



Christian Education: Just One More Thing? By Jeffrey Clawson

With the demands of life weighing down on everyone we hear of working 24/7, needing to scale back and questioning just how much more to take on. Is Christian education just one more thing to take on?



Christian Education is a bridge from self-reflection to human freedom.

With the pressures of life there is a need for increasing our experience of freedom. The language of the Bible tells us that to find our freedom we must “know the Lord”. This is not an intellectual exercise. It is about the heart.

I John 4:8 reveals this clearly, “the one without love has known nothing of God”. This world around us suffers from a lack of freedom because there is

a lack of love. How do we find the capacity to experience more love in life?

When we have the ability to reflect on how God is actively present and in relationship with us then we can experience more freedom and love in life. Meaningful Christian edu-

cation offers us the ability to reflect on God’s activity in our lives. Christian education then is never just one more thing to take on. Our Godly Play classes for children and our youth group for teens offers this bridge from self-reflection to human freedom.



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Godly Play: Telling Bible Stories to Change Lives for the Better

What exactly is Godly Play? Godly Play is a way to tell the stories from the Bible so that their meanings can be integrated into the lives of young people. When Bible stories become *my stories*, then life becomes not only a human experience but a sacred experience as well.

Godly Play storytellers inevitably will report how astounded they are by children's responses during the time of wondering questions. Children reveal that they have the capac-

ity not only to understand the meanings of these Bible stories but to also integrate these meanings into their own lives.

The world is complex and challenging for children today. School is demanding and many children experience far too much anxiety. Godly Play is a way of re-framing the world. Creativity is discovered to make life a wonderful experience that embraces love, mystery and adventure. Outside the Godly Play classrooms children have the opportunity to look for meaning

in life at school, with their friends and at home. This re-framing is essential for children to experience wholeness and to become truly productive in the world.

**Godly Play:
Every Sunday
at
10:00**



Creating Space for Teens

Our young people made our celebration of Dia de los Muertos a wonderful success this year. Behind the scenes and out front their participation also showed us how important church can be to young people.

Sociologist Christian Smith has identified that in American society there is a "structural disconnect" between

adults and youth. The church however seeks then to create what we might call "structure connections" between youth and adults. We see this happening at St. Stephen's.

This year's confirmation class will emphasize these connections between youth and adults. Get ready to see them not only as acolytes, but Eucharistic ministers, readers and greeters.

Know that our young people value their church and value you too! St. Stephen's has all that is needed to provide young people with the connections that make a difference in life.

Confirmation and youth group meet Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. in the youth room.

Christmas Pageant 2008



St. Stephen's Sunday School Christmas Pageant

will be presented at 4:00 pm on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24. Children and youth of all ages are invited to participate.

FULL CAST REHEARSAL will be Tuesday, December 23, 9:00 AM – noon. Watch the Sunday bulletins and the weekly *BLAST* for further information. PARENTS – help is needed with costumes and scPractice times will be scheduled on Sunday mornings, and the enery set-up.

Contact Janet Ward,
wardlings@earthlink.net





Advent Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 7, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

We extend a warm welcome families at this year's Advent Lessons and Carols. Come to all or part of this event:

3:00 p.m. Godly Play Story and Advent art in Kimball Hall

5:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols with choir in the church.

6:00 p.m. Potluck in Kimball Hall

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Annual Poinsettia Sale is Now Underway—Don't Wait to Order!

This year's sale of poinsettias will benefit Camp Create for summer 2009. Look to order on Sundays. Don't wait because you would not want to miss out!

Members of the youth group will be available to assist you with the order forms on Sundays after the 10:00 a.m. service. And it is a wonderful way to prepare your home for Christmas.

Poinsettias will be ready for pick up on Sunday, December 7.

