

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

First Congregational Church of Deep River

1 Church Street

Deep River, Connecticut 06417

## 2011 - 2012



FOR GOD SO  
LOVED THE  
WORLD

Welcome to a year in the life of children's  
Christian Education in our Church.  
As we meet together to explore Christian faith and heritage,  
you will learn along with those placed in your ministry.

### Sunday School Purpose

To let every child know they have a special  
place in the house of our Lord  
and to lead each child into a personal  
relationship with Jesus.

The information contained in this booklet is intended to acquaint both new and experienced teachers to the policies and goals of our Sunday School.



**Curriculum:** Our Sunday School is proud to offer a variety of age appropriate curriculum for the youth of our church. The Nellie Prann Room (birth – 3 years old) uses large story books and prayer shells, 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade focus on the Old and New Testaments, religion history, current religious events and other pertinent issues, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade veers off their regular curriculum for eight weeks as they complete lessons with "Learn Your Bible" in preparation for earning their own Bible on Children's Sunday.

Our Kindergarten through the 6<sup>th</sup> grade use Groups Hands-On Bible Curriculum. This curriculum offers a wide variety of options for teachers to use. You might open the Teacher Guide and find it overwhelming and think that it's impossible to fit all that is outlined into one class; and you are right, you can't. What we like about this curriculum is that it offers options and takes into account various teaching methods which include crafts, roll playing, music, drama, puppets and interactive play. As the teacher, you select which is the right fit for you. Remember, the simpler the better. If the children understand the key verse and the overall concept of the lesson, then what you are teaching and how you are teaching is working.

The Board of Christian Education (BoCE) in conjunction with the Director of Christian Education (DCE) and the Minister select curriculum that best reflects both our church's beliefs and what will hold the interest of the children. We feel it is imperative that all children are being taught lessons that have continuity and tie in with the overall scripture of the congregation. If a teacher has an issue or concern about the curriculum, it is important that you speak with either the DCE or attend a BoCE meeting which are usually held the third Monday of the month at 7:00 pm (please check the church web site calendar incase date is changed). Prior approval is needed by the DCE if a teacher would like to introduce other lessons or curriculum.

**Prayers:** Teachers are encouraged to start and end their class with a prayer. Some curriculum include key verses and by adding a few words you can make that into a prayer. There are also books on prayers in the CE office or teachers can write their own. Praying as a group may be difficult for some to adjust to including the children, but hopefully everyone will become more accustomed to this practice.

**Food Allergies:** We have many children in the Sunday School with food allergies. The most prominent food allergy is nut products. DRCC discourages serving food during Sunday School, except in the Nellie Prann Room. The BoCE believes children can make it through 45 minutes of class without eating. If you serve a snack you must check the ingredients thoroughly prior to serving and healthy snacks are encouraged. Parents list all allergies on the registration form and it is noted on your class list. For classes in which snack is provided by the BoCE, all ingredients have been checked prior to purchasing. When treats are served on UNICEF Sunday, we ask parents of the children with allergies to bake.

**Electronic Media:** With just one click the words you send can be seen by many. Before you click, think to yourself, is this something I would want to be included in the Messenger or Weekly Bulletin for all to see and read? I know we can't dictate what you do on your own personal time, but as a Youth Lay Minister you should keep in mind that our church has a Community Covenant which is in every Sunday School classroom. Throughout the year, we use that Covenant to remind our children the importance of being a Christian and to follow the 5 finger rule - to be responsible, respectful, prepared, safe and kind. Facebook has become a popular forum for people to voice their views and opinions. What some of us forget is that posts on walls are *not* private, even though your group might be. Eventually what is written is shared with others. Media is ever-changing and we are kindly reminding our all church members, of all ages, to follow our church's Community Covenant in their daily lives as Christians. We also ask you to use church e-mails for church business and correspondence only. Lastly, our Safe Church Policy states that adults should not "friend" youths (under 18) of our church. To read the full policy, visit our church website.

**Registration Forms:** Every child must have a completed, signed registration form on file. Since we have a family registration form, some teachers might not see one for each child in your class. Bring any completed registration forms that you receive to the CE office soon as they are turned in.

**Class Time:** Class time ends at approximately 11:10 a.m. This should give you enough time for your lesson and clean up. Some Sundays however are longer (i.e. Communion Sunday) and therefore a supplemental/extended lesson may be needed. Watch your Teacher Newsletter for other Sundays that may be lengthy.

**Early Arrival of Teachers:** It is important that teachers in the Nellie Prann Room be in their room by 9:40 a.m., so parents may drop off their children and be in church on time. All other teachers should be in their class with their prepared lesson by 10:15 a.m. Attending church service is encouraged. Please leave when the children are dismissed.

**Dismissal of Children:** On our registration form there is a section for the parent to state how they would like their child dismissed from Sunday School. Your class list will note dismissal instructions. Periodic updated class lists will be distributed if any important information changes.

**Classrooms:** We take great pride in our Sunday School classrooms. Supplies, storage and materials are continually being updated. Each room has been provided a bulletin board and a CD player. We ask you for assistance in making sure rooms stay in top condition for the children. Take a few minutes on Sunday to wipe the tables clean of glue, markers or crayons and wash the chalkboard. When hanging items on the wall, use masking tape (in CE office); no tacks or nails should be used. Make sure all markers are capped properly, keep supplies in the designated area and please keep your space tidy as some of our classrooms are shared with the daycare center.

**Materials and Resources:** There are many resources available in the DCE office. There are religious games, songbooks, story Bibles and CDs, and a flannel board with every imaginable Biblical scene. Art and craft books and supplies can also be found in the DCE office and in the storage room. Reference books and materials are found on the shelves in front of the office desk. The Church Office is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and you can come in and browse for resources. Please make a note and place it on the desk chair indicating materials that you have taken. DRCC has a library, located down the hallway of the kitchen, with age appropriate books and videos. Again, materials must be checked out on the library's sign out book. Teachers may show a video/DVD. The Sunday School has a TV/VCR and a DVD player on a cart that can be moved into classrooms. Advance notice is needed to avoid two classes needing it at the same time. If you need a specific resource, please see the DCE.

**New Children:** Advise the DCE if any new children start attending Sunday School during the school year. The parent should complete a registration form (copies in class folder). You will need to add the child's name to your class list and attendance sheet then return the completed form to the CE office.

**Children's Illness/Injury:** If a student becomes ill or is injured during class, please bring them to my office immediately. First aid kits are located in the DCE office (bottom shelf of built-in bookcase), in the main kitchen or on top of the refrigerator in the kitchenette on the lower level.

**Teacher Absence:** If you know in advance you are going to be absent, use your substitute list to arrange for someone to teach your class and notify me of the substitute obtained. If you are unable to find a substitute, please contact me at home, 860-526-4203, as soon as possible. If you become ill and cannot teach, please contact me before 8:00 a.m. on Sunday.

**Attendance Records:** Attendance should be taken every Sunday. An attendance sheet is provided twice a year. It is extremely important that attendance is recorded every week. These records are used in case of illness and for the calculation of the attendance certificates. The older children can check off their own names, but please double check for accuracy. Sheets may be posted on your bulletin board. In the past, teachers have attached a hanging pen or a pocket full of small stickers to mark attendance as well.

**Room Partner/Class Aides:** In an effort to comply with Safe Church policy ("Two Volunteer Rule") all events in which DRCC is providing supervision of youth, a minimum of two volunteers will be utilized. The rule will include coverage of the Sunday School classrooms in the form of a Class Aide. The Class Aide can assist teachers in various ways including distributing items, helping with crafts, washing hands, etc. A Class Aide sheet is posted so teachers know who will be in their class each week. A Room Partner (similar to a room parent) is assigned to each grade. They oversee Class Aide schedules, make sure each classroom has a second adult present and check attendance sheets. If they notice that a child has been absent for more than a few weeks in a row a "Miss You" card is sent. Teachers should feel free to contact the Room Partner at any time.

**Children's Behavior:** The BoCE has established Church-wide guidelines and expectations of all Sunday School children called the "Community Covenant". Every child of the Sunday School will be asked to make a commitment to be supportive and caring and to grow in the understanding of Christian life. They are asked to support one another in being Responsible, Respectful, Prepared, Safe and Kind. This agreement is on the back of our registration form with our goal of having the children know our expectations during Sunday School class. More information on this policy is in the classroom folder. If a child continues to be disruptive or starts to show inappropriate behavior, contact the DCE. Parents will be notified and may be asked to attend class with their child.

**Parent's Handbook:** A Parent Handbook is offered to every Sunday School family. It outlines our curriculum, class focus for the year, attendance policy, Communion, Youth Groups and other pertinent information. There is also a schedule in the back listing events and activities. Take a moment to review the handbook and become familiar with the Board's goals for your grade. The handbook is updated every year as policies and procedures change. This book is available on line.

**Snow Day Cancellation:** In the event of inclement weather, check our web site at [www.deepriverchurch.org](http://www.deepriverchurch.org) to see if Sunday School has been cancelled. Rev. Haut and the DCE make the decision about closing before 8:00 a.m. In addition, the DCE will attempt to call one teacher from each grade level and if you are not teaching that Sunday it would be helpful if you could call the other team teacher.

**Communion:** Teachers have two options for taking Communion. You may either attend the early service at 8:30 a.m. on a Communion Sunday or take part in our youth service (5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades) that takes place at 10:00 a.m. on the first Sunday of each month in the Upper Fellowship Hall. Music, readings and partaking of the elements are incorporated in this fifteen minute service done largely by the youth of our Church. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade will join us when they complete their Communion Classes in the spring.

**Board of Christian Education:** One of the roles of the BoCE is to make sure our Sunday School is the best it can be. If you have any questions or concerns about our program, please feel free to speak with one of the Board members. They circulate through the Sunday School during class time making "Temp Checks" to be sure things are running smoothly. You are also welcome to attend our monthly Christian Education meetings, where we have "Teacher Concerns/Comments" first on our agenda. You may contact the DCE or one of the Board members if you can't attend the meeting and we will be sure to bring up the issue or concern.

**Photocopying:** Teachers may use the church copier during the week if necessary to copy your lessons. The Church Office is open weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. If teachers need to make copies on Sunday morning, you may access the copier through the CE office, which is open by 9:00 a.m.

**Communication:** It is imperative that all teachers who team-teach communicate with each other throughout the year. If a classroom situation arises during your week, it should be shared with your alternate teacher. Feel free to exchange ideas, curriculum tips and activities that might benefit the children. It is important that you both agree on the presentation material for Children's Sunday (June).

**Conflicts:** If at any time you have a conflict with a parent, alternate teacher or a student, please come directly to the DCE. A meeting will take place to discuss and note all concerns. If need be, the DCE will seek the assistance of the Minister, call the parent, or speak with the person that the conflict is concerning. All measures will be taken to appease both parties involved and work towards a mutual resolution.

**Bulletin Boards:** Each classroom has a bulletin board of their own that should be filled during the year with children's artwork or a monthly theme that you may be working on. Photos of your class may also be put up on the board as well as inspirational messages.

**Workshop, Forum and Meetings:** The BoCE holds two important teacher events during the year. The first meeting is Teacher Workshop. Here you will have the opportunity to meet the entire teaching staff, including your alternate teacher. We also review class curriculum and distribute classroom and reference materials. In January, a Teacher Forum is held following church. This is a time for teachers to share ideas and have an open discussion about curriculum and classroom issues. We also discuss how the BoCE can make improvements for our teachers. It may be necessary to have an additional meeting during the year if the need arises.

**Newsletters:** A monthly teacher newsletter will be delivered to the classroom on the last Sunday of the month. The newsletter contains reminders, requests, upcoming events and missions. A list of lessons and their corresponding weeks are also included so there is continuity in our Sunday School. Please post the newsletter on the back of your closet door so both teachers (if applicable) can use it as a reference throughout the month. If you provide the DCE your e-mail address, the newsletter will also be sent to you prior to the first Sunday of the month. In addition, you can find a copy under Sunday School Teachers on the Church web site.

**Offering Envelopes:** Children are offered offertory envelopes at the time of registration. If additional boxes are needed during the year, please have the parents see the DCE.

**Mission Projects:** There are several mission projects that Sunday School children work on throughout the year. School supplies are collected in conjunction with Women's Fellowship for Church World Service in September. At Halloween time there is a monetary collection for UNICEF and a costume parade and party are held. We wrap up our church year in the spring with participation in Heifer Project International. More information on each of these mission projects will be available in the newsletters and on the web site as the dates approach.

Please see the DCE with any questions or concerns that might arise.....the office door is always open on Sunday mornings! Have a wonderful year of teaching and thank you for volunteering as a Youth Lay Minister!

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