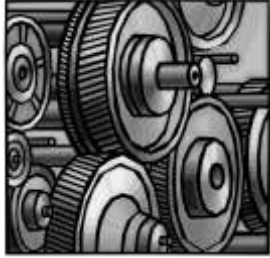


I recently started writing the curriculum for our Sunday school lessons this fall. This is a real joy for me. I do not get to work with the children as much as I would like. Writing a series of lessons helps me keep aware of their needs and ideas. It is also about the most fun as I get to have in a church.

***I love to write.***



Sadly, my writing skills run more toward technical writing than toward leisure reading. Sunday school lessons allow me to have fun and write what I write best - all at the same time.

The children suggested that they wanted help deciding how to behave as Christians. For me this is a great subject. I believe that faith without action is small faith. This is not to say that we must all go abroad to be missionaries or bankrupt ourselves to give to charity. I believe that God wants us to strive for balance in everything we do – including living out our faith. How many of you were truly transformed by Campus Crusaders in college? At Alfred University the Crusaders were the folk we dodged. Too much of any (even good) thing is TOO MUCH! As we used to say then: Don't shove the dove!

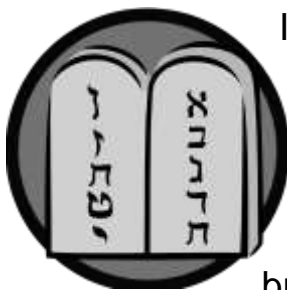


***So, I want our children to learn discernment.***

Now discernment is a hard term. In the first place it is hard to spell. In the second place, it suggests that there are several possible responses to the same situation. In the third place, it seems to infer doing some critical thinking and gathering facts before acting.

***This becomes a lot of work!***

How, in a 45 minute at-the-most class are we to even introduce the theme?



I have begun with the Ten Commandments. That's where God got really down and dirty about behavior. Of course, memorizing them is a must, but living them is hard, too. What does "covet" really mean, anyway? Does the ways we honor our parents change with age? How do we define "adultery" in the current age? Not easy questions, but these are the moral questions our children – especially

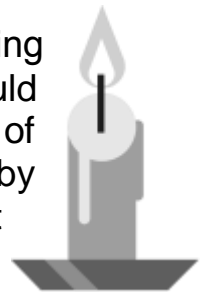
the Confirmation class need to wrestle until they have a grip on their own reality and choices. **So what's next?**

There are tons of crafts and experiential things we can attempt as we study the Ten Commandments, but it all wears thin and ancient after a while. How are we to move from Golden Calves to everyday decisions? Better yet, how are we to accomplish this without becoming preachy and boring?



Ever since last Christmas a line from a song I heard, first on the radio and then at the Duggan's concert, has been cemented in my mind. "Be the light you long to see at this darkest time of year." As our children move through ever shorter days into ever longer nights, as they see snow fall from grey clouds and then sparkle with early sun on the way to school, as they move through the adjustments of the school year – light will be an indispensable commodity. It will catch their attention, distract them, and (hopefully) give them the means to carry on until the sun is strong and warm again.

I remember Perry Como (now THAT dates me, doesn't it!) singing "If everyone lit just one little candle, what a bright world this would be." In today's world, our children cannot light candles much of anywhere without aggravating the EPA, teachers, and any nearby adult. They can purchase battery votives at Michaels, but the light is not the same. The only old-fashioned, renewable, dependable lights they have readily available is the light within themselves and the light of like-minded others. This can be a fragile light, but it is also a stubborn light. It can be snuffed, but it will reappear in the most startling ways. Like a candle flame it can start many fires without being diminished. When fanned and fed it can warm most anything.



I just received permission to use Peggy Lynn's song as a base for our children's education. I am excited to find a vehicle that may help our entire set of generations work to find the light. We cannot just wish for light; we must act to be and bring light. Our children are looking for ways to illumine their choices and the world around them. I am thrilled that they have come to us, RMPC to find that light. There are other places they could learn and other foundations they could use. I am glad they want ours. Jesus is the light of our world. What will this season's light uncover? This is going to be fun.