Most Seventh-day Adventist teachers realize that they are part of an ongoing “evangelistic series.” In fact, yearly church subsidies for small, one-constituency schools may well be equivalent to the cost of a moderately funded evangelistic series in the same community. Adventist teachers realize that a major goal of church schools is to support parents and churches in introducing their children to Christ. The importance of early introduction to the Bible is highlighted by Solomon in these well-known words: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” In Proverbs, Solomon has the personification of wisdom remark: “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.”

Ellen White also encouraged these activities. She wrote: “Children of eight, ten, or twelve years are old enough to be addressed on the subject of personal religion.” She recommended not waiting until children reach adulthood before introducing themes relating to redemption and salvation, but instead, teaching them early to comprehend biblical truths. “If properly instructed, very young children may have correct views of their state as sinners and of the way of salvation through Christ.”

For this reason, Adventist teachers must find ways to creatively incorporate biblical teachings into worships and Bible classes, as well as the other subjects. Yet, like many teachers, I have often wondered how to help ensure that students make a definite choice for baptism, and not just acquire doctrinal instruction and Bible facts.

One day, in the Southern Tidings, the official publication of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, I discovered an article by Jamie Francisco, a teacher in a one-room school like mine. She reported on an evangelistic series for children, led...
by her students. I immediately contacted Francisco, who shared wonderful tips with me, including where to access the materials she used in the evangelistic series she organized for her students.

The resource, *Truth for Youth*, created by Young Disciple Ministry, is a software product comprised of 19 lessons along with craft ideas for each lesson, health and nature videos, and a music CD. I was able to obtain the entire software package on loan from my conference education department.

Each lesson included a sermon that children could read verbatim as well as corresponding pictures and directions for creating additional props to accompany the sermon, such as signs or commitment cards.

**Getting Started**

Since our church was planning a fall evangelistic series, I requested permission from the school board and church board for our students to conduct a series at the same time. The meetings would take place in the church fellowship hall and cater to children aged 5 to 10. When possible, the sermon topics for the children’s series aligned with the topics presented each evening by the evangelist in the adult meetings. What better way for children to clarify their beliefs than to teach other

A 4th-grade student presents a sermon.
children? The church, parents, and students were enthusiastic, so we immediately began making preparations. Two months before the meetings, parents received letters introducing the series, which was also promoted at Home and School events. We asked for volunteers who could help with technology and lead out with crafts. All students from grades 2 through 8 were assigned one to four sermons each, on preselected dates. Students received a copy of each sermon in a notebook and were asked to practice their sermons at home. The children were given a songbook to accompany the songs on the CD, which was also distributed during the meetings.

Volunteers

Two volunteers from our congregation helped download the software for the sermons. They also worked with the children until each presenter felt comfortable using the equipment—which consisted mainly of the computer and CD player. One father loaned us his laptop computer. A grandmother offered to organize the crafts for each evening session. She bagged the materials, directions, and a sample in large re closable plastic bags. She helped each child practice completing the craft for his or her presentation night. This ensured that the children would feel comfortable leading others.

Gaining Support

Not all students in our schools come from Adventist homes. One of my students was not an Adventist. I explained to this student’s parents that we were working with the church, and I thought participating in the series would be wonderful training for their child in public speaking, using technology, and organizing and planning a project. The parents agreed to have their child present at church. At school, they practiced together. Each student would find a corner and read the assigned sermon aloud. An in-school solo practice presentation was also scheduled prior to each evening’s topic. We prayed for the Holy Spirit to influence the hearts of the presenters and listeners during each meeting.

The Meetings

Once the meetings began, I was amazed at the leadership skills demonstrated by my students. I observed as they greeted, helped corral the stragglers, led out in song service, spoke articulately and with enthusiasm, assisted one another with the computer and CD player, and explained the crafts. My main job at this point was to quietly assist in the background. I was so proud of them!

On the last Friday night of the series, one of my 5th-grade boys delivered his sermon. He distributed commitment forms for the children to sign if they were interested in baptism. After the meeting, as I looked through the forms before giving them to the pastor, I was happily surprised to see that the speaker for that night had also signed a form. The “preacher” was requesting baptism! When the candidates from the adult meetings were baptized, so was

---

Creative Ideas

1. Prayer Partners

Match each child in your school with a member of the church. Choose people who can come to an open house or other program, and if possible, devote several hours a week to assisting at school. (Be sure to do background checks first). Retired people are usually thrilled to be asked to participate. Encourage prayer partners to seek out their child at church, to interact with him or her at school, to get to know the parents, and, of course, to pray every day for their child. In turn, have the children write notes to their partners. At the beginning of the school year, arrange a special prayer time at church where prayer partners meet and pray with the children and their families. End each year with a prayer-partner breakfast. I have seen strong friendships built and witnessed non-Adventist parents grow closer to church members. Many become more comfortable about attending church events because of the friendships that develop between prayer partners. Having a prayer partner stay in touch after a child graduates can be a great source of encouragement to young people who are away at boarding school, and to those who enroll in public high schools. A special bond is developed when someone at church seeks them out at church, and calls them or sends encouraging e-mails periodically.
this 5th-grade student who preached during the series held by the children. The Holy Spirit had truly been at work.

**After the Meetings**

These meetings generated more interest in the pastor’s Bible study class, a small study group for students who desired further information. Over the next few months, several other students requested baptism.

As a result of their experience with the evangelistic series, many of the students felt more comfortable speaking at school and at church. Inspired by their growth, I created more occasions for them to lead out in worship and other school-related events.

Years later, this school continues to provide students with opportunities to serve through mission trips where they present sermons to both adults and children. I am reminded of Ellen White’s statement that “with such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-
2. Pastor’s Class

Each January, I invited the pastor to lead a small study group with students in grades 5 through 8. The junior baptismal book, It’s My Choice, was used to guide the study sessions. Parental permission was required for students to participate. During the time I implemented this plan, I never had a time when non-Adventist parents opted out. The small group sessions gave the pastor a chance to get to know the children and to follow up on any expressed desire for baptism. I did not call it “baptismal class” because I didn’t want the children to feel pressured. The class was designed to give each child an opportunity to ask the pastor questions. Also, even after they were baptized, I encouraged the children to continue attending the pastor’s class.

3. Community Service

What better way to grow in grace and a commitment to Jesus than to serve others? There are nearly endless opportunities for service in the community: picking up trash along the highway or at a park, helping at a food bank or soup kitchen, singing at nursing homes, creating cards and gifts for shut-ins, etc. One of our school’s favorite projects is to collect change in little banks. At a certain point, we remove, count, and roll the money. Even kindergartners help!

While I was teaching in a small school, the students sometimes perused the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) catalog to decide how they wanted to “spend” their money: to pay for water filters or tents, or to buy food to feed a family. Students have also contributed to sponsor One-Day Church projects and education goals sponsored by the local union conference. They helped sort and stack canned goods at the church-owned community center, visited older church members, and made cards for sick and shut-in members. They also made Valentine’s Day cards and sent them to the local radio station to be distributed to children in area hospitals.