

# Resource

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND WORKERS

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*Let us not become weary in doing good,  
for at the proper time we will reap  
a harvest if we do not give up  
(Galatians 6:9).*

Yesterday morning all the time, energy, study, work, and, yes, occasional frustration it takes to teach a third and fourth grade Sunday School class came to a climax as I watched Alyssa come to the altar and pray to accept Jesus as her Savior. What a thrill and a privilege to have played even a small part in the greatest experience of her life.

I have been teaching Sunday School for more than 30 years. I have mentored teachers, taught workshops, and written numerous articles on teaching skills and techniques. However, yesterday's experience reminded me that we might master all the skills of good teaching, but unless we prepare ourselves to lead our students toward a salvation experience, we have failed.

To leaders and teachers, pointing the unsaved to Christ must be as important a part of the Sunday School hour as Bible study, attendance, and the presentation. The journey toward faith in Jesus is wrought with teachable moments as we influence through teaching biblical truths, modeling Christlike behavior, and sharing our faith stories.

Evangelism begins with a genuine care and concern for unbelievers. Witnessing will always include the ability to articulate the message of salvation, but our words must consistently be underscored with personal, loving concern for the lost. There are ample opportunities around us to share the love of God. We must make every effort and take each opportunity to connect

our conversation and actions to the topic of Jesus.

This issue of *Resource* is filled with articles on how to share the good news of Jesus whether through teaching Sunday School, networking and building relationships in your neighborhood or community, or hands-on, care-related ministry. Our work may take the form of laying a foundation for saving faith to be built upon by the Holy Spirit in later years. We will not always see the results of our evangelistic work. Whatever our role, we are all called to be evangelists, whether our immediate task is that of sowing, reaping, or both.

Don't miss the joy of the harvest.

—Shirley Smith  
Assistant Editor

**Summary: Are you providing support, encouragement, and networking opportunities for parents of teens in your church? Here are some great ideas for helping parents of adolescents get the help they need.**

# Fun-Da-Middles

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Her voice quivering, a mother of a 13-year-old shares, “Shawna’s run away from home again this week. My husband and I don’t know where she is or what’s happened to her. Neither of us can sleep.” Through her broken words, she hears muffled encouragement from other parents, both single and married. Although the parents’ ages range from the early 30s to the late 50s, their children’s ages are constant—one or more are adolescents. Occasionally, even a grandparent raising a grandchild joins in.

## Promote discussion and sharing of ideas.

Adult classes for new parents, parents of preschoolers, or even elementary school are common, but in many churches, the support for parents of adolescents dwindles. So on Sunday evenings, parents of adolescents come together for a class we call Fun-Da-Middles. We chose our name to reflect the philosophy that regardless of our teen’s choices, we’re going to experience our children’s puberty, or what we refer to in our house as the “happy hormone” years with some fun. Here are the steps we used to begin Fun-Da-Middles.

- *Form a leadership team.* Recruit a leadership team of five couples. Have the group brainstorm, choose topics, determine a class format, and advertise.

- *Start with a social.* Plan a celebration to kick off the class. Using round tables will facilitate conversation.

- *Refreshments.* Ask people to sign up and provide weekly refreshments. Having the refreshments available when people arrive encourages parents to mingle and chat.

- *Roundtable discussion.* Begin with announcements and introduction of guests. Move on to a question and answer time. When situations are too personal, questions can be written anonymously on 3" x 5" index cards. Promote discussion and sharing of ideas. A wonderful benefit is the variety of parents’ ages. Parents of older children can offer wisdom and encouragement to parents of children just entering the teen years. Encourage honesty without being critical of one another or others’ children. Participants learn that parenting adolescents is a daily challenge, even on a good day.

- *Relationship building.* A bonus of the class is the relationships, networking, and support of other parents. Some observations from parents:

- ▶ “My husband and I didn’t really know any other parents of adolescents. Now we have a network and support system.”
- ▶ “It’s good to know other parents are dealing with the same problems.”
- ▶ “Just sharing the problems we have, helps us cope with our families each week. My marriage is stronger and closer than ever from reading the books which are recommended in class.”

- *Schedule and topics.* It is good to begin each fall with a four-week series

(adolescent development—physical, emotional, social, and spiritual) which provides parents with an overview of the adolescent adventure. One couple does not have to do all the teaching. Invite class members to teach on aspects they have experienced. Periodically distribute class evaluations and requests for class ideas. Some ideas include:

- ▶ a four to six week topical series
- ▶ a new topic each week
- ▶ divide the group by men and women’s topics
- ▶ panel discussion by “older” parents
- ▶ choose topics in conjunction with the youth department curriculum
- ▶ review a book or video
- ▶ a session with the youth pastor

## Parenting adolescents is a daily challenge.

The thoughts of this parent best summarize why parents keep coming to Fun-Da-Middles. She says, “I like the moral support, encouragement, different suggestions, and viewpoints of the unique problems of adolescents and their parents. It has changed the way I look at communication within the family.”

—Marian C. Fritzemeier