Teacher’s Rosary
A Reminder to Pray For Every Learner

By the Rev. Jo-Ann R. Murphy

One of the most important preparations for teachers at the beginning of a new church school year is praying for the children or young people in their classes. Through prayer, they can get to know their students before they actually see class members face to face.

There are different ways teachers can approach prayer. They could keep a list of class members in a place where they do routine tasks. The kitchen sink is a good place or the dashboard of a car.

A unique way to help teachers remember each person in their classes is to make and use an Anglican teacher’s rosary. Below are directions for selecting beads, assembling them, and praying the rosary. Making the rosary could be a creative addition to teacher training events or team meetings.

Selecting Beads
1. Choose four small beads for each person in your class; if you teach a class with seven students, you will have a total of 28 beads. These may be all the same or in different combinations. These are the student beads.
2. Choose four larger beads that are alike. These are the prayer beads.
3. Choose a bead as a symbol of Jesus, the Great Teacher. This could be a cross, heart, fish, butterfly or other symbol meaningful to you. This is the Jesus bead.
4. Choose one bead to represent Mary, the mother of Jesus. This is your Mary bead.

Assembling a Rosary
1. Begin with four threads or pieces of dental floss, about 18 inches long. (See drawings on p. 5.) Through all four strands, fasten the Jesus bead or symbol.
2. Pull the four strands through the Mary bead, and tie it off above the Jesus symbol.
3. Through all four strands, string one of the prayer beads. Separate the strands with two strands on each side. On the right side, string one set of student beads (one for each of the students in the class). Knot the strands and add a prayer bead. Then string a second set of student beads, tying a knot at the end.
4. Repeat this process with the two strands on the left side.
5. Bring the two sides together at the top of the rosary and tie a knot. Pull all four strands through the remaining prayer bead. Tie a double knot to finish.

Praying the Teacher’s Rosary
1. Begin with the Jesus bead or symbol. Read or recite Matthew 19:13-14.
2. As you hold the Mary bead, pray these words:
   Heavenly Father, as you entrusted your precious Son Jesus to the protection of a human
Summer: A Time For Rest, Growth

With summer comes the promise of less hectic lives and a slower pace. The summer months fall in the middle of the longest church season—Pentecost—the season of green, a time of rest and quiet growth.

The academic year winds down amid a flurry of activity with end of school parties, appreciation luncheons, sports award dinners, music concerts and celebrations of graduations at every level. Just the promise of summer is enough to keep most of us going.

For many, the promise turns up empty. Working parents continue to scramble to place their children in safe, enjoyable activities. Car pools for camps and classes can be as complex as the rest of the year. Getting away for a few days of vacation are complicated with the logistics of finding care for pets, hiring someone to tend lawns and plants, among others.

At church, volunteers are needed to staff Vacation Bible Schools and other activities. Plans need to be laid for the fall startup of Sunday School and needed renovations to classroom space.

As we march to the demands of calendars and palm pilots, we thrive under the illusion that we are in charge of our lives. We forget that this long, green season is calling us to rest, to slow down, to grow in new ways.

The summer months can slip away if we don’t stop and make room for God, our families and ourselves. Most of us need to be intentional about making this space available so we can be renewed.

This might the summer to begin that journal you’ve been talking about for years. Or maybe you want to tackle a book that’s now gathering dust on the shelf. Announce your intentions, so that friends and family members help you honor the time you have set aside for these activities.

Set aside at least one evening a week for “family time.” Rent a movie that the whole family can enjoy or read a book together. If you’re concerned about family members turning into “couch potatoes,” plan a more lively activity. Go on a family bike ride, take a hike together at a state park, or play a game such as volleyball or softball.

You may want to visit a local farm or market to pick or purchase summer vegetables and fruit. We all need to remember the work of those who are responsible for the food on grocery store shelves. The planting and harvesting of produce is a vivid illustration of God as Creator.

In my father’s office, a red plaque in the octagon shape of a stop sign is prominently displayed. It says: STOP and smell the roses. If you start to feel overwhelmed, STOP, take a deep breath, and think about God’s love as you smell the roses. —DSL
Youth Can Explore God’s Call Through The Lives of Others

Instead of waiting for All Saints’ Day to roll around, begin in September to explore the “saints” of the Church and the contributions they made to our faith. The Episcopal Curriculum for Youth (ECY) has several resources to help youth leaders plan a study of these special people.

Younger Youth

For younger youth in junior high or middle school, there are three Leader’s Guides in the “Contemporary Times” series that tell stories about people from the Early Church through today who dedicated their lives to do God’s work in the world.

“Witnesses in the World” examines the lives of Perpetua and her companions who died for their faith, as well as organizations such as Taize or L’Arche where people can live out their faith in diverse communities.

Youth are often uncertain about responding to God’s call in their lives. While this can be an individual decision to follow Christ, this kind of decision can also be made in community. During this study youth will discover communities and people who stood strong in their faith as they lived their lives as faithful Christians.

“Called Through Faith” examines relationships with God and others. Youth first meet Bishop Ambrose of the early Church who is remembered for his eloquence and calmness in the face of adversity. The series ends with a session about the courage of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador in the face of oppression.

By looking at those featured in the guide, youth can discover that people’s relationships with God are challenged and nurtured through their experiences with God. Youth often encounter doubts and questions. Through their study, they will learn the stories of others who found God in spite of doubts and setbacks.

“People of the Promise” examines the work of monks, priests, royalty, and ordinary people who have demonstrated what being Christian and following God meant to them and to others.

Youth are asked to define who they are as Christian people in a world, an increasingly difficult thing to do. Learning about others who have lived in equally difficult times can help youth respond to God’s call to live out a Christian life.

Older Youth

The Bible is full of stories about people who have struggled with their faith in God in a variety of ways. Some, like Esther, hid their faith until they had to take a stand. Others, like Jonah, tried to run away from God’s call.

Some, like Thomas, had reasonable doubts. Others, like Peter, denied knowing Jesus.

In other words, they were people just like us who had faults and doubts, who were confused about what they believed, and who were unsure about what they were willing to say to friends and family.

Throughout history and in our own time, individuals have been involved in the same kinds of issues over and over again as they seek to live as Christians in the world. The people featured in the guide “Who Are the People of God?” were chosen for their accomplishments.

Some are writers who shared their faith through prose and poetry. Some risked and even lost their lives in the pursuit of faith. Others questioned and sought answers, made mistakes and sought forgiveness, and found confusion and conflict in what they believed.

The purpose of the older youth study is to explore through scripture the lives of a variety of different people—past and present—and discover that they had many of the same feelings and questions youth have now.

ECY guides for younger and older youth are available at www.livingthegoodnews.com/ecy.htm or by calling 800.824.1813. —DSL
Family Circle Activity Can Help Congregations Identify ‘Heavenly Relatives’ on All Saints’ Day

All Saints’ Day is a time to remember those who have died in the faith of Christ. It is traditionally celebrated on November 1, but may be observed on the first Sunday in November instead.

Many scholars believe that the commemoration of all the saints first originated in Ireland and then spread to England and Europe. The Celtic people of Ireland had adopted Christianity quickly and strongly. Their conversion, however, did not keep them from celebrating old customs.

The end of summer and the celebration of harvests have always been important to those who live on the land. The ancient Celtic Samhain celebration marked both the end of summer and a commemoration of the dead. Christianity brought a new focus to the celebration as a day of remembrance for the saints, using the New Testament meaning of all Christian people of every time and place.

Early Festivals

The earliest commemorations in the Church were centered on martyrs. The first mention of an observation of a festival for all martyrs occurred before the year 270. A hundred years later, it is mentioned again, with a reference to an observance in May.

A patriarch in the Eastern Church who died in 407 described a festival of All Saints that occurred the first Sunday after Pentecost. The Orthodox Church continues to celebrate All Saints’ Day at that time.

All Saints’ Day is celebrated on November 1 in the West, since Pope Gregory IV ordered a churchwide observation in 837. During the Reformation, Protestant churches (including Anglicans) understood “saints” in its New Testament usage to include all believers.

In the Book of Common Prayer, All Saints’ Day is identified as a principal feast. Among the seven principal feasts, All Saints’ Day is the only one that can be observed on the following Sunday in addition to November 1. It is also one of the four days recommended in the Prayer Book for the administration of Holy Baptism.

The Family Circle

On All Saints’ Day we celebrate the vast crowd of “Beatitudes people” who belong to our family of faith. One way to learn about “heavenly relatives” is to make a “Family Circle.”

Ask participants to draw a large circle on a sheet of paper. In the circle, use markers to write “family members” of the Church tradition. These can be from the Bible, such as the disciples and Mary Magdalene, or people throughout history commemorated by our Church, including theologians like Augustine and recent martyrs like Jonathan Daniels.

To help participants think about family members of our tradition, set out Bibles and copies of Lesser Feasts and Fasts. Next, ask participants to choose a different colored marker to add more “Beatitudes people” who have been a part of their lives, who may go to the same church, or who they recognize from newscasts and articles, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Under each person in the “Family Circles,” ask participants to write (in a third color of ink) a description of a quality that they admire. For example, a quality of Mary, Mother of Jesus might be “dares to believe God’s word.”

Encourage participants to share their “Family Circles” and explain their choices of people and qualities. Ask, “Which of the saints would you like to imitate? Why?”

[Information for this article is based on Lesser Feasts and Fasts. The Family Circle activity was first published in A Child CONN-Nexus, a publication of the Diocese of Connecticut.]
**Teacher’s Prayer Beads**

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**Assembling Prayer Beads**

**Step 1.**

Jesus Symbol

**Step 2.**

Mary Bead

**Step 3.**

Prayer Bead #1

**Step 4.**

Student Beads

Prayer Bead #2

**Step 5.**

Student Beads

Prayer Bead #3

Student Beads

Prayer Bead #4

family, so send the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide those whom you call to teach in your Church. Give us dedication and patience, that with joy we may share your love with the children you entrust to us. In the name of the child Jesus, we pray. Amen. (If you wish, insert your name or the name of your teaching partner.)

3. Move to the first prayer bead, which is directly above the Mary bead, using words from the service of Holy Baptism in the *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 308: “O Lord, in your Holy Spirit, give each of these children an inquiring and discerning heart.”

4. Move counter-clockwise to the first set of student beads, praying for each child in the class. Keep a picture of that child in your mind’s heart as you pray.

5. At the second prayer bead, continue with words from the baptism service (p. 308): “O Lord, in your Holy Spirit, give them the courage to will and to persevere.”

6. At the second set of student beads, pray again for each child.

7. At the third prayer bead at the “top” of the rosary, in the words of the baptismal service (p. 308) say: “O Lord, in your Holy Spirit, give them a spirit to know and to love you.”

8. At the third set of student beads, pray for each of the children.

9. At the fourth prayer bead, finish the baptismal prayer (p. 308): “O Lord, in your Holy Spirit, give them the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.”

10. At the fourth set of student beads, pray again for each child.

11. Back at the first prayer bead, say “For the Care of Children.” (BCP, p. 829)

12. At the Mary bead, pray the following: “Heavenly Father, you sent your own Son into this world. We thank you for the lives of these children [insert names] entrusted to my care. Help me to remember that we are all your children, and so to love and nurture them that they may attain to that full stature intended for them in your eternal kingdom; for the sake of your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 841)

End the Anglican Teacher’s Rosary at the Jesus bead by reciting the Lord’s Prayer.

*The Rev. Dr. Murphy is Director of Christian Formation at Ware Episcopal Church, in Gloucester, Virginia.*
Diocese Celebrates Children’s Sabbath
By Cruising to Equity

By The Rev. Debra Kissinger

For several years AWE: Children’s Ministries of the Diocese of Bethlehem has been trying to find a way to involve parishes in the Children’s Sabbath Observance. A small article in the back of the 2005 Children’s Sabbath Manual, “Collect a Boatload of Items That Help Children Get the Start They Need,” primed the pump for a project that would eventually involve 35 of the diocese’s 67 parishes.

The article suggested that churches collect a “boatload” of items related to the “Starts” of the Children’s Defense Fund: Healthy Start, Head Start, Fair Start, Safe Start, and Moral Start. With that idea the children’s ministries committee began to conceive a plan.

The group wanted to be certain that the campaign accomplished more than simply collecting items for poor children. To be a success they agreed that education, awareness raising, community connection and prayer that lasted more than a day or the traditional Children’s Sabbath weekend were necessary ingredients.

From that criteria came Cruising to Equity, an advocacy and prayer vigil project that invited congregations throughout the diocese to join together in a “Sabbath Season of Prayer, Education, Witness and Action for Children.”

The committee developed an easy to use project guide and brochure and recruited the diocesan Episcopal Church Women (ECW) to co-sponsor the campaign. Because the ECW of the Diocese of Bethlehem annually undertakes a project to support children at risk, working with them increased the number of people who had a stake in the project.

The Cruising to Equity guide highlighted the plight of poor children in the nation and outlined the project itinerary, including: a campaign kick-off; launching an equity ship; visiting the five ports of call (stops on the journey) and finding safe harbor, the diocesan-wide celebration that concluded the campaign.

The guide contained resources from the Children’s Sabbath manual as well as worship and educational resources, community action and collection item suggestions, and contact information for social service agencies related to each of the “Starts” programs or stops on the journey.

The campaign began in October 2005 with the observance of the National Children’s Sabbath and the Diocesan ECW’s collection of “Undies for Children at Risk” at the annual Diocesan Convention. In the months that followed, congregations were invited to “launch their ships” by placing a rubber lifeboat or other small boat in their church or parish hall and appointing a local parish contact as the “Cruise Director.”

The Cruising to Equity Campaign lasted seven months with each port of call scheduled during a different liturgical season.

Safe Harbor Celebration

The campaign culminated with two diocesan-wide Safe Harbor Celebrations on May 7, 2006 to mark the end of the journey. Parishes were invited to keep a “log” of their journey and to share how they made a “boatload of a difference” for kids. They were encouraged to display pictures of filled boats and publicity from local newspapers at the receptions following the services.

Diocesan children, youth and ECW members participated in the worship services. Two dioce-

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Children’s Sabbath

Continued from p. 6.

san youth also gave sermons at each of the Eucharistic celebrations.

Interesting twists floated to the surface along the journey. While many parishes opted for an inflatable rubber boat, one parish placed a real canoe in their church and challenged their members, “Can-oe fill a canoe for kids?”

Two parish youth groups took on the cruise director role and challenged adults to get involved. And in another congregation, a child used the Cruising to Equity boat logo on the invitations to her birthday party with the following explanation: “Your gathering for Rachel’s birthday party is a gift in itself and we respectfully request that you not bring Rachel a gift. However, if you truly desire to give a gift, we would appreciate any contribution you could make in Rachel’s honor to this noble effort to collect items for children who are less fortunate.”

“Our church is collecting items for children going into foster care. Children often are removed from difficult situations with little chance to collect their things. Hopefully our gifts will help to assure a child that there are people out there who know and care about their plight. Items needed are: duffle bags, back packs, cuddly toys, night lights, blankets and personal care items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs, hair brushes, etc. Thanks for your support.”

For more information about AWE: Children’s Ministries and the Cruising to Equity Campaign, contact the Rev. Debra Kissinger at dkissinger@diobeth.org or visit the website at www.bethlehemtreasurechest.org.

The Rev. Debra Kissinger is the Missioner to Children and Child Advocate of the Diocese of Bethlehem.

As you prepare for the 2006 National Observance of Children’s Sabbath’s to be celebrated October 20-22, use the following suggestions in your planning and preparation:

Focus your efforts on God’s call and commandment for the faithful to advocate and enact justice for the most vulnerable—children and the poor.

Order your copy of the 2006 manual by emailing ssnyder@childrensdefense.org or by calling 202.662.3579.

Recruit a team that will assist you in planning and celebrating the Children’s Sabbath.

Time/Date and Place: Set the dates on your parish calendar.

Heroes and heroines in your community that work for and with children—invite them to be a part of your celebration.

Engage children and youth in the planning of your Sabbath.

Keep the local media informed.

Invite others in your community to join you in celebrating the Children’s Sabbath.

Determine to continue with ongoing work of child advocacy and justice work.

Share your story—let others know about your celebration.

—Sally Jo Snyder, Children’s Defense Fund
Many church schools close down during the summer months. Parishioners on vacations or at camps not only deplete the attendance of the children, but also affect the availability of teachers.

This might be a good time to offer some intergenerational activities or try out some ideas that never seem to get off the ground during the busy academic year.

• Start a summer photography class for all ages. Select a theme, such as “Where is God?” After discussing the question, encourage participants to take pictures that illustrate their answers. Pair adults and youth to work with young children. If participants use digital cameras, they can email their photos to a volunteer who has agreed to print them. Use the photos to talk about how Christians see God and each other.

• Work together on a service project for a community agency or group. Food banks often run low on supplies during the summer. Begin by reading and discussing Matthew 25:35-40 about feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and clothing the naked. Plan a publicity campaign for food donations at your parish, local grocery store, or community center. Encourage different parishioners to be responsible for gathering and delivering the food to an appropriate agency.

• Children in Trinity Episcopal Church, New Haven, Connecticut, focused on national and cultural diversity last summer. Each week’s program concentrated on a different country or culture that reflected the diverse populations of the state. Children learned about Mexico, Sweden, Great Britain, Egypt, China, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Poland and Native Americans. To plan a program for your church, you can tap into diverse cultures represented by parishioners.

• Another way to look at different countries and cultures is available through the national church website at www.episcopalchurch.org/44385_ENG HTM.htm. On the page for Children’s Ministries, click on “Treasure Magazine.” The colorful and inviting magazines are filled with information and activities for children. The countries featured in the magazines include Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, Jerusalem, Mexico, West Africa, among others. You can download a magazine, Leader’s Guide, Notes to Parent, and poster for each of the featured areas. You can use the materials for either a children’s program or an intergenerational event. —DSL
Allow Youth to ‘Take Over’ Summer Worship Services

Summer is a perfect time to turn the reins over to young people and give them an opportunity to try out their leadership skills in a variety of situations. They can be involved in events for young children or be a part of the planning and implementation of worship services.

One Sunday a month at St. John’s in the Mountains, Stowe, Vermont, the young people “take over” as greeters, ushers, readers, acolytes and musicians for a combined service. They even host the coffee hour.

Putting the youth in charge at St. John’s grew out of an idea from three mothers who wanted young people to know how valuable they are in the life of the church. They also wanted youth to get the message that they have a place in the church as leaders and planners.

Consider taking this idea into your own church this summer. Give the youth a chance to make decisions about worship services, including music selection and other innovations. Ask a team of adult mentors, including usher captains, altar guild members, acolyte coordinators, music leaders, and clergy to work with youth in planning services during the summer months.

Participation in both the planning and implementation phases will encourage the attendance of youth and prepare them for leadership roles in the future. Celebrate their leadership at the end of the summer with an all-church reception or picnic in their honor.

—DSL

Set the Record Straight with Saintly Study

The Da Vinci Code, a novel by Dan Brown, and the recently-released movie based on the book have spread misinformation and speculation about Mary Magdalene and her relationship with Jesus. Invite parishioners to learn about the “real” Mary Magdalene on her feast day, July 22, which falls on a Saturday this year.

Start the event with a picnic and then a sharing of information. Begin your research by reading Lesser Feasts and Fasts, which includes background information about Mary Magdalene, scripture passages and a collect. The background information, for example, notes that in the Eastern Church, she is regarded as the equal of an apostle.

Look for additional information at a public library or through the internet; visit www.magdalene.org, among others. Ask different people to read passages in the Gospels that refer to Mary Magdalene, including:

Mark 15:40-16:1 John 19:25
Mark 16:9-11 John 20:1-18

If possible, bring paintings of Mary Magdalene from art books. Talk about the different ways she is described or mentioned in the Bible. End the discussion by reading the collect for Mary Magdalene from Lesser Feasts and Fasts.

—DSL
Having children attend worship can be a positive experience for everyone in the congregation. Children should feel welcome in sacred places and look forward to sharing time there with others.

In addition to children’s bulletins, some churches provide bags filled with quiet activities that are available as families enter the worship space. One church goes a step further to color code bags for different age groups. The red bags, for example, might be filled with books, crayons, and word games appropriate for older elementary-age children.

In *Rainbow Bags*, author Lois Brokering provides ideas and patterns to encourage children to play-act the service as it unfolds. The book also includes patterns for a Baptism and Communion bags, and characters from major Bible stories, including the Creation, Noah, and the nativity.

Whatever kind of bags you eventually use be sure to check them regularly to replace and replenish their contents. The bags can make the entry to church inviting and colorful for everyone. —DSL

(To order the book *Rainbow Bags*, send $10 plus $1 shipping to Herb Brokering, 11641 Palmer Road, Minneapolis, MN 55437.)
Use Photos to Personalize Your Classroom

Even if you share classrooms with other groups or classes, find ways to personalize the space for your students with moveable posters, pictures, and other objects.

At the beginning of the church school year, take a picture of every learner in your class. Bring your camera for the first few weeks to capture those who may not be present on opening day.

Print the pictures and mount them on a portable bulletin board or attach them to a large poster board. This will remain constant—except for new additions to the class—for the entire year.

Change the colors and borders for the background according to the church seasons and the biblical focus. Cutouts in the shapes of items in stories can reinforce lessons visually. For example, during a unit on creation in the fall, use green for the Season of Pentecost and make cutouts of birds, fish, trees, flowers, among others. Use key words or phrases from stories in the unit to complete your display.

Working with the pictures will help you learn the learners’ names. Using poster board will allow you to move the display easily.

At the end of the year, consider putting the photos in an album that could be given to the group’s teachers for next year. The children will enjoy seeing how much they have grown and changed.

—DSL

Hands and Hearts:

*Intergeneration Activities throughout the Church Year*

By Lois J. Johansson

Morehouse Publishing, 2006

800-877-0012

www.morehousepublishing.com

Cost: $9.95

*Hands and Hearts* is a new resource for intergenerational activities to encourage members of congregations to share their faith with one another. The seven themes in the book follow the Church Year, beginning with Advent and ending at the Season of Pentecost.

Author Lois J. Johansson, Christian educator and columnist for *Christian Education Counselor*, notes, “By sharing with one another in a community of faith, we learn new ideas and ask new questions. We tap into a new creativity and explore new spiritual paths.”

The activities in *Hands and Hearts* will help churches implement an intergenerational way of learning. Each event has the potential of bringing together all ages at home or at church for new spiritual discoveries.

Activities are varied from making ornaments for a “waiting tree” (Advent) to presenting a “Magical Moments Drama” (Epiphany) to unraveling the puzzle of Lent by working a series of crossword puzzles.

The events are tied to a particular time in the liturgical calendar, and each begins with a brief introduction to the Church season for which the activities are designed. Johansson has included suggestions and tips for getting started and adapting activities to a church’s size and resources.

Included with each event are patterns, game boards, and music that can be duplicated. An intergenerational activity for making a banner of “The Cloud of Witnesses” (Season of Pentecost) could easily be adapted for a Vacation Bible School or 24-week course. Even the elders in the church may not know all of the biblical characters introduced in the making of the banner.

“Before you know it,” says Johansson, “strangers—with their hearts and hands engaged in an enjoyable project—will find themselves turning into friends.”

—DSL
Prayer Adds Meaning To the Art of Pysanky During Every Season

By Dontie Fuller

Long ago, people of Ukraine celebrated the return of the sun god with the ritual of decorating eggs in spring. In 988 C.E., when Christianity was introduced in the Ukraine, the art called “pysanky” became an Easter tradition.

Pysanky is the Ukrainian word for eggs decorated in a wax-resist method known as “Ukrainian Easter eggs.” Pysanka, a single egg, comes from the Ukrainian word “to write.” It is pronounced pes un ka—with no emphasis on any syllable of the word.

Although the art of pysanky seems to be a Lenten activity, it does not need to be restricted to one season. Last year young people attending the Youth Fall Conference sponsored by the Diocese of Indianapolis combined pysanky with prayer for a new experience.

Prayer is a natural component of the tradition’s religious roots. Ukrainians begin decorating an egg with the prayer: “God help me.” They continue to pray as they adorn the eggs to bless friendship and marriage.

Each design drawn on the egg becomes a prayer. Typical motifs come from nature or symbols from the Christian tradition. Prayers of thanksgiving and supplication imparted in color and design become beautiful eggs. Eggs can be decorated with Christmas motifs and used as ornaments or as gifts to celebrate wedding anniversaries or graduations.

Introducing pysanky as a prayerful venture provides participants a peaceful interlude in rushed and over-scheduled lives. Suggesting that an art project can be a prayer expands the learners’ definition of prayer.

After an egg’s contents are “blown” out, prayer motifs are penciled lightly on clean, dry eggs. (See below for more information about making the eggs.) With a writing tool called a “kistka”—a copper funnel attached to a handle—beeswax is applied to the design. Beeswax is scooped into the kistka’s funnel and melted in a candle flame. The wax flows from the tip of the funnel onto the egg.

The design that is to remain white is covered with the beeswax. After the white areas are covered, the egg is placed in the lightest dye—yellow. Moving from the lightest to the darkest dyes, each color is covered with beeswax to protect it from the darker color.

When the dying is complete, beeswax is then removed from the egg by holding it next to a candle flame and wiping off the melted wax with a

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Making Pysanky Eggs

A Kid’s Guide to Decorating Ukrainian Easter Eggs, by Natalie Perchyshyn (Minneapolis: Gopher State Litho, 2000, $9.95) is an excellent resource for learning about pysanky. The step-by-step instructions are easy to understand as they guide you through the process.

Most of the supplies for pysanky are common household items. Special equipment is relatively inexpensive and easy to obtain. Kistkas, beeswax, and dyes are often available in Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic church gift shops, especially those with an Eastern European heritage.

The Ukrainian Gift Shop in Roseville, Minnesota, has a large selection of supplies, kits, and books about pysanky. If you have questions, contact them at 651-638-9700; to order call 866.PYSANKA (toll free) or visit www.ukrainiangiftshop.com.

—Dontie Fuller
Have you ever had a dim memory of an idea from a past issue of Episcopal Teacher that you are now ready to try? Are you looking for additional seasonal ideas to round out your Christian formation programming for the year? Visit the Virginia Theological Seminary website at www.vts.edu/cmt/overview to look at past copies of Episcopal Teacher beginning with the Fall 1999 issue. On the page for the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, click on “Published by the CMT,” then highlight Episcopal Teacher. The past issues are in an adobe format that can be downloaded and copied.

Some of the youth who attended the pysanky workshop asked to continue during free time to create more eggs. During a similar program for the youth choirs at St. Paul’s, Indianapolis, the children requested that the pysanky program be offered each week in Lent. Focusing on prayer can be difficult in a roomful of young people who are learning the craft. It is worth the effort to connect prayer with the art of pysanky to help participants discover a new way to relate to God.

Designs are prayerfully chosen by each artist.

Art of Pysanky
Continued from p. 12.

paper towel. A polyurethane or varnish coat may be applied to the finished egg.

Learners find the technique challenging, and “first eggs” are rarely perfect. But the brilliant colors give satisfaction even on the first attempt, motivating young artists to try again and again.

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Paper towel. A polyurethane or varnish coat may be applied to the finished egg.

Learners find the technique challenging, and “first eggs” are rarely perfect. But the brilliant colors give satisfaction even on the first attempt, motivating young artists to try again and again.

Some of the youth who attended the pysanky workshop asked to continue during free time to create more eggs. During a similar program for the youth choirs at St. Paul’s, Indianapolis, the children requested that the pysanky program be offered each week in Lent. Focusing on prayer can be difficult in a roomful of young people who are learning the craft. It is worth the effort to connect prayer with the art of pysanky to help participants discover a new way to relate to God.

Website Place to Find Past Issues of Episcopal Teacher

Have you ever had a dim memory of an idea from a past issue of Episcopal Teacher that you are now ready to try? Are you looking for additional seasonal ideas to round out your Christian formation programming for the year?

Visit the Virginia Theological Seminary website at www.vts.edu/cmt/overview to look at past copies of Episcopal Teacher beginning with the Fall 1999 issue. On the page for the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, click on “Published by the CMT,” then highlight Episcopal Teacher. The past issues are in an adobe format that can be downloaded and copied.

Look for Advent/Christmas/Epiphany articles in the fall issues; Lent/Easter in winter issues; Pentecost and Vacation Bible School in spring issues; start-up ideas and All Saints in summer issues. Feel free to make copies of articles to reprint for your teachers.
No Experience Necessary

Bible Study
Augsburg Fortress Press
800-328-4648
www.noexperiencenecessary.org
Cost: $8.99/Unit Guide

No Experience Necessary is a Bible study curriculum aimed at young adult professionals who have little or no exposure to the Bible and are curious to find out more. The study is designed to be used in groups with as few as two members and invites learners to read, listen for God, and share insights through simple, relaxed lesson plans.

Each unit outlines seven sessions that focus on God’s call “to follow Jesus into a life that is different…a life that makes a difference in the world.” Articles, stories and straightforward questions are designed to spark conversation, reflection and action on Bible texts. Lessons contain short, informal articles that provide basic biblical background, pose questions for discussion, and invite learners to connect texts and contemporary life experiences.

The study employs a narrative approach to scripture that presents the Bible as a composition of carefully constructed documents that contain clues for interpretation.

No Experience Necessary bills itself as an informal, come-as-you-are Bible study that anyone can lead and participate in. The lesson plans are simple, straightforward, and unencumbered by theological jargon. The graphics are hip, the writing style is relaxed, and the overall approach is inviting. This is a study that doesn’t tell learners what to do or think.

Augsburg-Fortress Press, the publishing house of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, offers an informative website to support the study at www.noexperiencenecessary.org. Each guide is filled with lesson plans, teaching tips, background information, and hints on leading small groups.

Currently, five unit guides are available. Companion DVDs ($19.99) will be available for each unit beginning with Unit 6, scheduled to be published in July. The DVD will feature an introduction by the writers and lively discussions to help leaders set up conversations for each session. —GJK

Summer a Time to Play Together

It is all too easy these days for household members to be running in all directions. Even when home at the same time, family members can each be involved in individual pursuits: one checking email, one watching TV, one playing video games, another reading.

Simply living in the same household does not guarantee closeness. As with all communities, it is important for those sharing a household to spend time together. This takes care and attention.

Fellowship is an integral component of Christian Community; this is true in the home as well. Take time to play together. Remember that on the seventh day God rested and reveled in creation.

Recreation is also re-creation. Relax and revel in one another. Try a family hike, a board game, a theater outing, a game of catch, popcorn and a movie. The family that plays together stays together.

—Anne Kitch
Introducing the Old Testament

ELCA ©2005
Produced by Tim Franks
38 minutes, DVD with Study Guide
www.elca.org/mosaic
800-638-3522
Cost: $19.95

The video, *Introducing the Old Testament*, is an excellent resource that gives viewers a general overview of the structure, content and authorship of the Old Testament. Old Testament scholars of both the Jewish and Christian faiths describe the central message of the text and suggest ways to begin reading the books of the Old Testament.

In the film the scholars describe God’s relationship to the Hebrew people and involvement with humankind throughout history. Both first-time readers and seasoned Christians will understand and be intrigued by the information presented in the 38-minute video.

Images from art and the Holy Land today that are shown throughout the film add emphasis to the scholar’s comments. After a general introduction, viewers are invited to explore the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), followed by the historical books, wisdom literature and the prophets.

The DVD concludes with an overview of women in the Old Testament that also highlights passages about slavery and violence. The segments can be viewed all at once or shown individually to emphasize a particular topic and allow time for discussion.

A study guide with discussion questions helps facilitators organize class sessions and reflect on the material presented. A list of additional resources encourages further study.

The film could be used in a variety of settings and with different age groups. It would provide an excellent introduction to the Old Testament for confirmation or high school groups studying the Bible. Parish Bible study groups or first year Education for Ministry (EFM) students may also find viewing *Introducing the Old Testament* beneficial as they begin their studies.

Laura Derkits is video specialist at the Center for the Ministry of Teaching.

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Mark Your Calendar Now to Attend
Winter Christian Formation Event

OOPS! What is this snowy scene doing in the summer issue of Episcopal Teacher? Well, it may seem like winter is a long time away, but it will be here before you know it!

Block out January 21-23 on your 2007 calendar planner now to attend Teaching for Discipleship hosted by the Center for the Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary. Designed for Christian educators from all denominations, the Christian formation event offers a range of workshop topics and experiences for both the veteran and newly appointed professional or volunteer.

It doesn’t matter if your church is large or small, family-size or bursting with programs. Together we will explore how to develop and select curriculum, how to work with clergy and volunteers, how to plan for special events, how to create successful youth programs, and more.

The three-day event will begin with registration from 1 to 3 p.m., January 21, and continue through lunch on Tuesday, January 23. Tuition, which includes lunch and dinner for two days, is $130. A private room for two nights and breakfast cost an additional $155.

Registrations can be made on-line at www.vts.edu/education/events after June 30, or send in the coupon on p. 15 to request a registration form. Credit cards are accepted. Enrollment will be limited, so don’t wait!

—DSL