

ROTATION SUNDAY SCHOOL

Anyone who helps with VBS will tell you that there is a very high level of excitement and interest throughout the whole week. Six years ago we decided we would like to keep that level of excitement going when we started fall Sunday School. To accomplish that goal, we began using a new approach to teaching Sunday School with our youngsters in kindergarten through 5th grade. It is a method of teaching called The Workshop Rotation Model. In a nutshell, it teaches major Bible stories and concepts through multimedia workshops: art, drama, music, games, puppets, storytelling, video, cooking, science, and any other educational media you can get your hands on. The same Bible story is taught for three or four weeks with the kids rotating to a different workshop each week. This method is very sound since kids not only love but also need repetition to develop lasting memory and understanding of content. The multimedia approach is very kid-friendly and gives each student a chance to learn in the medium that best suits him/her. While traditional programs have attempted to teach through multi-media, they have usually tried to squeeze all the workshops into one week. This was far too frenetic for teachers as well as students. The Rotation Model is exciting without being overwhelming!

Since each rotation lasts only 3 weeks, anyone who wants to teach for short periods of time can volunteer for as few as 3 weeks. In many cases, “teaching” is really sharing a little of yourself and we can usually arrange things so you only need to come one week. We often have “guest speakers.” For example, when we taught the parable that deals with building your house on a strong foundation, an architect from our congregation visited the classes and showed blueprints and drawings. When our Jeremiah rotation had a reference to a potter’s wheel, an art teacher did a demonstration. During our Gideon Rotation, two teen trumpet players let each student give the trumpet a try.

In Rotation Sunday School, students do not just sit at tables doing work sheets. They are moving, exploring, really living the stories. When we studied the Last Supper, we baked Communion bread. As part of the Pentecost Rotation, we made and flew kites. For part of the David unit, we viewed a VeggieTale. Learning is fun and each week is unique. So, if you wander into Luther Hall some Sunday and hear laughter, see kids striking poses for a digital camera, or smell the aroma of something baking, you will know that Rotation Sunday School is really working.