

# FAITH FORMATION CLINIC

## PHILADELPHIA, PA ▪ MAY 30, 2009

### WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS & BIOS

1. Activate Faith with Spark! by Debra (Thorpe) Hetherington
2. Equipping, Empowering, and Encouraging Teachers by Debra (Thorpe) Hetherington
3. Passing on Vibrant Service to Youth by Rev. Wendy Abrahamson
4. The Faith Life of Children and Youth Workers by Chandler Carriker
5. Multidimensional Learning and Faith Formation Workshop by Joy Gerhart
6. Responding to Special Needs Children and Youth by Sister Sally L. Kerr, Ed.D.
7. Families and The Word of God by Margaret Wolff
8. Teaching the Bible through Song by Tom Yenser
9. Training VBS Teachers and Volunteers by Leesa Wimmer
10. Let the Infants and Toddlers Come: Ministry with Little Ones by Marlane Druckenmiller
11. Inviting, Supporting and Keeping Volunteer Teachers by Linda Walker
12. Nurturing Faith with Multicultural Ministries by Linda Walker
13. Teaching Stewardship to Children by a local Thrivent Financial Representative
14. Nurturing a Spiritual Environment for Children by Diane Monroe
15. They Know the Answer is Jesus; How do I Ask the Question?  
Children's Messages in Worship Rev. John Brock and Rebecca Enney

#### 1. Activate Faith with Spark by Debra (Thorpe) Hetherington

What if we could find new ways to bring Bible stories to life? How could we better reach kids who learn in different ways? What if teachers could be more prepared in less time? How can we prepare kids with the biblical foundation they need for a lifetime of faith? This workshop will introduce Augsburg Fortress's new SPARK curriculum and how it's designed to help activate faith - whether your congregation uses using traditional classroom, lectionary-based or rotational formats. This workshop features the new SPARK Story Bible (age 2-Gr. 2) and SPARK Bible (Gr. 3-Gr. 6), the learner resources that form the foundation for this curriculum!

Deb is a Curriculum Editor, Congregational Life and Learning at Augsburg Fortress Publishers. Previously, Deb served as the Children's Music Minister and Vacation Bible School Director at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie, MN, leading Sunday school music and VBS programs for kids ages 3-Grade 6, as well as teaching early childhood music classes. She still works part-time as the preschool choir director.

#### 2. Equipping, Empowering, and Encouraging Teachers by Debra (Thorpe) Hetherington

How can you help your teachers (and your faith formation program) grow? Leadership development is a valuable skill for anyone who manages a team, and teams of teachers that is well-prepared, well-trained, and connected to one another can have a powerful impact on the faith life of the entire congregation. This session focuses on some practical ways that program administrators and directors can better support teacher teams with lasting results. (See bio above)

### **3. Passing on Vibrant Service to Youth by Rev. Wendy Abrahamson**

This workshop will focus on working with elementary-age students in developing a service-minded faith. The 5 circles of service (God, family & friends, church family, community and world) will be explored, as well as the 5 styles of service (prayer, work, time, money, donations).

Rev. Wendy Abrahamson is the pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Florham Park, NJ. She holds a B.A. from Concordia College, Moorhead, MN with a major in Social Work. Her M. Div is from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg with honors in Church and Society. She spent 3 years in the child care field and thirteen years in the field of developmental disabilities before attending seminary. She serves as a Team Leader on the NJ Synod Youth Ministry Mission Team and is currently enrolled in the Spiritual Direction Formation Program, Quellen Spiritual Center in Mendham, NJ

### **4. The Faith Life of Children and Youth Workers by Chandler Carriker**

The faith lives of volunteer youth workers, paid staff, Sunday School teachers, and others working with children and youth matter! We'll explore how the faith life of adults dramatically makes a difference in their ministries with young people and learn some simple, effective faith practices to help strengthen our faith lives. It's time to stop feeling guilty about taking time to have cultivate your own faith life, and start taking the small steps toward a more active relationship with the living God.

Chandler Carriker, an Associate in Ministry in the ELCA, is the director of Theological Education with Youth (TEY) at LTSP. Before coming to TEY Chandler worked as assistant program director at Camp Lutheridge in Arden, NC, and as an adjunct professor of religion at Thiel College. In his spare time Chandler writes and performs with the band boywonder.

### **5. Multidimensional Learning and Faith Formation Workshop by Joy Gerhart**

This workshop will explore the many different ways people learn and the many different ways a lesson can be presented. Often called multiple intelligences, methods such as visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, naturalist, and existential will be covered through the actual use of these methods. Definitely "hands on" and more, this workshop will help you see, hear, and feel how to incorporate all the senses and important teaching styles in your learning situations.

Joy Gerhart is an Associate in Ministry in the ELCA who has served the church since 1981. A graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Joy currently serves as a Coordinator of Youth Ministry and Congregational Programming ("YMCP") at Calvary Lutheran Church in Laureldale, PA. Formerly she served as a Director of Christian Education for 25 years at Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing, PA.

### **6. Responding to Special Needs Children and Youth by Sister Sally L. Kerr, Ed.D.**

Children and youth with special needs can present the teacher and program with challenges within the learning context of a congregation. This workshop will address and explore general labels/diagnosis given to children who present problematic/precarious behaviors as well as some physical special needs. Participants will be given specific techniques and tools to create a positive learning setting for the children/youth. This interactive workshop will encourage participants to share and discuss specific situations within their setting.

Sister Sally L. Kerr Ed.D. has served children with special needs in a residential treatment center for over 30 years. Her degree is from the University of Pennsylvania. She serves on the Synod Council in S.E.Penn Synod. Sr. Sally has a therapy dog, "Sophia" who is a licensed therapy dog and works with the children and youth.

## **7. Families and The Word of God by Margaret Wolff**

Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6:7) Are you looking for ways to help families strengthen their spiritual life after Sunday morning? In this workshop you will discover ways to help them share their faith at home, in the car, at a restaurant, or at the park. You will have time to share your experiences, try out some new ideas and browse through family faith building resources. You may be surprised at how easy it is to get the fire going with just a little "Spark".

Margaret is a wife and mother of 4 boys, ages 16–23, and the Director of Youth and Family Ministry at Friedens Lutheran Church in Kempton, PA. She received her Certification in Youth and Family Ministry from Gettysburg Seminary and was also trained by the Youth and Family Institute in Faith and Skills for Parents. She has a BS degree from Newberry College and a MEd in Curriculum and Instruction from The University of South Florida. She has taught both secondary science and preschool. Margaret enjoys reading and staying current on Christian parenting and youth and family resources. She is passionate about working with parents in building faith at home.

## **8. Teaching the Bible through Song by Tom Yenser**

Scripture instructs us to "Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart." (Deuteronomy 6:6) Well-chosen songs can help children learn Bible stories and memorize scripture verses that they can cherish throughout life. What are the best resources for this task? How can you use scripture songs that are both fun and effective teaching tools? If you would like to get better at leading music with children, here is your chance to discover some practical tips that will increase your skills and your confidence. Come to this workshop prepared to learn and sing!

Tom Yenser, an Associate in Ministry of the ELCA, has served for ten years as Director of Music at Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing, PA. He previously served congregations in Allentown and Northampton, PA, where he was called to the dual role of Director of Music and Christian Education. Tom has planned and led worship and offered workshops throughout the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA. His skill as an accompanist has brought opportunities to collaborate with everyone from opera singers to chimpanzees on roller skates. Tom resides in Wyomissing with his wife Kathy, a Christian education director, and his daughter Lydia, a fourth grader.

## **9. Training VBS Teachers and Volunteers by Leesa Wimmer**

VBS is perhaps the biggest evangelism ministry event in a congregation. We often hear that many hands make light work, but perhaps the toughest challenge of any successful VBS program is recruiting and training volunteers. Learn how to create an environment that will inspire volunteerism. We will provide tips on volunteer training that produces confident, well equipped, mission focused leaders that will bring their talent, energy and passion to VBS and have so much fun doing it, that they will want to return year after year. This workshop will also address the importance of planning a staff dedication service, making meaningful staff connections during VBS week and post-VBS volunteer appreciation. Workshop examples will be taken from the Discovery Canyon VBS, but can be used with any curriculum.

Leesa Wimmer is an Associate in Ministry in the ELCA and serves as the Director of Education and Family Ministries at Christ Lutheran Church in Allentown, PA. VBS is a passion for Leesa, and she especially enjoys building partnerships with other congregations and denominations to create a truly community based VBS experience. She is a Learning Ministry Staffer for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and serves on the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission Board of the ELCA (which oversees Christian Education). Leesa resides in Quakertown with her husband Mark and son Brett.

## **10. Let the Infants and Toddlers Come: Ministry with Little Ones by Marlane Druckenmiller**

What does your congregation offer for infants and toddlers in your congregation? Life in the congregation can officially begin with baptism but then what? Come and see some resources (including brain research) that will assist your ministry to children from birth to three.

Marlane Druckenmiller, Associate in Ministry serving as Christian Education Coordinator at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Douglassville, PA and Learning Ministry Team member for Northeastern PA Synod.

## **11. Inviting, Supporting and Keeping Volunteer Teachers by Linda Walker**

Are you having trouble getting enough teachers for your education program? Learn how to invite and support volunteers who can teach the faith, plan a lesson, have a good time doing it, and will come back next year to do it again. When people love what they do, others not only hear the good news, they see the good news in them.

Linda is currently the Director of Adult and Family Ministries at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Somerville, NJ. Previously she was the principal of a Lutheran parochial school and the Director of Parish Education in a large suburban NJ church. I have a BS in Elementary Education, a MAR from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and have been an Associate in Ministry for over 20 years. She has traveled all over the world and has made 3 mission trips to Namibia.

## **12 . Nurturing Faith with Multicultural Ministries by Linda Walker**

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." Luke 18:16. Learn how to make your Sunday School a welcoming place for ALL children and tell the Good News in a multicultural context. Let your teaching and meeting space reflect the diversity of your communities. Through music, art, food, clothing and programs you can embrace the ethnicity of your children and neighborhood. (see bio above)

## **13. Teaching Stewardship to Children by a local Thrivent Financial Representative**

Want to instill the importance of sharing and saving in children? Looking for a Confirmation workshop that fosters money value in middle-schoolers? Learn from a local Thrivent Financial Representative about how to share, save and spend. The engaging format of Parents, Kids & Money Matters (ages 6-10) and Parents, Teens and Money Matters (ages 11-14) is an ideal fit for congregations and schools. Stewardship has never been this much fun!

## **14. Nurturing a Spiritual Environment for Children by Diane Monroe**

This workshop is designed for anyone who lives and works with children. Come discover ways to nurture faith growth by creating an environment where a child or young person can thrive in "God's delight"!

Diane is the Director for Christian Education of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission Unit of the ELCA. Her work continues to be devoted to supporting lifelong learning and discipleship, for people of all ages--and with special emphasis on the youngest in our midst.

## **15.They Know the Answer is Jesus; How do I Ask the Question? Children's Messages in Worship by Rev. John Brock and Rebecca Enney**

Our little ones deserve much more than last minute preparation. This workshop will help you prepare messages that will be relevant and engaging. Participants will explore methods of offering children's messages within the worship setting with emphasis on development of a personal style or formula. Practical tips for using everyday household items, stories, and puppets will be included.

Pastor Brock serves as Associate Pastor at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Camp Hill, PA. A graduate of Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S.D., his M.Div is from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg. He also served as pastor of Elysburg Lutheran Parish, Elysburg, PA after he was ordained in 1997. His wife, Marianne, is director of Camp Nawakwa, and Associate Executive Director of the Lutheran Camping Corp. of Central PA. They have 2 sons. Pastor Brock has also been a bike mechanic and stills enjoys playing with Legos.

Rebecca is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill, PA, where she has been the weekly story teller at the Contemporary Worship Services since 1996 and also taught Sunday School for 25 years. Becky also teaches a Confirmation Class on Christian Discipleship and annually leads a 4 week course for 6th & 7th graders called "Secret Church", culminating in a costumed reenactment of early Christian worship in the catacombs (otherwise known as the church boiler room!). She presently serves on the Worship and Social Ministry Committees at Trinity.

### **Lunch and Learn: Biblical Literacy with Children with Paul Lutz**

An energizing round-table conversation facilitated by our keynote speaker. Join this lunchtime networking opportunity to exchange ideas with fellow Christian educators, ask questions, share stories and more.

### **Other Lunch and Learn Opportunities**

Grab your lunch and join the energizing round-table conversations facilitated by our workshop presenters. During this lunchtime networking opportunity you will get acquainted with fellow Christian educators, exchange ideas ask questions, share stories and more!

## **We look forward to seeing you there!**