



Christadelphian Sunday School Union Autumn Newsletter 2020

Supporting each other

One of our aims in publishing our CSSU Newsletter is to offer teachers the opportunity to ask for or offer support to each other. For example, do you have such a large group of children that you find it hard to organise them or to resource your lessons? Or, is your Sunday School very small and you feel you don't have enough children to do exciting activities or engage in proper discussions? Perhaps you've ended up teaching because no-one else will but really you lack confidence to try out more adventurous activities, especially now it's all by video link. Possibly, you have issues dealing with one child which you do not know how to address. There may be all sorts of areas which someone else has found a way of dealing with, if only you knew who to ask. Well, in our Newsletter, we would encourage you to air the problem and others to offer suggestions. In other words, it would be good to feed off one another. Please send your ideas and feedback to caz@cssu.org.uk

Ali Lawrence & Caz Parsons, Newsletter Editors

'Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another'

Proverbs 27:17

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](http://www.crossway.com)

Our first virtual Teachers' Gathering!



On Saturday 3rd October we had a world-first for the CSSU - an online Teachers' Forum and AGM.

Over 50 people representing ecclesias from around the UK, plus some from South Africa and India joined the committee on Zoom from their own homes to hear our annual activity and financial reports (something that must be done publicly to fulfil our charitable status obligations).

We then moved onto discussing materials for Iranian Sunday School students. It was felt that the number of Iranian children attending Sunday School in the UK was at present small, many of those had decent English and the remainder were learning it quickly. As such there was little demand for Farsi translation of whole lessons at present. There are efforts to source speech recognition and translation software, and some are simply using free Bible images and attaching captions using Google Translate. There are also a group of Iranian sisters/unbaptised contacts who are keen to learn 'how to teach Sunday School' and efforts are being made to support them.

The second half of the discussion session was based around 'Innovations during the Covid 19 pandemic'. Shirley ecclesia shared a highlights video of their Sunday School play, an ambitious venture with plenty of comedy moments produced by many parent videographers at home and put together by bro Julian Brown with appropriate backgrounds and a dramatic soundtrack! Other contributions included a slideshow of ecclesial members put together to the song 'Love One Another'. Several ecclesias shared what they were doing with their own Sunday School and CYC provision, with some

having taken the decision to move back to physical meetings as far as government guidelines allowed. In India, Zoom had been a real boon to bring disparate students together across large geographical areas under skilled and passionate teachers.

There was also an honesty and a recognition that Zoom 'burn-out' could occur with both students and teachers becoming frustrated or disengaged with Sunday School without face-to-face contact, with one sister sharing that since schools reopened her child's school friends seemed 'real' while her Sunday School peers were less real. Others shared their disempowerment in the face of the pandemic, where struggling to cope with their own reaction to lockdown meant they felt unable to provide for their students. There was a need identified for schools with small numbers of students to have access to the larger Sunday Schools with established provision and the idea of a central register was suggested.

All in all it was a great forum with open and honest discussion about the difficulties, successes and failures we are all encountering in these new uncharted waters of living with a pandemic. Hopefully those attended came away with new ideas and enthusiasm for what is possible!



If you are part of an ecclesia which has established a regular online provision of Sunday School, and would be happy to allow students from smaller schools to join you - please get in touch on caz@cssu.org.uk so we can create a register of virtual Sunday Schools for others to access.

Supporting one another



Last edition a teacher asked:

How can I cater for everyone in a class of mixed abilities, and more importantly, ensure there is no resentment between the two groups?

Brother Jim Harper from Connecticut, USA offered this answer: "I sympathize with the teacher who submitted the question. She is carrying the burden by herself: *"How can I cater for everyone, and more importantly, ensure there is no resentment between the two groups?"* One way to start is with a helper. In recent years, we have had a number of teaching teams – especially young wife-husband teams – voluntarily working with our kids ... even with small classes ... and it has made the job a lot lighter, especially where wide age or ability differences are concerned."

Another idea is to offer individualised 'learning centres': "Centres provide a very flexible way of dealing with the individual abilities and interests of the children and give the teacher time to work individually with them as needed. On occasion, centres also give the children opportunities to work – or play or do some activity – cooperatively with each other." For more information about the learning centre idea see brother Jim's book 'The Joy of Sunday Schooling', published by Tidings USA.

Contributions from Sunday Schools

Q: *How can I encourage parents to be more involved in Zoom Sunday School lessons?*



Please submit your suggestions and we'll include some in our next issue!

Sis Rachel Stevens from Kettering sent us this:

As part of working through the CSSU 'Peace Project Pack' a Junior class of 4 children in four different households put together a musical interpretation of 'Jesus calming the Storm'. It comprised a Lego boat complete with disciples, a fabric sea, a soundtrack created by the children at home.

"All the children contributed to the footage by creating the narrative which I typed into the chat. They each had musical instruments (bottle for blowing across to make wind / baking tray and wooden spoon / guitar marked the end of the storm/ fingers pitter-pattering on the table for rain) and effects like a torch for lightning although it's not visible in the video. It wasn't difficult to do. One child had been asked to play and pre-record a piece of piano music – The Reef by Carroll."

Watch it here:

drive.google.com/file/d/1YU4NI0m9bKY1B1vQ4Lyn-k_259-f6RWw/view

Do you have any successes, funny stories or pictures we can share?



Quick teaching ideas:

Google Earth

Bro Chris Peel from Newbury says: "Something I found worked well in a recent lesson about Philip and the Ethiopian was to ask my junior class where they thought Ethiopia was and finding it on Google Earth (via a shared screen). We then found our way from Ethiopia to Jerusalem by deciding whether to go up/down left/right. We probably didn't go the route the official took but it did serve to show how far he had to travel to worship at the temple."

Make honey locusts

Sis Ali from Kettering got her junior class to make 'honey locusts' during her lesson on John the Baptist. I always think edible activities go down well and are a great way of involving learners that respond to active and sensory stimulation which can be low on Zoom. Yum!



If you have any easy ideas we'd love to hear them so we can share them in our next issue!



Kids Corner

"What's your best and worst thing about doing Sunday School over Zoom?"

"I like seeing my friends being silly and climbing on the table"

"I love youth camps because I get to be with my friends and I get to learn about God in a really fun way...there are lots of amazing opportunities for anyone who goes. One time we had to put edible letters on a pre-baked pie to spell out an important Bible message. My favourite camp was Wardley Camp, when we got to meet our mates from Bible School and do all the activities at the same time."

Josh Lawrence (11), Doncaster

In lockdown, we had mini Bible School with Auntie Ali. It was amazing! I loved making the map of Israel, it was so big! I Loved all of it and I had loads of fun in her garden too! I would love to do it every week! 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

Japheth (9), Kettering

We need your contributions!



To encourage more dialogue between our readers and the CSSU we have included a  sign wherever we'd like you to get involved!

Please submit your contributions and feedback to caz@cssu.org.uk

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