you for that courage when complimented—even by phone.’”

Bishop Tom Ely of the Diocese of Vermont mentioned #AdventWord in his 2014 Christmas message that the words offered “support for the faith journey into which Christ welcomes each and every seeker. These words remind me that the Christian faith and life is about active living in response to God’s invitation to share in God’s reconciling mission for the world.”

To participate, go to anglicancommunion.org/adventword and register to receive a daily email from the Brothers of the Society of Saint John the Evangelists. The email will contain a daily word and meditation, accompanied by a thoughtful image. You are invited to respond with an image of your own on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook or merely to watch the calendar grow each day in Advent. When you sign up you will receive easy instructions on how to send in images and view the Advent Calendar.

#AdventWord was popular with younger adults and is a vehicle for creating trans-Anglican identity. Who knew that an Advent Calendar on social media would encourage so many people to pray every day during Advent and to create an experience filled with wonder, joy and mutual compassion.

James (Jamie) Coats serves as Director, Friends of SSJE, a monastic community of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
I imagine standing in line at the local bank when the man in this parable rushes in to withdraw all his money. I can see him bounding up the stairs — two at a time — into the office building where he has worked for years, kindly but quickly making his way to find his boss and resign. I can see him sitting on the edge of his seat in a favorite Starbucks, trying to be patient with a confused close friend who keeps asking him again and again, ‘so you are really leaving?’

If you could watch this man in that holy span of hours and days after discovering true treasure and then re-ordering his life around owning it and enjoying it, you might call him busy. And how could he not be? Whatever his life was before finding a true treasure, he now has a clear focus for his person and his passion. He has an organizing principle for prioritizing his time. He has touched truth and he is now leaving?

‘But is the problem that we are too busy? Is the best advice to ‘slow down?’ Should the man who has found treasure in the parable ‘slow down?’ Is there any virtue in embracing his new life more slowly or with less urgency?

I say no.

This parable is an image of the energy, inspiration, and joy that flow from finding something true and liberating. This parable does not teach moderation any more than it condemns urgency. I have seen enough Episcopal schools in this country to say that our stress, anxiety and mission failures are not necessarily a problem of velocity but of values.

DEFINING OUR TREASURE

I reject the diagnosis that we are “too busy” in our schools, not because it is wrong but because it is imprecise. I believe the anxiety in our schools is more about what we treasure than how fast we are digging.

It is cheap and easy to say ‘slow down.’ The harder question begged by the parable is: What treasure are we rushing to own? If our treasure is a true source of life and meaning, then rushing to order our lives around it will bring freedom, not exhaustion.

If our treasure is a shallow cultural wish such as consumption or celebrity, then it will suck out our joy and stamina. The message of the parable is not to slow down but to order your life and the life of school around treasure that is real.

I have been involved in Episcopal education for more than 20 years. And this experience has led me to say that the true treasure of Episcopal schools — that which we ought to name and claim and order our communities around — is the Gospel of the love, teachings, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and the sacramental embrace of Jesus in the Episcopal faith.

I could whisper one thing in the ear of Episcopal educators this fall, it would be this: “Sell everything to buy that field.” Schools that don’t explicitly choose their treasure will become schools chasing after the culture’s treasures of competition and consumption.

Centralize the Gospel in your classrooms, whether or not your school has an overall culture of healthy Episcopal spirituality. Take matters into your own hands. Like the man in the parable, rush to order your curriculum and your concern around sharing the life-giving message of the Gospel and you will experience the joy of seizing the chance to share abundant life.

Whether you teach kindergarteners or 12th-graders, post the Beatitudes on your walls, pray in your classrooms, play inspirational music while teaching, light candles, and sit in silence with your students.

All of the longitudinal research we have about primary and secondary education cries out that pictures, music, candles and silence stick in the minds and souls of students for decades more than letters and numbers and grades.

Don’t just be a teacher, be a pastor. Let your classroom and faculty room become altars where sacramental power transforms the profane into the holy. By grace we are vessels of the real presence of God. Find the treasure in the field and use it to replenish and restore your vessel.

Dr. Patricia Lyons is a student at Virginia Theological Seminary preparing for the priesthood. She has worked in Episcopal schools for more than 20 years as a chaplain and teacher. This is the first of a two-part series. Part 2 will appear in the Winter 2016 issue of Episcopal Teacher.
Looking for Resources for Latino Congregations

E
The Center for the Ministry of Teaching (CMT) at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) is focusing on increasing our digital and physical collection of resources for Latino churches. We are working with publishers, such as Forward Movement, to identify materials to support Christian formation in Spanish-speaking churches.

We will continue to highlight and review resources in each issue of Episcopal Teacher in both Spanish and English. We are also working toward creating lists of resources on our internet platforms (the CMT pages of the VTS website, Key Resources, and Building Faith).

We encourage you to visit websites of publishers, dioceses, and other institutions that offer resources in Spanish. The CMT recommends a visit to these sites:

- Forward Movement: Books and pamphlets designed for Latino church ministry.
- The Episcopal Diocese of Texas: More than 50 internet links and documents in Spanish.
- The Discovery Series: A Christian Journey. A multi-week introduction to the Episcopal faith in Spanish. [The Diocese of Texas will underwrite the cost of the series to the extent that Spanish-speaking congregations need to pay only $150 for the series plus $12 shipping/handling.]
- Concordia Publishing House. Resources on structuring leadership teams and intentional giving. A quarterly Spanish-language email blast highlighting the most recent Spanish-language resources is available on ECF Vital Practices.
- Episcopal Relief and Development. Seasonal and topical study guides in Spanish.
- Godly Play in Spanish. Curriculum and training opportunities.

We would appreciate your help in putting together lists of websites and resources, including books, curricula, liturgy, Bible studies and seasonal study guides, that are available in hard copy or through internet downloads. Send your ideas and suggestions to cmt@vts.edu. "Thank you for helping us to build our collection of Spanish resources!"

Note: Deep Blue replace Grow, Proclaim, Serve previously published by Abingdon.

Deep Blue
Abingdon Press
deepbluekids.com

O
One of the newest curricula on the block is Abingdon Press’ Deep Blue Kids, designed for children from babies to age 11+. One of its strongest appeals is its scope and sequence, or the structure of the contents over a year of study.

During the year, children are introduced to scripture and the seasons of the Church. All ages begin in the fall with Old Testament stories from the Book of Genesis and move into the history of the Hebrew people in Exodus, Judges, Samuel and the Kings. In the winter unit, children meet Jesus through stories about Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, and then learn about the ministry and parables of Jesus. In the spring, they experience stories of Lent and Easter, with the last days of Jesus’ life, his death, and resurrection. The spring unit includes stories about Pentecost and the early church from the Book of Acts.

The summer unit introduces learners to stories of faithful women, Jesus ministry as described in the Gospel of John, and the teachings of Paul. Churches that do not schedule regular formation in the summer could use parts of this unit for a Vacation Bible School (VBS) curriculum. The Deep Blue title of this resource comes from three cartoon characters who encourage participants to “dive deeper” into the Bible to experience God’s love. Both the name and the many components of this curriculum mirror the products and energy of many VBS programs published today.

Among the resources offered as part of Deep Blue are science experiments, arts and craft ideas, animated video storytelling, music videos, active games, and even an “Adventure App” for “tech-savvy kids.” Trying to figure out which products to use can be daunting for a volunteer teacher or even an experienced formation director. If you begin to feel overwhelmed, go to the Deep Blue website, click on the curriculum tab, and then select the scope and sequence tab. Is this the content you want for your children? If so, you can probably make the curriculum work for you. Begin by purchasing leader’s guides appropriate for your age groups. The unit guides include information about faith development for each age group and the general supplies needed for the entire unit. Each session has background for the teacher and exploration points to consider.

For each session, there is a gathering, storytime, experiences for deeper understanding, and closing worship. Instead of cueing a DVD for the weekly three-minute storytime, the teacher can use different methods to tell the story. In place of an elaborate pre-packaged craft for the fall, the children could create a mural that spanned the stories from Creation to the Kings. For the most part, the session backgrounds and exploration points in the leader’s guides are theologically and culturally sound. Teachers by encouraging them to tell stories and make points in their own words.

Deep Blue Kids Bible (Common English translation) has been recognized as one of the best in its field. The best way to spread the Christian faith is through relationships. A drawback to this curriculum is its use of two-dimensional characters in a DVD for storytelling and the scripted language that permeates the leader’s guides. My recommendation is to embrace the creativity and faith of teachers by encouraging them to tell stories and make points in their own words.

Dorothy Linthicum

Deep Blue Kids website

deepbluekids.com

14

Looking for Resources for Latino Congregations

E
The Center for the Ministry of Teaching (CMT) at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) is focusing on increasing our digital and physical collection of resources for Latino churches. We are working with publishers, such as Forward Movement, to identify materials to support Christian formation in Spanish-speaking churches.

We will continue to highlight and review resources in each issue of Episcopal Teacher in both Spanish and English. We are also working toward creating lists of resources on our internet platforms (the CMT pages of the VTS website, Key Resources, and Building Faith).

We encourage you to visit websites of publishers, dioceses, and other institutions that offer resources in Spanish. The CMT recommends a visit to these sites:

- Forward Movement: Books and pamphlets designed for Latino church ministry.
- The Episcopal Diocese of Texas: More than 50 internet links and documents in Spanish.
- The Discovery Series: A Christian Journey. A multi-week introduction to the Episcopal faith in Spanish. [The Diocese of Texas will underwrite the cost of the series to the extent that Spanish-speaking congregations need to pay only $150 for the series plus $12 shipping/handling.]
- Concordia Publishing House. Resources on structuring leadership teams and intentional giving. A quarterly Spanish-language email blast highlighting the most recent Spanish-language resources is available on ECF Vital Practices.
- Episcopal Relief and Development. Seasonal and topical study guides in Spanish.
- Godly Play in Spanish. Curriculum and training opportunities.

We would appreciate your help in putting together lists of websites and resources, including books, curricula, liturgy, Bible studies and seasonal study guides, that are available in hard copy or through internet downloads. Send your ideas and suggestions to cmt@vts.edu. "Thank you for helping us to build our collection of Spanish resources!"

Note: Deep Blue replace Grow, Proclaim, Serve previously published by Abingdon.

Deep Blue
Abingdon Press
deepbluekids.com

O
One of the newest curricula on the block is Abingdon Press’ Deep Blue Kids, designed for children from babies to age 11+. One of its strongest appeals is its scope and sequence, or the structure of the contents over a year of study.

During the year, children are introduced to scripture and the seasons of the Church. All ages begin in the fall with Old Testament stories from the Book of Genesis and move into the history of the Hebrew people in Exodus, Judges, Samuel and the Kings. In the spring, they experience stories of Lent and Easter, with the last days of Jesus’ life, his death, and resurrection. The spring unit includes stories about Pentecost and the early church from the Book of Acts.

The summer unit introduces learners to stories of faithful women, Jesus ministry as described in the Gospel of John, and the teachings of Paul. Churches that do not schedule regular formation in the summer could use parts of this unit for a Vacation Bible School (VBS) curriculum. The Deep Blue title of this resource comes from three cartoon characters who encourage participants to “dive deeper” into the Bible to experience God’s love. Both the name and the many components of this curriculum mirror the products and energy of many VBS programs published today.

Among the resources offered as part of Deep Blue are science experiments, arts and craft ideas, animated video storytelling, music videos, active games, and even an “Adventure App” for “tech-savvy kids.” Trying to figure out which products to use can be daunting for a volunteer teacher or even an experienced formation director. If you begin to feel overwhelmed, go to the Deep Blue website, click on the curriculum tab, and then select the scope and sequence tab. Is this the content you want for your children? If so, you can probably make the curriculum work for you. Begin by purchasing leader’s guides appropriate for your age groups. The unit guides include information about faith development for each age group and the general supplies needed for the entire unit. Each session has background for the teacher and exploration points to consider.

For each session, there is a gathering, storytime, experiences for deeper understanding, and closing worship. Instead of cueing a DVD for the weekly three-minute storytime, the teacher can use different methods to tell the story. In place of an elaborate pre-packaged craft for the fall, the children could create a mural that spanned the stories from Creation to the Kings. For the most part, the session backgrounds and exploration points in the leader’s guides are theologically and culturally sound. Teachers by encouraging them to tell stories and make points in their own words.

Dorothy Linthicum

Deep Blue
Abingdon Press
deepbluekids.com
EMBRACING THE SEASONS OF ADULT FAITH FORMATION

The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation book and website (seasonsofadultfaith.com) provide leaders with a deeper understanding of adulthood today, a vision of twenty-first century adult faith formation, and the tools and processes for designing faith formation for all the seasons of adulthood. Kyle Oliver and Dorothy Linthicum of the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, along with John Roberto, Ed Gordon, Jim Merhaut, Mary Ann Ronan, Janet Schaeffler, and Tom Zanzig explore characteristics of different age groups and paradigms for teaching and learning. A special issue of the LifeLong Faith Journal, available at lifelongfaith.com, explores effective practices for each stage of adulthood.