

EQUIP & CONNECT

Winter 2013



Christian Education and Publications

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

A report on the 2013 Children's Ministry Conference



What about the children? This question burns in the hearts of those who minister to children in the local church, and it became the catalyst for a gathering of 135 ministry leaders, volunteers, and parents on Saturday, October 26 at Westminster PC in Atlanta.

Representing 20 local churches from 14 states, these attendees explored ways to disciple effectively the covenant

families in the Body of Christ. After a time of worship that included the children's choirs of Westminster, conference participants chose 3 of 22 workshops offered, along with a group discussion based on the different types of churches represented (e.g., small/medium/large congregations). The goal of the day-long conference was to provide opportunities for these leaders to connect with others who serve in similar ministries, and connect with some of the many resources available in the PCA. Seminars were led by practitioners from local churches and covered a variety of topics such as learning how to build relationships in the process of recruiting and training volunteers; helping parents maintain a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

STAYING CONNECTED

For over 15 years the *Equip Bulletin Supplement* has found its place in bulletins and church magazine racks with the purpose of keeping everyone in the denomination networked and encouraged by each other. We'd like to present the new and improved version of this publication now known as "Staying Connected." It will still serve the same purpose, but we're now also making it available in pdf form for churches

to include in their e-newsletters to their members. To view a sample, find out more about getting this bimonthly publication, or to be included in the next issue visit:

pcacep.org/staying-connected.



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Gift List

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Your disposition can color not only your perspective, but others ...



Occasionally, members of our family (including me) struggle with the “morning grumpies.” Whatever the reason—disappointment, busyness, lack of sleep—that person sets a first impression that often colors the whole day and negatively affects others.

First impressions. At this time of year, we remember when God made a “first impression” by taking on the nature of mankind. John’s gospel doesn’t have a Christmas story with shepherds and wise men; rather, he describes Christmas like this:

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14, ESV)

John’s words hearken back to an earlier event in the life of Moses when he met with God on Mount Sinai. The people committed the great sin of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32). Moses went to the LORD to intercede for the wayward people. In his plea, Moses made a request: “Show me your glory” (Exodus 33:18). Moses had experienced God before, but he was asking for something different. Exodus 34:6-7 records what happened. The LORD passed before Moses and proclaimed His name:

“The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and fourth generation.”

In the face of the great wickedness and brokenness of the people, God’s “first impression” is mercy, grace, and steadfast love. He doesn’t ignore the evil; instead, he

overwhelms evil with good. The author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact imprint (i.e., impression) of his nature (Hebrews 1:3). That impression must color every day—even the grumpy ones—with great joy.

As you read this edition of *Equip & Connect*, we hope you see the impression God is making through the discipleship ministry of the PCA. Thank you for your support as we work so that others may know the mercy, grace, and love of God.

CM

Catechism for Young Children:

From Trinity Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, AL

- Mary Frances Curles
- Susan Joy Harmon
- Sarah Madaleine Linnea Johnson
- Sydney Charlotte Speagle

From New Life in Christ Church, Fredericksburg, VA

- Emilee Leaman
- Madeleine Whitenack

From Hope of Christ Presbyterian Church, Stafford, VA

- Anna Leino

From First Evangelical Presbyterian Church, East Liverpool, OH

- Hannah Lorah

The Westminster Shorter Catechism:

From Trinity Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, AL

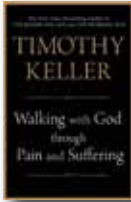
- Jan-Mikael Johnson
- Joel Gary Johnson
- Sarah Madaleine Linnea Johnson
- Rebekah Maria Margareta Johnson
- Rachel Desiree Wales

Your Christmas Gift List for your Congregation



BIBLES & CHRISTIAN LIVING:

- **Gospel Transformation Bible** (ESV Study Bible) (7814)
- **Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering** by Tim Keller (11785)
- **Prayers of the Bible** by Susan Hunt (11259)
- **Introverts in the Church** by Adam McHugh (11760)



- **Extravagant Grace: God's Glory** by Barbara Duguid (11836)
- **Letters to Pastor's Wives** by Catherine Stewart (11851)

BOOKS FOR TEENS:

- **Deep Down Faith** by Cornelius Plantinga Jr. (6140)
- **Rebels Rescued** by Brian Crosby (11810)
- **Awesome Words: Daily Bible Readings for Teens** by Edythe Draper (7813)

BOOKS FOR MEN:

- **Crazy Busy** by Kevin DeYoung (11820)
- **Crazy Love** by Francis Chan (7812)
- **Men of Courage** by Larry Crabb (5207)

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN:

- **Pilgrim's Progress** published by GCP (11815)
- **Song of the Stars: A Christmas Story** by Sally Lloyd-Jones (11337)
- **God's Great Plan** by Melissa Cutrera (11892)



BOOKS FOR WOMEN:

- **Housewife Theologian** by Aimee Byrd (11837)

****When ordering be sure to refer to the 4 or 5 digit product code for order accuracy.**

Visit www.pcabookstore.com or call **1.800.283.1357**

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WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN? CONTINUED FROM COVER

focus on the gospel in every area of child-rearing; understanding the challenge of discipleship among technologically savvy kids; developing a special needs ministry in the local church; and training children on how to serve others. As the conference ended, one seasoned ministry director commented:

"I remember now why I wanted to do this job in the first place. I am re-energized and ready to go home tomorrow to all of my children!"

The CEP staff and seminar presenters were especially blessed by the teachable spirit and enthusiastic response of

everyone involved. The loud cry of the day was, "Give us more! Come to our church! We want to share this great training and information with the whole church!" CEP desires to respond to this need through additional conferences hosted by local PCA churches. Stay informed through the Children's Ministry page on our website: www.pacep.org/children

If you missed the conference, but would like to learn about some of the great resources that were offered, you can order the audio of 17 of the workshops and opening and closing sessions for \$45 (item#7821) from www.pcabookstore.com.

KINGDOM SERVICE: A Blessing for ALL GENERATIONS

by Kathy Young of First Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, MS

If you are interested in including more senior adults in children's ministry, you might want to have a conversation with Pat Chambless at First Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, MS. Pat and his wife Kay spent over twenty years volunteering within youth ministry, but after the addition of their grandson to the family, Pat decided to teach the four- and five-year-old Sunday school class. Pat has a love for sharing Jesus with children, and he doesn't mind squirmy, talkative, or apprehensive little ones. In fact, he is a gifted teacher of all ages, but particularly



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young children. However, due to work and family constraints, Pat Chambless had to take a break from teaching for quite a while.

Then came a retirement announcement. After more than thirty six years in the banking profession, Pat's work was honored and celebrated as he prepared to leave his occupation. If you were the children's ministry director and you knew this man would have some extra time on his hands, what would you do? It seemed appropriate to glean some of that new freedom and years of experience. Right after he cleaned out his desk, he put on his shorts and t-shirt and joined the Vacation Bible School (VBS) team as a teacher of four-year-olds. Every child wanted to sit in Mr. Pat's lap, hold his hand, and tell him their Bible verses. He was such a blessing to the whole week, showing genuine

interest in each student, caring for them, teaching them, and loving them with Jesus' love.

The really wonderful thing is that the VBS experience was a joy to Pat as well. He decided to come back the following year—especially after his co-teacher requested to be paired with him once more. After this second time, when asked to help recruit new volunteers for Vacation Bible School, this is what he had to share, *“Being one of the older members of the church now, I don't have as much contact with the youth or their parents as I used to have. Volunteering for VBS has allowed me to meet and get to know some of the parents and work with some of our precious children. I have been blessed the past two years and hope I have been able to help in even a small way.”* Of course, we were delighted to have his help this past summer, and are looking

CONTINUED ON BACK COVER

Highlights of the New CEP Website

In trying to accomplish our new purpose—to connect and equip those who serve the church in discipleship ministry—the updated CEP website has much to offer ministry leaders and church volunteers. Below are two sections of our website we think will be very useful as you develop your ministries: (1) Ministries, and (2) Ministry Toolbox.

Click through the tabs to see all the helpful information and resources relating to that specific area of ministry

Click on the Ministries icon and select the area of ministry you're interested in learning more about

Throughout the website we provide direct links to the resources or people who can assist you with your ministry needs

Click on the Resources icon and select Ministry Toolbox or select the Ministry Toolbox icon on the homepage

www.pacep.org/children

Click on the Resources icon and select Ministry Toolbox or select the Ministry Toolbox icon on the homepage

Click on the tab relating to that specific area of ministry you need tools for

Toggle through the sections to find resources, links, or books relating to each specific area of ministry

www.pacep.org/toolbox

GENERATIONS CONNECT TO CONSIDER BIBLICAL MANHOOD

MM This spring, Grace Covenant PCA of Williamsburg, VA brought

together 83 men, ranging from teenagers to college students to graduate students to single thirtysomethings to fathers and grandfathers, for a three-hour Saturday morning seminar on **Rediscovering Biblical Manhood**. The seminar, conducted by PCA Men's Ministry Coach Gary Yagel, was what one participant called "a great opportunity for males of all ages to get a perspective on masculinity in our current culture." Beginning with Genesis 2, the men compared what American culture is saying about masculinity with the mandate God gave Adam to live in the garden to "work it" and "keep it."

Other sessions included a panel of Grace Covenant members discussing **In the Dance with Woman What Does Authentic Manhood Look Like?** Later in the morning, fathers and grandfathers were particularly challenged to consider **What a Son Needs to Grow into Authentic Manhood**. After lunch, the seminar closed with a look at **Jesus: God's Portrait of Manhood**.

Over the lunch break, Gary met with the Grace Covenant Men's Ministry Leadership Team to give suggestions and

encouragement that was tailored to the unique needs of the congregation.

The impact of the seminar has been multi-faceted. The leadership is already planning a future event to discuss the topics raised in their time together. One

elder reported that a participant picked up a copy of the book, **Intimacy: God's Design for Marriage**, and was working to apply the principles in his

marriage, to include a long-overdue date with his wife. In reflecting on the day, one man commented, "*The material in this seminar meets a vital need in the church.*"

We praise God for his blessing on the seminar and especially for the daily efforts of the leaders who are on the front lines of men's ministry. If you would like information about hosting a **Rediscovering Biblical Manhood** seminar, call Gary Yagel at 301.570.5097 or go to his website www.forgingbonds.org.

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SAVE THE DATE • FOR THE 2014

YM

The YXL East conference is back and better than ever!
Join us July 7-12, 2014 at Covenant College

version of the Youth eXcelling in Leadership conferences. If you can't make it to Covenant then check out **YXL Northeast July 6-11** at Refreshing Mountain Camp in Ephrata, PA or **YXL West July 5-12** in Horn Creek, CO. You will be able to find out more information at pcept.org/youth in the upcoming months.

The YXL conferences are leadership development conferences for high school students who are ready to go to the next level in their relationship with Christ. During the week students will be exposed to solid biblically reformed teaching, challenged mentally, physically, relationally and spiritually, and given tools to help them serve the Kingdom by being student leaders when they return home. While each conference is run by its own leadership team, they all are committed to the same philosophy of leadership development. YXL conferences are not for every student but those who take the YXL leap at Covenant, Refreshing Mountain, or Horn Creek often find that their faith journey takes on a depth and clarity like never before.



YOUTH EXCELLING IN LEADERSHIP

EAST

CEP Christian Education and Publications presents:

2014

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH • FEBRUARY 20-22 • ATLANTA, GA

Leadership Training Conference *Leading with Truth*

CALLED TO SERVE • EQUIPPED TO LEAD

Women's Leadership Training Conference 2014



One of the valuable resources available to women in the PCA is found in the seven trainers who serve the Women's Ministry Team (see them at pcep.org/women). The annual Women's Leadership Training Conference (LT) has been a great opportunity for PCA women to meet and learn from these trainers through seminars, as well as informal conversation. Many times, conversations turn into invitations for the trainer to visit a local congregation for a ministry event.

At the 2013 conference, one local church made the investment of bringing most of their young leadership team. The congregation had begun a strategic local ministry, using resources available through CEP. The relationships developed as they studied these resources and led to the group registering for LT. One woman reflected on her experience:

"The weekend in Atlanta was full of grace and inspired us in many ways to serve with humility. We feel safe knowing that we are under such a biblical umbrella in our denomination. Thank you for **helping** us and

showing us how to serve King Jesus and His people."

As a result of their experience, this local church offered the twelve churches of their presbytery a fall training weekend with one of CEP's trainers. The event brought together 150 women – 25 of them high school teens – who learned more of what it means to be a disciple in God's kingdom.

The 2014 LT promises to be another great opportunity to learn not only from the trainers of the PCA Women's Ministry Team, but also from other women who serve as leaders in the denomination. To learn more about the upcoming event, or to register, visit pcep.org/women and click on the **events** tab.

Be Sure to Support 2013 Women's Ministry Love Gift For RIDGE HAVEN

Was summer camp part of your youth? For many it was a week that brought anticipation, fun, songs, and campfires that helped grow your love for Christ and His church. It is CEP's prayer that the PCA family will support this love gift project so that another generation will be taught the Truth of God in the beauty of His creation. Be stirred by Alexia Newman's memories...

"When I think of places and events that have impacted my life and stir sweet memories, Ridge Haven is at the top of the list. I remember the first year Ridge Haven was a reality. I was staying in the brand new Lodge that was nice and new! We didn't understand the impact then, but I think many sensed that this was going to be a special place. We had no idea what the Lord had in store from this incredible gift to the PCA from Ken and Polly Keyes!" I have watched the Lord call people to Himself on the rec field, on a hike to the Waterfall, sitting by the pool, in a bunk bed late at night, in the chapel service, or after a conversation in the dining hall. God's Spirit is always working at Ridge Haven! (continued online)

View the rest of the article @ www.pcep.org/wic-love-gift/

The **2013 Love Gift** will benefit the ministry of Ridge Haven Conference Center. To date, over \$20,765.40 has been received for the purpose of remodeling the dining hall at Ridge Haven.

If you would like more information, go to website link above.



Giving to Meet *the Need*



Every holiday season, people struggle with the question, “How can I give so that a ministry is blessed and my gift actually addresses the need?” For the discipleship ministry of the PCA, there are a number of ways that churches and individuals give.

The “ministry ask” is the amount per member that CEP requests from churches that donate. This figure takes into account that, for a variety of reasons, not all PCA congregations are able to donate to General Assembly causes. In 2013, the CEP “ministry ask” is \$7 per church member.

An alternate method is the “per capita calculation.” This amount optimistically assumes that every PCA church will give to the work of the General Assembly regardless of the circumstances of the congregation. In 2013, the CEP “per capita

calculation” is \$2.54 per church member.

The most effective way to contribute to the ministry of CEP is to give a donation by a check mailed to our office or through an online bank draft using the orange “Invest in CEP” button on our home page (www.ppacep.org). There you can also make a donation by credit card, but a portion of your donation will go to the credit card company for the service.

If you are a church leader, please encourage your deacons and/or elders to support CEP at the level of the “ministry ask.”

If you are an individual with a heart for the work of discipleship among children, youth, and adults, consider a gift to CEP at the level of the “ministry ask” (\$7 per person) on behalf of your small group, Sunday school class, or even your entire congregation. In whatever way the Lord leads you to give, we appreciate your partnership in the ministry of discipleship.

If you are an individual with a heart for the work of discipleship among children, youth, and adults, consider a gift to CEP

FOR ALL GENERATIONS

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forward to many more years of service from our dear friend, Pat Chambless.

As our church is embracing our identity as a covenantal community, we are seeing more retirees participate in children’s ministry. Vacation Bible School gives an opportunity for them to be a part on a short term basis. Even Mr. Pat’s wife, Kay, helps lead the music each year. Beyond, VBS, we also have been blessed by senior adults who serve as prayer partners, assistants for special events, and hosts for cookie bakes. We even benefit from a former school guidance counselor volunteering on a regular basis to keep inventory of supplies, make copies, and distribute curriculum. As you might imagine, our children’s ministry committee is beyond thankful for this multi-generational influence. While not all senior adults feel comfortable on the floor with preschoolers, most have something wonderful they can share with children.

I will sing of the LORD’s great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.

— Psalm 89:1 (NIV)



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