



**Growing  
in CHRIST™**

**Adapting *Growing in Christ*®  
for Site-Rotation Sunday School**

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## Introduction

In spring of 2005, the Board of Education at my church decided it needed to do something to revitalize Sunday School. Attendance was decreasing, and there was little enthusiasm from students. It was becoming difficult to find adults who were willing to commit to a year of teaching. What's more, by February they were tired and their weariness showed in the classrooms. We knew we needed to look for some way to make kids excited about hearing the special message of Jesus, our Savior.

During the summer, a group of committed parents came together to brainstorm and discuss what our options were. The initial talk was about painting the classrooms to make them more inviting while also incorporating some special events into the scheduled curriculum. But one parent expressed the concern that we could change the classrooms all we wanted, but if we didn't change some of the format as well, the attitude wouldn't change. Then someone shared their experience with site-rotation Sunday School, and the energy level increased immediately.

On August 1, the decision was made to make the switch. Sunday School would start in a month. Could it happen? With enthusiasm and growing excitement, many volunteers put in countless hours to make it happen. Concordia's curriculum was adapted to work very well with the new format.

Looking back now, one year later, we can say it was a success. Children got excited and attendance increased, with new families joining us throughout the year. New people participated in teaching throughout the year, and there was never the weariness of years past. As soon as the year was over, people started meeting to plan the "next stage" of the program and what needed to be done over the summer months.

While not for everyone, site-rotation Sunday School breathed new life into a program that was struggling in our church community. As we continue to grow and develop, we see how this model continues to meet the needs of children and adults as they grow in their faith and share the Gospel with others. Can site rotation work for you? The ideas in this resource are flexible and can work with your specific situation with very little modification. It is our hope that this guide will assist you as you consider adopting site rotation in your children's ministries.

## **Part 1: What is Site-Rotation Sunday School?**

Site-rotation Sunday School is a flexible option of coordinating classes into different settings and groups during the Sunday School time. Concordia Publishing House's Growing in Christ curriculum lends itself to this adaptation, as the scope and sequence are the same for all ages. Activities from each grade level can be adapted and incorporated into the lesson outlines for each site in the rotation.

There are many benefits to the site-rotation format. First and foremost is the flexibility it gives your teaching staff. One of the biggest difficulties with Sunday School identified by churches is finding teachers to commit for an entire year. The site-rotation model allows for individuals to work in areas that they are specifically gifted in and for shorter periods of time. So, instead of finding all-around classroom teachers, you can draw on people's strengths. It's easier to recruit someone to teach just music or to handle only arts and crafts. Plus, leaders may be recruited for one week, a month, or a quarter, depending on the format that is selected for the site rotations.

A second benefit is that the rotation model allows students different activities in different settings. In today's world, where children are accustomed to a variety of media and stimuli around them, the rotation model reaches children in different ways, adapting lessons to accommodate different learning styles while allowing greater opportunities for creativity throughout the education hour.

A third benefit is that while individuals can teach children in areas that they are particularly gifted in, relationships actually seem stronger in site rotation. Volunteer guides are used whose sole role is to "shepherd" and get to know children. (Definitions of all volunteers and roles will follow later.)

Finally, site rotation also lends itself to using the gifts of others who might not be gifted teachers, but excel in the areas of administration, decorating, missions, or others. Adapting the overall program allows more people to be involved in ways that meet their passions for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others.

## **Part 2: Options of Site-Rotation Sunday School**

There are different options for the format of the site-rotation Sunday School. There are benefits to each option, but choose the ones that are best for your program's goals and space.

**Opening:** All these options begin with a large group opening. The Director Guide for Growing in Christ each quarter is an excellent resource for the opening portion of the education hour. An overall outline is included as well as suggestions for preparing your worship space. A short devotional talk is included in this resource as well. (Think about incorporating elements of worship. This will help the children understand the worship structure of the congregation.)

Smaller Sunday Schools may choose to have the opening with all students together. Older students can be assigned to younger children as mentors to assist in the activities and seating. An advantage of having all the students together is that this depicts the unity of the body of Christ together and exemplifies how corporate worship of the congregation happens. One disadvantage is that one huge gathering limits the range of music and the depth of presentations since material needs to be accessible to children of all ages.

Larger Sunday Schools should consider using two age-appropriate openings. In this way, the music and message can be crafted to an age-appropriate audience.

However you choose to do your opening, attention should be given to developing an exciting opportunity for children to join together for praise and worship of their Lord and Savior. Allow students to be involved through the reading of Scripture, singing, and preparing the worship space. As students are involved, their excitement will be contagious, generating more enthusiasm.

After the opening, different options are available for site rotations using the Growing in Christ curriculum. Each of these can be additionally modified to meet the needs of your Sunday School:

**Option 1** (As described in the Fall 2006 Director Guide):

**God Speaks** – Students remain in the large group for the “God Speaks” section of the lesson. A leader gifted with storytelling, tells the Bible story (or uses other media such as video, books, drama, etc. to tell the story) to everyone and reviews the story with the group. (See later in this resource for suggestions on using the Teacher Guides in preparation for this section.)

**Music** – Students remain in the large group for a music session with a leader gifted in music to learn hymns and songs tied in with the lesson. Materials are provided in the curriculum to assist with this area.

**We Live** – Break up students into small groups by age/grade level for discussion of the lesson using the age-appropriate materials. This is an excellent opportunity for relationship building and for a greater in-depth discussion of the lesson. Leaders of the

small groups must prepare for discussion questions, but do not need to prepare an entire Bible story presentation.

**Closing** – Students return to the large group to join in a common closing. The Bible story is briefly reviewed again. Close with music and prayers.

**Option 2** (As described in the Fall 2006 Director Guide):

Following the large group opening, children are split into groups, each led by a “shepherd” (a guide that sticks with the group each week). The groups rotate every ten to fifteen minutes to different sites as outlined below. Staff for each station will lead the activities with the shepherds guiding the children from one activity to the next. The shepherds provide comfort and consistency for the kids throughout the lesson and from week to week.

**God Speaks** – The leader uses the “God Speaks” section from the Teacher Guide to tell the Bible story.

**Music** – The leader uses CDs and other musical materials to teach a song relating to the story theme.

**We Live** – A leader assists the shepherds in discussing the application portion of the Teacher Guide.

**Arts and Crafts** – Using the student items and Teacher Guide reproducible pages, the leader assists students in making a take-home piece to reinforce the lesson of the day.

**Snack** – This leader prepares and serves a simple snack and beverage, possibly tied in with the lesson for the day.

**Games** – The Growing in Christ curriculum has many suggestions of review games for each week’s story. (A separate workshop may be utilized to use these resources.)

**Closing** – This can be done either at each group’s final site, or as a large group, using a closing activity found in the Teacher Guide.

**Option 3:** (A combination of options 1 and 2)

**God Speaks** – As with option 1, keep students together for the telling of the Bible story in a large-group setting.

**We Live** – Students move in small groups for a short discussion of the story using questions suggested in this section of the Teacher Guide.

**Stations** – In a large area, have tables of the different stations described in option 2. Students can move around to the stations as they desire, focusing on activities that fit

their learning style and interests. Additional stations that might be set up include a drama area for students to re-enact the Bible story, a service area incorporating a service project for the month or quarter, and a reading area with Bible storybooks for students who wish to read more about the story on their own.

#### **Option 4:**

In this option, one story is selected to be the focus of a four-week period of classes. Workshops are then planned with a variety of presentations of the story of the month, utilizing an in-depth activity to reinforce the story. In this model, different workshops may use the varying forms of Bible story presentation found in the different Teacher Guides, as well as more of the reinforcement activities. While children will learn fewer Bible stories over the course of the year with this option, students who miss a Sunday will still learn of the story. Those who are in attendance on a more regular basis receive a weekly reinforcement of the story.

As with the other options, a large-group opening introduces the topic of the week/month and works on a musical piece. An advantage of this option is that more time can be allowed for the opening because the other workshops have more time to do their activities as well.

Following the large-group opening, students and their shepherds will go to one workshop for the remainder of the time that Sunday. These workshops might include the following (although more are possible):

**Music** – As described in the other options, the leader uses the Growing in Christ CDs and other musical materials to teach one or two songs that focus on the theme of the month. If you use this option, consider having the students sing the song they learn in worship at the end of the month as a way to highlight the children's ministry of your congregation.

**Drama** – The story is reinforced as the students act out the story in different forms.

**Arts and Crafts** – After hearing the story in a new form, students complete a more in-depth craft to take home and have as a daily reminder of the month's story.

**Cooking** – The leader presents the story, followed by a cooking activity that students eat while reviewing the lesson.

**Video** – Students watch a video relating to the story of the month. Discussion follows the video to review key points of the story.

**Service/Missions** – If your Sunday School has a regular mission project or is participating in one through the missions department, this workshop can be an opportunity to explain further what is happening in the project. It also provides an opportunity for hands-on experiences tied in with the mission project. Consider a service project as an opportunity for students to reach out to individuals within your community or congregation.

**Memory Work** – This might be incorporated into other workshops or be a workshop on its own. In this area, the focus is on learning the Bible memory verse (and possibly catechism passages) tied in with the lesson. Growing in Christ provides several resources to assist you with this workshop.

At the end, students may remain in their workshops as those leaders host closing activities, using materials from the Teacher Guides, or there can be a large-group closing where students can join together in music and prayer before being sent out as witnesses in the world.

### **Part 3: Definitions and Job Descriptions**

The following terms and job descriptions further explain the site-rotation model. They will also assist you in recruiting volunteers. Use them to explain to individuals how the format works.

**Workshops** – These are centers focusing on a specific task or theme relating to the Bible story. Workshops may include, but are not limited to, arts & crafts, drama, music, storytelling, and so on.

**General Job Descriptions** – As recruitment begins for site-rotation Sunday School, it is important to prayerfully consider individuals who:

- Have the interest, skills, and ability to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with children and their families.
- Have a commitment to Christian education and outreach.
- Enjoy working with children.
- Can donate the time. (For each area recruited, the time frame may vary. While individuals may commit to the entire program year, an advantage of site-rotation Sunday School is that it lends itself to smaller time commitments. Suggested time commitments for all staff other than shepherds, might be one month or one quarter. So that there is a continuity for students throughout the year, it is ideal to have shepherds commit for the entire program year.)

**Opening and Closing Leaders** – Plan and lead the Sunday School opening (and closing if there is one) so that students can grow in their knowledge of Jesus' love and God's grace.

- Is skilled in leading worship, singing, or making presentations.
- Plans, sets up, and leads openings and closings for time of commitment (one month or one quarter).
- Recruits helpers to assist, as needed. These may include but are not limited to musicians, actors, puppeteers, and so on.

**Shepherds** – Youth or adults who lead or “shepherd” a small group to different workshops. These individuals should make a longer commitment (think: a month, a quarter, or the entire education year).

**Workshop Leaders** – Youth or adults who lead a specific workshop for a designated period of time, as determined by your Sunday School program. See individual workshop titles for specific job descriptions.

**Music:** Teach songs and lead singing in openings, closings, and workshops.

- Use music to reinforce the Bible lessons and themes.
- Select and teach specific hymns and songs.
- Whenever possible, teach correlation between music and the Bible story and theme.
- Choose musical accompaniment options, using CDs found in the curriculum or live instruments.
- Recruit, coordinate, and practice with musicians as needed.
- Coordinate music and lead singing when there is a presentation in worship services or other opportunities.

**Drama:** Lead workshop focusing on the use of drama and/or puppets for the sharing of the Bible lesson and theme.

- Plan drama experiences utilizing students whenever possible.
- Prepare the drama settings, costumes, and props.
- Recruit helpers and actors as needed (although whenever possible use students in the drama process).
- Facilitate discussion after drama presentation to reinforce lesson points.

**Arts and Crafts:** Lead workshop focusing on the arts and crafts to reinforce the Bible story and theme.

- Is creative and artistic, eager to share their faith with students during craft time.
- Prepare a craft lesson tied in with the Bible story and theme.
- Purchase materials or arrange for donations of needed supplies.
- If using option 4, plan Bible story presentation as directed by the Sunday School coordinator.
- Facilitate discussion after craft is completed to reinforce lesson points.

**Cooking:** Lead workshop using food to develop and reinforce the Bible lesson and theme.

- Plan theme-related snack based on the Bible story.
- Coordinate donations and food purchases.
- Check all registration forms for any food allergies, making adjustments as necessary.
- If using option 4, plan Bible story presentation as directed by the Sunday School coordinator.
- Facilitate discussion after cooking activity to reinforce lesson points.

**Video:** Lead workshop using media to develop and reinforce the Bible lesson and theme.

- Select a theme-related video based on the Bible story (with the assistance of the Sunday School coordinator).
- Purchase video, if necessary.
- Review video in preparation for showing.
- Coordinate popcorn and beverage for video showing, if desired for a movie theatre atmosphere.
- Confirm proper AV equipment is available for video showing.
- Introduce video to students; show video.
- Facilitate discussion after video to reinforce lesson points.

**Service and Missions:** Lead workshop that actively involves children and families in a mission project.

- With Sunday School coordinator, select a mission or service project for current month or quarter from the Growing in Christ Web site ([sundayschool.cph.org/missions](http://sundayschool.cph.org/missions)).
- Plan activities to involve children and families in the mission or service project.
- Assist in publicizing the current Sunday School mission or service project in various publications, displays, and presentations.
- Educate students, parents, and congregation about the needs and opportunities of the project.
- Coordinate purchase of supplemental resources as needed.
- If using option 4, plan Bible story presentation as directed by the Sunday School coordinator.
- Facilitate discussion after the activity to reinforce lesson points.
- Collect and distribute gifts for the mission project.

**Memory Work:** Lead workshop focusing on Bible memory verses related to the Bible story and theme.

- Plan verse and theme-related activities based on the Bible story as provided in Growing in Christ.
- Recruit and coordinate volunteers, as needed, to assist.
- If using option 4, plan Bible story presentation as directed by the Sunday School coordinator.
- Facilitate discussion after activity to reinforce lesson points.
- Use resources found in Growing in Christ
- Bible Verse Songs (on Teacher CD)
- Bible Words Puzzles (in Upper Grades and Jr. High Teacher Tools)

#### **Part 4: Room and Space Setup**

An advantage of the site-rotation model is that the setting, staging, and space are up to you. Some sites or workshops may be more elaborate than others, but all the ideas are flexible and can be adapted to fit your space and needs.

General ideas for preparing your large-group opening worship space can be found in the Director Guide. This checklist gives specifics for items needed and how to set up the space. As suggested, the more opportunities you provide for your children to interact with your environment and to be involved in a meaningful way with the worship experience, the more engaged the children will be.

#### **One Large Room**

If your education space is limited and you only have one large area for your children's education time, the site-rotation model can work well. In your space, have a section set for the large-group gathering. Chairs, pillows, or carpet squares may be used for this area, depending on how formal or informal you want things to be. When students break into small groups, they can move into designated areas within the room, sitting in circles. Chairs, pillows, carpet squares, or whatever seating pieces you use, can be moved with the children into their small-group times, and then brought back. If using options 2, 3, or 4, use tables for the designated activity areas, with students moving in a clockwise direction around the room during the breakout portion of the hour or month.

#### **Multiple Rooms**

If your education space includes multiple rooms, designate one room or space for your large-group opening. Larger classes may be assigned to one room, which is then split into sub areas for discussion and activities. Furniture and decorations should fit the age group that is using that classroom.

In option 2, 3, or 4, rooms may also be decorated to further develop the theme of the workshop. Some area decorating ideas:

**God Speaks/Storytelling** – A relaxed setting of pillows or carpet squares to sit on the floor. Use a small indoor/outdoor canopy tent with an area rug to set the space apart. Have bookshelves of Bible storybooks for students to look at if there is extra time throughout the morning hour.

**Music** – Decorate with musical instruments and notes on the wall. Have a variety of rhythm instruments and keyboards available for students to use if their musical interest is not vocal. An overhead projector or PowerPoint projector might be helpful, especially if you have a larger group together.

**We Live** – Cozy discussion areas help to facilitate discussion by creating a small-group atmosphere. Utilize pillows or carpet squares for a movable and adaptable space.

**Arts and Crafts** – The arts and crafts space should promote creativity. Have tables at appropriate heights for children and shelves for art materials. Decorations may include previous projects that children have worked on, pictures of Bible stories, or murals on the walls.

**Snack/Cooking** – Your cooking space should have a homey feel, or reflect a café style. If it is possible, have a kitchen feel to the room, including café curtains, hot

pads, aprons, and chef hats. Have large counters or tables for work space and smaller tables (if there is room) for the eating space.

**Games** – There are a variety of games in the Teacher Tools of Growing in Christ. Some are board games, while others are active games that involve large motor skills so this should be a space with a lot of room, adaptable to the types of games utilized. For additional fun, consider making a life-size game board on the floor, using laminated construction paper squares, carpet squares, or a permanent design using different colored tiles.

**Video** – One of the most difficult aspects of using videos for larger groups is that not all children are able to see the TV monitor. If possible, project the movie on the wall or screen so all the children can easily see. Another option is to have tiered seating for students to look over each others' heads.

There are many options for room decorations and setup. They all depend on your budget and room availability. More examples of room decorations can be found at [www.rotation.org](http://www.rotation.org). Do not be overwhelmed by these examples. Remember, a lot can be done with minimal expense—especially if you let your congregation know what your needs are for the program.

## **Part 5: Using and Adapting Growing in Christ**

Because the Growing in Christ curriculum has a scope and sequence where all age levels have the same story each week, it is very conducive to using in a site-rotation format. While identifying different options for organizing site-rotations in section 2, some aspects of the curriculum were highlighted. Here are some additional ideas and ways to use and adapt Growing in Christ to meet your needs.

**Openings** – As noted previously, the Director Guide includes a suggested setup for your worship space, as well as an opening devotional talk that can be used each week. Some of the talks highlight aspects of a specific story, so be sure to review and confirm that it fits with the story that you are using that week. Additional resources and ideas are in each grade level’s Teacher Guide.

Share the resources with your volunteer(s) who lead openings and music. If you have more than one person doing this over the year, tear the books at the perforations and hand out the materials to the corresponding volunteers. Permission is granted to make copies of select pages from the teacher manuals to give to volunteers in different roles. These are marked “Reproduced by permission.”

Depending on the format selected for your particular rotation model, the specifics of how to adapt the curriculum for the remainder of the education hour will vary. Following are suggestions for how to use the curriculum for each of the different rotation models:

### **Option 1:**

**God Speaks** – With a large group of varying ages, the story presentation is a very important part of the morning’s curriculum. Although the leader may be the same person who does the opening, in order to allow for variety during the education time it is suggested to have someone different lead this section. Separate the Teacher Guide for the age groups according to the story and copy the “God Speaks” portion for the storyteller. The leader should review the options and select the presentation that best fits their style and excitement level, keeping in mind what has been used in previous weeks to allow for a variety of presentations. If puppets, drama, or video are being used to supplement the curriculum, make sure you’ve prepared by practicing ahead of time and having equipment ready and enough seating to allow the large group to be able to see the entire presentation clearly.

The “God Speaks” portion of the curriculum includes utilizing discussion with the student handouts. Have shepherds use these as additional resources during the small-group discussion time. In this model, the large group should be presentation, with some large-group discussion, but save the worksheets for smaller gatherings.

**Music** – As with the storytelling and opening, the music portion of the education time needs to be energetic, with a focus on using the gifts of children in music. If there are children who are not gifted in singing or who are uncomfortable singing, utilize them in other ways, including playing rhythm instruments, running PowerPoint screens with lyrics, or accompanying on piano, if they are gifted in this area. To provide a purpose to the music time, outside of learning new songs, plan to have children sing regularly in

the large-group openings. Ask your pastor if the children may sing what they learn here in the worship service. This allows for visibility of the Sunday School to the rest of the congregation—and allows children to sing their praises to God in worship.

**We Live** – Provide Teacher Guides for the shepherds to utilize during the discussion time. They should use the “We Live” section to spark discussion. This is also the time to use student leaflets and other resources from Growing in Christ. Besides discussing the story from the large-group presentation, shepherds can also use the time as an opportunity for discussing how things are going for each of the students. Though there is a large-group closing, use this time for a small group prayer. Be sure to share prayer requests for the week.

**Closing** – To wrap up all the ideas, you might want the same person who led the opening to lead your closing, but another individual will work just as well. Copy the closing section of each of the Teacher Guides to give suggestions of the summary and review. The Bible Review Cards are an excellent resource to use as students come back to the large-group setting. Consider making a big game board with the questions and answers. After reviewing the story, use suggested activities for the closing to end the education time.

### **Option 2:**

An additional staff member is needed for each activity station. Separate the Teacher Guides for each story, making copies for each of the station activities. Because station leaders will have all the age groups in their area, they can utilize aspects of each grade’s guide in each presentation. Shepherds should be given the copies of their student handouts each week to be used at the appropriate stations. Staff for each station will lead the activities while shepherds guide the children from one activity to the next (maintaining regular and comforting relationships).

### **Station specifics:**

**God Speaks** – The leader uses the “God Speaks” section from the Teacher Guides to tell the Bible story. Because the curriculum identifies 20 minutes or more for this time, only a portion of each age groups’ curriculum will be able to be used. Focus on telling the story, utilizing the suggested discussion questions as time allows.

**Music** – As noted in section 2, the leader may use CDs and other musical materials to teach a song relating to the story theme. Smaller groups allow one to focus each group on learning the words and their singing. Use this time to explain the background of the songs and what the meaning of phrases and words are. Growing in Christ provides a Teacher CD (levels Early Childhood–Upper Grades) with many songs and hymns that will work for your music rotation. The CDs also contain the sheet music for you to print and use.

**We Live** – The station leader facilitates the discussion as shepherds assist students with handouts and activities. As with the “God Speaks” section, the curriculum usually

suggests a longer period of time for this area. Identify key areas and focus on having an interactive discussion with students, keeping them actively involved. Use the Growing in Christ leaflets and other teacher tools.

**Arts and Crafts** – The Early Childhood and Lower Grade materials include craft pages in the student packets. These are easy to use in the time slot allotted for this station. In most cases, additional local resources will be needed to identify crafts for Middle and Upper Grade levels. Several great resources are available from CPH at [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org). Type “crafts” in the search box at the top of the page.

**Snack** – The Growing in Christ curriculum does not specifically identify snacks to incorporate into the lesson each week, so this is an area where a creative snack leader will come in handy. While a simple snack and beverage is all that is needed for this area, students enjoy having a snack that ties in with the lesson for the day (e.g., little fish crackers with the lesson where Jesus calls His disciples to be fishers of men). Be aware of student allergies while making plans for each week’s snacks.

**Games** – Growing in Christ has many games for reviewing each week’s story. Make copies of all the suggested options (review cards, reproducible games, etc.) for the station leader. Allow them to choose from the many options. Keep track of what games are used each week to ensure variety. Additional Bible games and puzzles can be found at [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org) or your local bookstore as your budget allows.

**Closing** – If this is done at each group’s final site, make copies of the appropriate age-level closing from the Teacher Guides for each station leader. This may also be a role for the shepherds. If so, make copies and give them to the shepherds at the beginning of each month to allow them to review and prepare for their role in leading the closing discussion.

If you use the large-group closing, consider having the opening leader to also close the day (or task another volunteer). Make copies of all the closings in the curriculum, and allow the leader to pick and choose appropriate activities for the age groups. Encourage the leader to be energetic, sending the children on their way with one last review of the day’s main points.

### **Option 3:**

Because option 3 is a combination of options 1 and 2, refer to the curriculum adaptations previously noted for specifics. Suggestions for “God Speaks” and “We Live” can be found in option 1, while specifics on developing stations can be found under option 2. Since the “We Live” discussion is done separately, that station would be eliminated from the options student participate in.

Option 3 may also be as structured or unstructured as the leadership is comfortable with. The stations may be in one large room, or smaller separate rooms, with children moving in a clockwise rotation to reach all the stations. Another option is to allow more freedom. With this method, students only attend the stations that they

are specifically interested in. In this case, shepherds act more like “floaters,” watching that all of their students are actively involved and working in a specific area, but not directing them in an organized sequence.

If you go with the “freedom” option, be sure to also have a quiet area for students to watch a video or read Bible storybooks as part of their overall station options. These areas are also helpful as time winds down, keeping students occupied if there is not enough time to start the activities at another station.

#### **Option 4:**

Growing in Christ is jam-packed with activities and options for your Sunday School. The Teacher Guides utilize a variety of activities so teachers can choose the activities that best fit their students and teaching style. This host of options means that some of the activities and materials will not be used on a weekly basis. Option 4 is a way to use more of the activities while focusing on fewer biblical accounts.

In option 4, materials are used in a fuller capacity because one story is selected to be the focus of a four-week period. As noted previously, workshops are planned to provide a varied presentation of the story of the month. An in-depth activity is used to reinforce the story.

The administrator has a larger role in this model. He or she will select a general format of Bible story presentation for each workshop, being sure that different styles and medium are used in each area. The administrator identifies the different presentation models noted in the different Teacher Guides while also identifying additional resources needed. He or she must then develop a packet from these resources with specifics of how to present the story in each setting. In some cases, each grade level’s presentation may be easily adapted for other classes. In other cases, two distinct presentations may be necessary, one for younger students and another for older students.

In the monthly packet, include copies of the “Growing in the Word” resource from the director and Teacher Guides for each volunteer. Encourage them to read through this resource so they have the background for the story and know what is being focused on for the month.

The key to this method of site rotation is variety. If the same book or medium is used each week, students will become bored. However, if one week students hear the story read to them from Scripture or an age-appropriate Bible storybook, and the next week they see it in video form, and the next week they act it out using drama or puppets, the story is reinforced. Each form appeals to the different learning styles children have, and is thus remembered better.

In this option, following the large-group opening, students and their shepherds go to one workshop for the remainder of the hour. Below are some of the basic workshops your program should consider, but the number and variety of your workshops is only limited by the gifts and imagination of your volunteers. (Although note that the number of workshops used each month should first be dependant on the number of classes your program has. Provide one workshop for each age group. If there are more age groups than weeks, students will not participate in all the workshops that month.)

**Music** – As described in the other options, the leader uses CDs and other musical materials to teach one or two songs focusing on the theme of the month. As noted with option 1, if there are children who are not gifted in singing, or uncomfortable singing, utilize them in other ways, including playing rhythm instruments, running PowerPoint (for words on a large screen), or accompanying on piano—if they are gifted in this area. Again, a goal to keep in mind is to have the students sing the song they learn at the end of the month in worship. This not only highlights the children’s ministry of your congregation, but directly involves the kids in the worship life of your church.

**Drama** – In this workshop, students have an opportunity to act out the story in different forms, reinforcing the story. Some grade levels may not have specific drama options highlighted, but the storytelling presentations in the Early Childhood and Lower Grade teacher manuals can be adapted for all ages. Creative leaders could also adapt their script right from the source, taking characters, dialogue, and narration right from the Bible.

The purpose of this manual is to give general information, not specifics; however, here are some suggestions of how to adapt the curriculum for this workshop area:

The Lower Grades Teacher Guide has many scripts easily adaptable to a variety of forms of drama and puppetry. If using storytelling figures, consider having kids make their own figures to tell the story at home.

Each week, have students learn the story/drama to present to the upcoming class. Begin with the oldest age group, having them present the drama the following week to the next group. This second group then learns it for the following week. Youngest students will have the story presented, and then work on their own presentation to tell parents at home.

Another option is for students to learn the story in drama form, then utilize them to tell the story during Sunday School openings.

Students could also create their own books depicting the story. Consider having each class write the text for their book and identify scenes to act in still life. Using a digital camera, take pictures of the children acting out the scenes. Download the pictures to your computer and add them to the right pages of the text in your word-processing or publishing program. (This idea provides a service opportunity for volunteers who are comfortable with computers, but are not comfortable in direct contact with children [i.e., teaching]. During the week, they could put the books together so they are ready for distribution for the following week.)

**Arts and Crafts** – Because under this model students spend the entire time that week in this space, larger crafts and projects can be completed.

First, tell the Bible story using one of the “God Speaks” presentations. Then introduce a more in-depth craft to reinforce the story and send home as a reminder.

Consider using this workshop to involve students in a service project that incorporates art. Ideas include making quilt squares with the finished product sent to a family in need, special occasion greeting cards for congregational members, or, if you’re really adventurous and space allows, have students create murals to decorate

classrooms or hallways for now and the future.

The Lesson Expanders at the end of each lesson in the Upper Grade Teacher Guide give additional suggestions for in-depth projects that can be adapted to all age levels.

**Cooking** – While specific ideas for cooking are not always included in Growing in Christ, students enjoy working with food and having the opportunity to eat afterwards. Be careful of food allergies while planning treats each month. Use the cooking time to discuss the lesson each week, and review it again while eating the snack.

Once again, this workshop lends itself to opportunities of service while students are having fun. Consider having students plan the treats for a fellowship time of the entire congregation, and work throughout the month to make enough to share. Another option might be to make care packages for members away at college or in the military. (Be sure to have students make “thinking of you” cards to enclose in them.) Family members appreciate treats at home as well, and this is an excellent opportunity for students to share the story with other family members.

**Video** – Most Bible story videos average 30 minutes in length. This site-rotation format allows for a video to be shown with time for discussion following. To introduce the video, select one of the introductory activities found in the curriculum’s Teacher Guides in the opening section. Many of these activities are excellent ways to set the stage for the story. After the introduction, show the video. Afterwards, discuss the video and review the key points of the story. Use one of the Teacher Guides for suggestions of what questions to ask. (This is an excellent opportunity to utilize the handout sheets in each student’s pack.)

**Games** – As noted under option 2, the Growing in Christ curriculum has many review games for each week’s story. Make copies of all the suggested options for the workshop leader for that story. Have materials from the teacher packets (review cards, reproducible games, etc.) available for the leader to use. Keep track of what games are used each month. Additional Bible game and puzzle resources can be found at [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org) or in your local bookstore.

If there is not a game workshop in a given month, consider having the review games available in a separate space. Shepherds can bring their groups to this space if they finish in their workshop early on a given week. Make available materials and easy instructions for all the students to use.

Additional suggestion: If you are using the game boards found in the teacher resources, consider laminating them before use to keep them in good condition.

**Service/Missions** – If your Sunday School has a regular mission project or is participating in one through the missions department, this workshop can be an opportunity to explain further what is happening in the project. It may also provide an opportunity for hands-on experiences tied in with the mission project. A service project might also be involved in this opportunity allowing students to reach out to individuals within your community or congregation. Resources for mission projects are available

through the Growing in Christ Mission Web site: [sundayschool.cph.org/missions](http://sundayschool.cph.org/missions).

**Memory Work** – Learning God’s Word through memorization is an important lesson we can share with our children. If you don’t offer a specific memory work station, incorporate it into other workshops.

The Director Guide CD has all of the Bible Memory words available for print, while the CDs in the Teacher Packet have songs and rhythm resources. Pull the “Bible Words” portion of the curriculum from the Teacher Guides to generate additional ideas of how to help students memorize the weekly verse.

Resources in the Teacher Tools for older students include reproducible Bible Words Puzzle Books. Utilize these puzzles as “time fillers” or create large group activities to work through the puzzles together.

### **Closing**

Because each workshop finishes at a different time, each workshop has its own (small-group) closing. Use material from the Teacher Guides to develop these. Encourage shepherds to talk with their students about prayer requests and pray together or assign the workshop leaders to lead the closing activity and prayer.

If there is a large group closing, where all the students join together in music and prayer, use the suggestions found in options 1-3 for the format. Make sure that the workshop leaders know what time they need to be done by so everyone can gather quickly.

### **General**

With any setting, Growing in Christ offers a variety of storytelling options. The supplemental Bible story posters are another tool to consider using in your rotation model. The story is written on the back of the poster for the leader to read out loud. Consider purchasing two sets of posters, cutting one up to create puzzles of each story for students to put together for review. Laminate the posters and puzzle pieces and they’ll last longer.

Resources in the Teacher Tools packets can be separated and used in individual stations. The Bible Words Puzzle Books may be incorporated into a memory station for different ages, not just the group noted for. Other memory games included in the curriculum may be adapted for many age groups.

The Growing in Christ curriculum is flexible and can be adapted to meet your needs. It contains many resources that will allow you to create an exciting learning environment for children of all ages. It is not necessary to use everything every month, but you won’t run out of options either.

## **Part 6: Overall Administration**

Administering a site-rotation Sunday School varies from the traditional model in a variety of ways. While the overall record keeping and promoting of the educational ministries for children is the same, working with volunteers and individuals is not.

Recruitment for a site-rotation Sunday School program can be easier, but it still has its challenges. After all, site rotation's flexibility, shorter time commitments, and use of specialized roles make it more attractive to volunteers than the usual one-year commitment. However, because in most models, individuals do not commit to an entire year of teaching, recruitment and training continues year round.

Communication is critical when working with a larger group of volunteers. Always let them know what is expected of volunteers, maintain contact lists, and stay in touch.

Files for each small group should be made available to your shepherds when they come each week to pick up the supplies they will need. Individual stations or workshops will have their individual needs, but if there are supplies that need to be moved around, such as student handouts, shepherds will receive these at the beginning of the education hour.

Reviewing curriculum pieces and separating out specific tools for the different stations is another role of a site-rotation administrator. Create a team or select a trusted volunteer staff person to do this sorting. Create a separate file for each story and station to allow for additional resources to be added regularly.

Student packs are an excellent resource for the different workshops. Review what aspects from the student packs can be used in different settings. If there are resources that are not going to be used, send them home with your students for reinforcement in the home. Or, use them as a basis for a home mailing to keep parents up to date on what is happening in the education hour and to recommend ways to reinforce each Sunday's lesson.

Examples of letters, schedules, and other tools follow in the appendixes. Please note that many of these are written specifically for option 4, but can easily be adjusted for whichever model option you plan to use.

## **Appendix A – Workshop Leader Introductory letter (Option 4)**

*(Date)*

Dear Workshop Leader,

Thank you for agreeing to lead a workshop at our site-rotation Sunday School. We anticipate that the kids will enjoy this new format and learn so much from the hands-on activities each site offers.

Our Sunday School hour begins at *(insert time)*, and the students will come to your workshop approximately 15 minutes later, giving you 45 minutes with the children. Each group has a shepherd, a guide, who accompanies the group to the workshop and will be there to help you with whatever you need. Please communicate with them on what you might want them to help with.

As you begin each week introduce yourself to the children. It is important that they know who you are. The children wear nametags so that you can call them by name.

Each workshop has a table, counter, or cupboard where all your needed supplies will be stored for the month. Requested supplies will be there so that you can find them for setting up. Please return them to the same area when Sunday School is over each week. The bookshelves in the rooms have Bibles for the students to use. (Older children are able to look up Scripture in the Bibles themselves.)

Each workshop comes with the Bible story lesson, and it is important to go through this every week with the children. Repetition helps them remember the story. After going through the Bible story, you may choose activities suggested in the curriculum. Some will take longer than others, so choose enough to fill your time. Feel free to make the activities your own, as long as the focus is on the day's lesson.

Please look over your lesson plan and let us know about needed supplies by *(insert date)*. This will allow us time to get the supplies and to set the area up for you.

*(Designate spaces used for each workshop, room numbers, or areas in large space where the workshop will be held.)*

Following is a schedule for the four Sundays of your workshop, as well as the group you will have each week.

Again, please let us know about needed supplies by *(insert date)*. Please contact me with any questions that you might have at *(insert phone number and/or e-mail here)*.

**Please note: Your commitment is for Sundays, *(insert dates here)***

Your servant in Christ,

## **Appendix B – Workshop Leader Introductory letter (Options 2, 3)**

*(Insert date)*

Dear Workshop Leaders,

Thank you for agreeing to lead a workshop for our site-rotation Sunday School. We anticipate that the kids will enjoy this new format and learn so much from the hands-on activities each site offers.

Sunday School begins at *(insert time)*, beginning with an opening worship. Students will begin rotations about 15 minutes later, moving every 10–15 minutes thereafter. Each group has a shepherd, a guide who accompanies the group to the workshop and will be there to help you with whatever you need. Just let them know what you might want them to help with.

When you start out with each group, introduce yourself to the children. It is important that they know who you are. The children wear nametags so that you can call them by name.

Each workshop has a table, counter, or cupboard where all your needed supplies will be stored. Requested supplies will be there so that you can find them for setting up. Please return all supplies to the same area when Sunday School is over each week.

The bookshelves in the rooms have Bibles for students to use. Utilize them whenever possible in your lesson presentation and discussion.

Please look over your lesson plan and let me know about needed supplies by *(insert date)*. This will allow us time to purchase and organize any needed supplies and set the area up.

*(insert locations of workshops/breakouts here)*

Following is a schedule for the four Sundays of your workshop, as well as the group you will have each week.

Again, please let us know about needed supplies by *(insert date)*. Please contact me with any questions that you might have at *(insert phone number and/or e-mail here)*.

**Please note: Your commitment is for Sundays, *(insert dates here)***

Your servant in Christ,

## Appendix C – Shepherd Introductory letter (option 4)

*(Insert date)*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thanks so much for agreeing to be a shepherd for our new Sunday School format this year! I hope you are excited about the new program and the opportunity of building lasting relationships with students as they learn about their God and Savior. I have you scheduled to work with \_\_\_\_\_ grade students.

The concept for Sunday School this year is called Rotational Sunday School. The idea is to focus on a Bible story/theme over a three- to four-week period. During that time we will have different workshops for students to attend each week. Examples of workshops are cooking, science, arts/crafts, drama, puppetry, video, and service. Each week we will review the story and then provide opportunities to put the teachings of God's Word into practice.

While site rotation is a great idea that provides versatile learning opportunities for the students, we do have one concern. Because they go from teacher to teacher, station to station, we are concerned that the children won't form close bonds with the staff. This is where the shepherds come in.

As a shepherd, I believe you are one of the most important aspects of this program as you will have a regular relationship with the students and have the opportunity to help the children grow in their personal relationship with God. You will not have any preparations for each week's lesson. Your primary focus is on building relationships. Of course, at the same time you will also be helping the students apply the weekly lesson to their lives.

Below are the specific things we ask of our shepherds.

- Pray regularly for your students. Pray that God will be with them and that they may grow in their relationship with Him. Each week, we also ask that you spend time finding out what's happening in your student's lives. Keep track of these things and pray for them specifically.
- Arrive at Sunday School each week 10 minutes early (*insert time*). This will allow you to greet students and meet new enrollees when they come. As things will be a bit different for students, this is especially important these first weeks of Sunday School.
- Look over the attached sheet regarding the current unit. It contains an overview of what will be happening in each workshop and the ways that you will be a valuable asset to the success of the program. Prior to each unit starting, you will receive a similar overview for the upcoming theme.
- Pray for the entire Sunday School program. As this is a new endeavor, we are trying new things. Please ask for God's blessings.

- Share your thoughts! As noted before, this is a new endeavor. We are looking for feedback. As we work through each unit, please share what you observe as working and what is not working. This is the only way that we can improve! Our goal is to build excitement while children are learning from God's Word. If you identify ways that we might do this better, please let *(insert name)*, or a member of the Board of Education know.

Again, thank you so much for your willingness to serve in this way. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions. *(insert contact information here)*

Blessings as we begin this year serving children,

Unit: *insert theme title*  
*Insert bible memory words here*

### Sample Schedule

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
<i>Insert date or time</i>	Drama	Cooking	Arts & Crafts	Video
<i>Insert date or time</i>	Cooking	Arts & Crafts	Video	Drama
<i>Insert date or time</i>	Arts & Crafts	Video	Drama	Cooking
<i>Insert date or time</i>	Video	Drama	Cooking	Arts & Crafts

	Drama	Cooking	Arts & Crafts	Video
<i>Insert date or time</i>	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
<i>Insert date or time</i>	Group 4	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<i>Insert date or time</i>	Group 3	Group 4	Group 1	Group 2
<i>Insert date or time</i>	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 1

Cooking – *insert location*  
 Arts & Crafts – *insert location*  
 Drama – *insert location*  
 Video – *insert location*

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## **Biography of Christine Eid**

Christine is a director of Christian education serving at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Columbia Heights, MN. She is a graduate of Valparaiso University, IN, and has a master's degree in Parish Education and Administration from Concordia University, St. Paul. Prior to her current position, Christine served parishes in Downers Grove, IL, and New Hope, MN, as well as working at Lutheran Youth Encounter, Minneapolis. She has also taught as an adjunct professor at Concordia University, St. Paul, in the DCE pre-intern program. Christine currently serves on the Board of Directors of KINDLE (Karpenko Institute for Nurturing and Developing Leadership Excellence), and previously served on the Board of Directors of LEA (Lutheran Education Association), as well as various District and Synod committees in the LCMS. Within all areas of ministry, she strives to develop ways for adults and children to learn of God's love together, encouraging everyone to be actively involved in ministry.