

ROUNDabout

Fall 2008



The newsletter for Gather 'Round leaders

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

“But where are the weekly take-home leaflets?” we are sometimes asked. How does Gather 'Round help Christian education programs make connections with the home? How do we keep parents informed and involved?

The Talkabout is a “take-home” that is really an “at-home.” The Talkabout is a colorful and three-dimensional product to give to each household at the beginning of every quarter. It offers simple and fun suggestions for engaging families around the weekly Bible themes.

Children from preschool through junior youth also have activity and worship books to use with their teachers throughout the quarter and then take home. Parents can read aloud Bible stories with their preschool and primary children and look at the art and activities that accompanied each story. Middler or multiage children may want to do some of the craft projects again, make a recipe, or reread some of the stories in their books.

In most sessions, there are creative projects that can go home with children. When children have invested energy in a project, they are more likely to “own” the idea behind it. Parents are more likely to be interested in a product that has been made by their children.

We know it isn't enough to do “Sunday school.” We must bring entire families together to learn about and serve God.

—Anna Speicher, Director and Editor

New features for fall

Beginning this quarter, *My Bible Storybook*, for preschoolers, has a lively new design. Take special note of the new features, such as more interactive activity pages and “home connection” notes for parents. The primary *Good News Reader* is also getting a new look, with sixteen additional pages that allow more space for stories and activities. Work with teachers and parents to be sure you are making the most of these books.

Signs of hope

The fall quarter leads us back to the Old Testament, and stories of Israel's history during the time of kings and prophets. The main themes are judgment and hope, and how divine purposes are fulfilled through people who are sometimes faithful and sometimes disobedient.

The stories begin with the call of Samuel and end just before the destruction of the temple about 450 years later. During this time, Israelite society makes significant transitions, beginning with a shift from informal tribal leadership under the judges to a united monarchy and culminating in the reigns of David and Solomon. The kingdom splits into two rival nations: Israel (ten tribes in the north) and Judah (two tribes in the south). The northern kingdom is destroyed by the Assyrians. Much later, the Babylonians defeat the southern kingdom and lead the people of Israel into exile.

Bible insight writer Patricia Shelly asks: “What would it have been like to live through these tumultuous events? Imagine conversations among people of faith as they tried to discern God's will in these times of upheaval.”

During this quarter we will be reminded that God's covenantal love means there is hope (beyond judgment) for restoration and a new beginning. The birth of a child, the anointing of a new king, the rushing of water, the discovery of an old book—all are signs of hope that God's purposes will yet be fulfilled if the people respond in faithfulness.

**Copy and distribute to
all teachers and leaders.**

**PDF at:
www.gatherround.org**

The tip of the iceberg

In a way, this teacher's guide you hold in your hands is only the tip of the iceberg. What lies underneath is years of research and prayer, a staff committed to giving our children the best, and a faith history and biblical story that goes back to the beginning. To be one small part of this much, much bigger project has been inspiring to me. I pray you will be inspired as well.

—Ingrid Loepp Thiessen (2008–2009 Primary Writer)

Inspiration on board!

Follow these tips to create bulletin boards that inspire learning:



- Keep bulletin boards, posters, and displays at the children's eye level when possible.
- Display the story picture each week under the caption, "Story of the week."
- Display children's artwork as often as you can.
- Cut out pictures from magazines that depict events or feelings similar to the quarter's theme or a weekly Bible story.
- Add something new each week to draw the children's attention to the theme.
- Take photos of the children for a room collage. Be sure to add photos of newcomers and visitors.
- Create a mural on the bulletin board, each week inviting children to add images, draw or cut out pictures, write poems, add stickers or fabric that can build on the theme of Judgment and Hope.
- Transform your bulletin board into a paint-by-number mural as a backdrop for the Bible story. Ask an artist or check out pictorial books of ancient Israel or Old Testament Bible stories. Create the outline, give step-by-step instructions, gather the supplies, and go to work. Older children might enjoy doing this on a weekday in preparation for the quarter.

Check out the Gather 'Round Handbook for more ideas on room arrangement (pp. 121–122, 130–131, and 140).

Fall 2008 Talkabout • Judgment and Hope

For Fall 2008, roll the special Talkabout cube. Match the symbol on the cube with the symbol in the Talkabout booklet for a new possibility each day. Find answers to Bible trivia, act out stories, draw, share ideas, and pray together. Enjoy living with the Bible story all week long.



www.gatherround.org

Free sample sessions,
Bible texts, and more at
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