

Teachers Serving God in the Community

by Linda Short



Have you ever been shopping in your local grocery or department store and encountered a child from your Sunday school class? There is always that “aha” moment for the child as he realizes that his teacher does not stay at the church but is actually a member of his community.

Young children usually giggle and point while explaining to their parent that this ordinary looking person is really special to them because it is their Sunday school teacher. Preteens may act nonchalant and may not be as quick to acknowledge your smile of greeting, thinking it is not quite cool to speak to the teacher outside of church. In either case, the student sees that his teacher is involved in every day life outside of the Sunday school classroom.

How can you capitalize on this revelation and increase your godly influence from just a few hours on Sunday morning to an effective witness and help during the week to the entire community? Several avenues are available in which to direct your energies.

Many youth-oriented organizations seek responsible, moral, principled, educated adults as volunteers to mentor children and teens. Most libraries have literacy programs, summer reading programs, and children’s story hours that provide an array of opportunities to interact with small groups or individuals. What a profound effect you could have on an entire family by helping a child or his parent learn to read.



Libraries provide training sessions and continued support for volunteers who take on the task of teaching someone to read. There is a bond that develops between teacher and student which grows and deepens as success is attained. While the learner acquires book knowledge he also receives reassurance that someone cares enough about him to see that he achieves this vitally important goal. Reading opens up a whole new world and that includes the ability to read and understand the Bible.

Another area for volunteering is mentoring or being a Big Brother or Big Sister to a student. To become a part of the program you have to fill out a questionnaire, interview face-to-face with a match coordinator, pass a background check, and be assigned to a compatible child in your local area. Being a “Big” can range from playing computer games, reading, shooting hoops, or attending special events to just hanging out at the park. The most important aspect is spending time with the “Little” and giving him your undivided attention.

The Web site of Big Brother Big Sister is www.bbbs.org. According to the information posted, “Littles” experience better relationships with peers and families, attend school more regularly, and are less likely to begin using drugs. The statistics are the culmination of a nationwide impact study. The success was not based on the type of activities provided but on the fact that a child had a caring adult in his life who typically met with him three times a month for a period of one year.



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Resources

by Joni Owens



www.pentecostalpublishing.com

314-336-1818

www.upci.org/wap

Apostolic Products

What better way to serve your community than to cover the schools with prayer?

Introducing Daughters of Zion to Your Ladies Ministries DVD

Ladies Ministries

If you are interested in surrounding your children with the protection of prayer, let this DVD inspire you. You will find testimonials of successful back-to-school prayer rallies, inspirational pictures of children in prayer, a history of the rallies, information on starting your own DOZ chapter and prayer rally, and much more.

www.ladiesministries.org

Item 18021

\$11.95

Back To School Prayer Rally Pack

Ladies Ministries

Mothers, now more than ever before, we need to reach the throne of God for our children. Daughters of Zion has put together an incredible program that encourages and offers unique ideas for praying for our children. Start your child's school year off right with a prayer rally! Involve the mayor, the school superintendent, administrators, teachers, and area pastors in this community-wide effort. This pack offers all the information and resources you need to start your own chapter of Daughters of Zion and implement an annual back-to-school prayer rally. The enclosed CD-ROM allows you to print the information found in the spiral book.

www.ladiesministries.org

Item 18319

\$22.95

Web sites

When serving your community, think outside the box. Show God to your community through activities that appeal to them, such as the environment, politics, or the school system. Then watch God do a great work through your simple non-religious volunteer work. Visit these Web sites to see what others are doing in their community, then brainstorm with your team to see what you can do.

www.blossominternational.org/?gclid=CLWe-fDh3ZECFSW6IgodbVTCXA

<http://charityguide.org/?gclid=CKrhyOfh3ZECFQZ7Igodbm6nYA>

www.ccschouston.com/

www.nationalservice.gov/about/newsroom/photos_press_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=475

www.unitedway.org/

www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/www_usn.nsf

Teacher Brain Breaks

Teachers need brain breaks! Consider these novels by our own LaJoyce Martin that will strengthen and refresh your spirit.

The Watchdog

Item 11332

\$11.99

Last Concert

Item 21152

\$11.99

Silent Winner

Item 17927

\$11.99

Beyond the Shadow

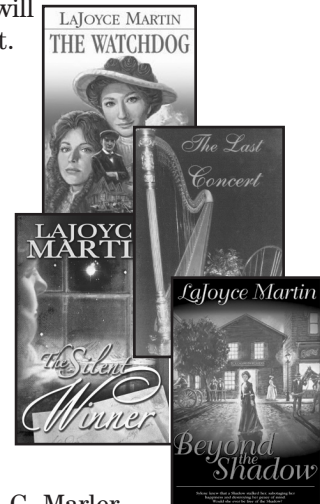
Item 13852

\$11.99

The Crooked Picture

Item 21546

\$11.99



And for the men—westerns by O. C. Marler

Night of the Panther

Item 10007

\$10.00

Long Road to Mesilla

Item 9964

\$10.00

Laugh Kills Lonesome

Item 9931

\$10.00

Music

Keep a good supply of children's music CDs for play during activities, worship, travel, and outreach.

Kids in Praise

Word Aflame Publications
Item 16628

\$10.25



Kids in Praise 2

Word Aflame Publications
Item 17591

\$10.25

If You're Happy Say Amen

Shaw
Item 20517

\$12.00



Obvious Kids Praise

Condon
Item 19468

\$17.95

Kid Stuff

Waaay Cool Bible Puzzles

Nancy I. Sanders

A resource chock-full of word searches, crossword puzzles, mazes, secret words, and codes that will literally have the answers jumping up before your eyes. A valuable resource for 8-12 years old.

Item 12505

\$5.99

Christian Girls Guide to the Bible

Katrina Cassel

Did you know that you can find suspense, adventure, humor, and even romance in the Bible? The Bible is a pretty awesome book. Full of puzzles, crafts, and other activities, this guide will help you understand it just a little better. Includes a cross keychain.

Item 16951

\$9.99

Bibleopoly Game

This bestselling game has the popular appeal of Monopoly weaved into a Christian theme. Move around the board and build churches as you go. Ages 8+.

Item 4274

\$24.95

Bible Dominoes Game

Faith Kids

An old game made new! Instead of numbers, each domino comes with Christian symbols for matching against those already played. Scripture references explain each symbol through Bible stories that share truth in a new way. For ages 3 and up.

Item 12610

\$8.99

Bible Action Heroes Matching Game

Faith Kids

Match the Bible hero to the exciting Bible action! For ages 4 and up! A fun game for 2-4 players. No reading required!

Item 17472

\$8.99

Full Armor of God Game

Faith Kids

A great practical way to teach your children about the armor of God. This "Peel 'n' Play" game comes with silver vinyl armor for each competitor's board. Just spin the dial and see who completes their armor first. Works in a car or at home. Ages 4 and up, for 2-4 years.

Item 12609

\$8.99

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To become a Big Brother or Sister, visit the Web site mentioned above. This organization provides continued support, advice, and supervision for the duration of the relationship.

Many other mentoring organizations are available. Simply type "volunteer opportunities" in the search engine of your computer and a host of choices will appear. Most of these agencies provide information about their funding and partnerships that support their efforts. A small amount of research can detect those organizations sponsored by partners with whom our biblical doctrines conflict. It is important to know what values the volunteer group promotes because you will be an underlying supporter of the agency as a whole.

Another method of volunteering is to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for abused or neglected children. This organization was established by a Seattle, Washington, superior court judge when he realized that he did not have enough information at hand to make a wise decision regarding the welfare of a child. He solicited volunteers from his community and when fifty citizens responded the CASA movement was firmly established.

This type of volunteering takes a person into the life of an entire family involved in the judicial system because of abuse or neglect of a child. The job of the CASA is to help the court system find a safe, permanent, nurturing home in



which to place the child. The CASA visits everyone involved in the case including parents, relatives, Department of Human Service workers, attorneys, teachers, psychologists, and others.

Although some CASA workers have credentials in educational backgrounds, many have been products of foster care themselves, and others have simply come from loving homes and are trying to help those less fortunate to find the level of care they received growing up. It is important to note that having experience in child care and/or education is helpful in volunteering for CASA but it is not a requirement. CASA provides an initial thirty hours of training which includes information on child development, judicial procedures, substance abuse indicators, interviewing techniques, and other related issues.

After the training is completed the volunteer is duly sworn in by a judge and becomes a court-appointed advocate. The CASA has the backing of the court and is privy to any and all confidential information regarding the case. He is also required to present reports on his findings and attend hearings throughout the duration of the case. Often interviews that must be conducted in order to gain as much information as possible may occur in distasteful places, including county jails or prisons and homes with undesirable living conditions. Yet, the satisfaction of helping an innocent child makes every visit worthwhile.

I have been privileged to be involved with CASA for over two years. An interesting occurrence took place in a specific case just in the last few months. The mother involved was directed to attend substance abuse counseling as part of the treatment plan to regain custody of her children. After two or three starts at government sponsored agencies, she was directed to the A.C.T.S. program provided by the United Pentecostal Church in a neighboring city. Coincidence? This CASA thinks not.

No matter what avenue of volunteering you decide to take, remember that the friendship and trust established in these relationships can lead to discussions about faith and salvation. The Lord will take whatever efforts you expend to reach out in your community and display His love and compassion through you.



The Word Aflame staff is here to serve you. If you have questions, dilemmas, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will listen and do our best to help you. You may reach us Monday through Friday, 8-4:30 CST at 314-837-7300, or via e-mail at wap@upci.org.

