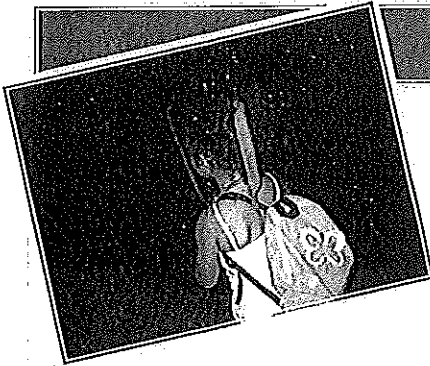


# Ministry With Children

ADDRESSING TOPICS OF CONCERN FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN

*"... for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs."*

June 2010



## Men in Ministry with Children

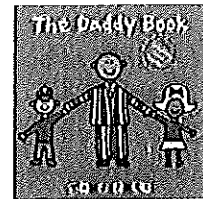
.....  
Are you a nurturer?

From a young age, children view their caregivers as representatives of God. The way in which we live our lives and engage with our children exemplifies for them who God is. As we show them love, they will see God as a loving God. As we show them fairness, they will see God as a just God. The same can be applied to who is present in the lives of our children based on gender. Take a walk down the hallway of your classrooms. Who do you see teaching and guiding the children? Although there are exceptions, like John Sullivan, who is in ministry with children in the Florida Annual Conference, most teachers of children in our congregations are women. Women more often serve as nurturers and caregivers, but we sometimes forget that loving others is not gender specific. Children not only enjoy being in relationship with men, they need to see men in the role of nurturer.

Statistically speaking, the absence of strong male role models in the lives of children is linked to the rise in the number of children living in poverty, rise in the frequency of children committing crimes at a younger age, and a higher dropout rate in public schools. Although a great deal of the research is in the area of fathers, what could this mean in light of the Baptismal Covenant? What is the responsibility of men in being involved in the lives of children in the congregation and the community?

When we welcome a person into the community through the Baptismal Covenant, we promise to "be living witnesses to the gospel, individually and together, wherever [we] are, and in all that [we] do... and to nurture one another in living the faith of the church and include [the individual] in [our] care". This is not a promise reserved for fathers or mothers, women or men, pastors or laity. It is a promise made by each of us adopted into the body of Christ through our Baptism. Nurture is an integral part of this promise.

## Reading and Resources



**The Daddy Book**  
by Todd Parr

celebrates the diverse, wonderful world of fathers with engaging observations and colorful illustrations

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



**Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation—Children's Ministries**

guides congregations in using their own gifts to respond to God's call to care for the children

[www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)



## Practical Ways to Involve Men in Ministry with Children

.....  
A few ideas from Melanie

*There are some strategies that we can use to encourage and support male involvement in the nursery, preschool, Sunday school, and in other areas of ministry with children.*

First, encourage male involvement. Go directly to the source. Talk to the men in your congregation about the importance of the presence of men in the lives of young children.

John Sullivan, Christian Educator at St. Peters UMC in the Florida Annual Conference, suggests that beyond "offering Super Bowl tickets", create "exciting ministry events" that involve everyone in the congregation and use these events to show men how important they are in the life of the church and the lives of children. He also suggests that you build relationships with men in the congregation that will encourage them to see that ministry with children is "about serving Jesus".

Talk with the United Methodist Men in your congregation about taking on a ministry involving the children of the congregation and community.

Once men become actively involved, pair them with an experienced teacher. Of course, this should be the common practice for all new teachers and guides.

Encourage men to use their gifts to teach and guide children. Whether a contractor, an accountant, a musician, or someone who just enjoys fishing or cooking, these talents will only enhance your children's experiences in the congregation... and the way that they engage with others in the world.

*Melanie Gordon is Director of Ministry with Younger Children at the General Board of Discipleship, and a member of the South Carolina Annual Conference*



.....  
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For any other use, please contact [mgordon@gbod.org](mailto:mgordon@gbod.org).

## Ministry with Children

### Related Links

GBOD Ministry with Children  
<http://www.gbod.org/children>

.....  
GBOD Ministry with Children Blog  
[http://blogs.gbod.org/younger\\_children](http://blogs.gbod.org/younger_children)

.....  
GBGM Serving for Children  
<http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/work/women-children>

### Related Resources

The National Fatherhood Initiative <http://www.fatherhood.org> seeks to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers

.....  
The United Methodist Men <http://www.gcumm.org/about/> is committed to helping men grow in Christ so that others may know Christ

### Feedback

*I would enjoy hearing from you!*

*Are there topics that you would like to see addressed in this newsletter?*

*Please email me at [mgordon@gbod.org](mailto:mgordon@gbod.org)*

*Grace and Peace,  
melanie*

# Resources in Ministry with Children

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## **Books and Resources for Understanding Ministry With Children**

***The Children's Minister*** - Children yearn to be noticed and recognized as individuals who have an important place in the church. Remember the vow the congregation takes at a baptism? The church declares a commitment to be a part of the lives of the children in their midst. Senior pastors, church staff and volunteers, children's pastors will find a treasure trove of tested guidelines to help you effectively offer the presence of Christ to children.

Available through Upper Room Books

<http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/>

***Real Kids, Real Faith – Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives*** - Drawn from a three-year study of children's spirituality, as well as the best in theological tradition and literature, *Real Kids, Real Faith* provides insight and a variety of helpful tips for nurturing children's spiritual and religious formation. In addition to its wealth of practical advice on how to engage children in authentic faith practice, *Real Kids, Real Faith* helps parents identify their own important role in a child's deepening life of faith.

Available through Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com>

***The Most Important Space in the Church*** – This resource emphasizes that evangelism and spiritual formation begin in the nursery. It is there that many visitors first interact with church members and experience an outpouring of warmth and acceptance — known as radical hospitality. This book presents both theological groundwork and practical applications for strengthening any church's ministry, beginning in the most important space — the nursery.

Available through Upper Room Books

<http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/>

## **Staff Development Resources**

***Safe Sanctuaries - Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth*** - Practical guidance is provided in developing and implementing a substantive, holistic action plan of abuse prevention.

Available through Upper Room Books

<http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/>

**Guidelines for Children's Ministries** - This booklet concentrates of the basics of ministry that help children grow in faith. It is the beginning point for organizing for ministry and is designed to help congregations use their own gifts to respond to God's call to care for the children, on Sunday morning, through the week and for special events.

Available through Cokesbury

<http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=693075>

**Job Descriptions and Leadership Training in the United Methodist Church - A Leader Development Guide 2009 – 2012** – In this guide, each job description includes: Result Expected, Spiritual Gifts and Qualifications Helpful for this Position, Responsibilities, Support to Expect from the Congregation, Getting Started, People and Agencies That Can Help, and Resources for Help. In addition to individual positions within congregational life, the book explores biblical roots and dimensions of leader development. It includes new thinking based on field research and training leaders in a variety of settings.

Available through Upper Room books

<http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/>

### **Bibles and Books for Children 0-11**

All books below available through Cokesbury and Amazon

**The Early Reader's Bible** – Bible stories for emerging readers

**The International Children's Bible** – translation that children can read and understand independently

**The Children's Bible in 365 Stories** – Bible stories for families to read together

**Contemporary English Version of the Holy Bible** – translated on a third to fifth grade level

\* **Common English Bible** – fresh translation on a fifth grade level - only in NT right now

**On Noah's Ark** by Jan Brett

**Old Turtle** by Douglas Wood

**God's Paintbrush** by Sandy Sasso

**Runaway Bunny** by Margaret Wise Brown

**Cain and Abel** by Sandy Sasso

**Psalm 21** illustrated by Tim Ladwig

**The Lord's Prayer** illustrated by Tim Ladwig

**Morning Has Broken** by Eleanor Farjeon

## *Play for Children Newborn through Eleven*

**101 Great Games for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers: Active, Bible-based Fun for Christian Education** - Even as babies are beginning to crawl, toddlers are learning to speak, and preschoolers are starting to cooperate with playmates, they can begin to discover God's Word and God's world through play. Each game includes a Scripture passage, a teaching point, a supervision tip, materials-needed list, and game instructions.

Available through Cokesbury

<http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/search.aspx?ddlSearchScope=&txtSearchQuery=101 great games>

**Unplugged Play** – This book helps parents of children through eleven pull the plug on excessive electronic play with 710 games and activities that allow parents to say, "YES" to creative, active, imaginative play.

Available through Alternative for Simple Living

<http://www.simpleliving.net/shop/item.aspx?itemid=1128>

## *Curriculum and Formational Resources*

**United Methodist Publishing House Curriculum Comparison Chart** – This chart includes curriculum approved by the Curriculum Resources Committee of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship for use in the Christian education ministry of The United Methodist Church.

<http://www.cokesbury.com/FreeDownloads/CurriculumComparisonChartWeb.pdf>

**The Way of the Child** - *The Way of the Child* is a formative study for children ages six through eleven that recognizes that children have an innate spirituality with a natural acceptance of mystery, an amazing capacity for awe, a vital imagination, a longing to be their unique selves, and an ability to be open to and receive God's love.

Available through Upper Room Books

<http://www.companionsinchrist.org/WOC/index.html>

**Godly Play** - Teaches children as young as three the art of using religious language - parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action - helping them become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives.

Available through Godly Play, Inc

<http://www.churchpublishing.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=landingPage&pageID=17&categoryID=344&tagID=0>

**Pockets Magazine** - *Pockets* is the devotional magazine that helps children ages six through eleven learn more about God by encouraging them to read the Bible, practice spiritual disciplines, act compassionately, and exercise their creativity. This magazine also includes an on-line component.

Available through Upper Room Books

<http://pockets.upperroom.org/>

**The Little Christian Magazine** - The stories in this magazine are meant to be read by or with young children, so the text is simple or rhymed. The art is vivid, bold and engaging. The stories are faith-based, so you'll be helping to nurture a child's spiritual awareness from a young age. In addition to stories, it contains prayers, songs, Christian biographies, activities, rituals and more to help children become aware of God's presence and activity in and around them.

Available through the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

<http://www.thelittlechristian.org/littlechristian/>

### **Downloadable Resources**

**Child Care and the Church** – This is the official document of the United Methodist Church that outlines the church's responsibilities in initiating, encouraging, and participating in the highest quality of child care for children and families, not only in the local community but also nationwide.

[http://www.kintera.org/atf/cf/%7B3482e846-598f-460a-b9a7-386734470eda%7D/CHILDCARE\\_AND\\_THE\\_CHURCH.PDF](http://www.kintera.org/atf/cf/%7B3482e846-598f-460a-b9a7-386734470eda%7D/CHILDCARE_AND_THE_CHURCH.PDF)

**Ministry with Children Monthly Newsletter** - This monthly "Ministry with Children" e-newsletter addresses topics of concern for those engaged in ministry for children. It is also available in PDF form for parents in congregations.

[http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.5702881/k.4474/Ministry\\_With\\_Children\\_Newsletter.htm](http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.5702881/k.4474/Ministry_With_Children_Newsletter.htm)

**Welcoming Children with Special Needs** – Resources for teachers, ministers, and congregations

[http://blogs.gbod.org/younger\\_children/?page\\_id=875](http://blogs.gbod.org/younger_children/?page_id=875)

**Helping Children Cope and Heal** – This booklet assists those engaged in ministry with children in meeting children where they are in the grief process, and supporting them as they heal.

<http://www.kintera.org/atf/cf/%7B3482e846-598f-460a-b9a7-386734470eda%7D/INTIMEPAINCRISIS.PDF>

**Development through the Lifespan [chart]** – This chart outlines twelve different stages of development.

<http://www.gbod.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=nhLRJ2PMKsG&b=5964007&ct=7303981>

**i-Teach** – This is a free monthly newsletter providing insights, thought-provoking observations and "I never thought of it that way" commentary on subjects Christian educators deal with every day.

[http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.5573581/k.68F6/Subscribe\\_to\\_emiTeachem.htm](http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.5573581/k.68F6/Subscribe_to_emiTeachem.htm)

## **On-Line Resources**

### ***General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church***

Resources, training, and support for leaders of children's ministries

[http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.3784729/k.C283/Childrens\\_Ministry.htm](http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.3784729/k.C283/Childrens_Ministry.htm)

### ***Younger Children's Ministry Blog***

Support, resources, and connections for those engaged in ministry for young children [0-5] and their formation

[http://blogs.gbod.org/younger\\_children/2008/04/](http://blogs.gbod.org/younger_children/2008/04/)

### ***Safe Sanctuaries***

A guide to help congregations in make a safe place where children and youth may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship within the community of faith

[http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.5598111/k.A248/Safe\\_Sanctuaries.htm](http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.5598111/k.A248/Safe_Sanctuaries.htm)

### ***First Steps Spirituality Center***

Online "Prayground" for young children to learn the elements of prayer

<http://www.1ststeps.net/Prayground/tabid/617/Default.aspx>

### ***National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC]***

Annual training for educators of young children

Ongoing professional development

Online community forums

<http://www.naeyc.org/naeyc/conference>

### ***Association for Childhood Education International [ACEI]***

Annual Training for educators of children

Radio/internet accessible lectures and discussions

<http://acei.org/>

## COMMENTARY: Let the little children come

**By Bishop William H. Willimon**  
*Special Contributor*



Bishop William  
H. Willimon

A couple of decades ago, in a sincere attempt to make our churches more accessible and welcoming to children, some of our churches adopted an innovation: the children's sermon.

Today, the children's sermon is to my mind a prime example of a noble effort, but an unfortunate strategy.

I've heard lots of children's sermons. Tried a few myself. For what it's worth, here is my assessment of children's sermons.

I sometimes say that I've only got two objections to children's sermons: They are not for children and are usually not sermons.

### Not for children

Any child younger than older elementary age (who usually avoid coming down for children's sermons) cannot possibly comprehend the complicated analogies and object lessons of most children's sermons.

When an adult says to a preacher, "I get more out of your children's sermons than your regular sermons," this is not a compliment to children's sermons but a criticism of our sermons!

At their worst, children's sermons put children on display, sometimes embarrassing them with a "Kids say the darnedest things" routine. At their best, they reach only a small proportion of children.

Besides, if we really want to reach our children and to affirm them, the sermon strikes me as the least effective liturgical act to reach children.

### Not really sermons

They are not sermons. If a sermon is an attempt faithfully to proclaim the Christian faith, then the moralism and trite common sense of children's sermons make them questionable.

"Let's all be good boys and girls next week," is a long way from the truth of the gospel.

From what I observe, the most effective children's sermons are delivered by lay persons who are called and equipped by God to communicate with children. A stiff, uncomfortable, age-inappropriate lecture by a pastor sends the wrong message to children and congregation.

True, it is important for the congregation to see the pastor as relating well to children (our aging church desperately needs more young families and children), but there are numerous ways to do this more effectively than in exclusively verbal, abstract communication.

For instance, every time the church celebrates a baptism, why not call all the children down front and have them gather about the font so they can see what's going on? Try to explain one thing we believe about baptism to the children. They may have difficulty knowing what to make of "redemption" but they all know about water!

Jesus communicates with us through ordinary, everyday experiences like eating and drinking, bathing and singing, all activities that are accessible, though at different levels, to children.

I fear that children's sermons tend to backfire, saying to parents and children what we do not intend to say.

We wouldn't interrupt the congregation's worship with, "And now I would like all those of you who are over 65 to come down front while I say something sentimental and sappy to all of you old folks." That would be ugly.

So why do we single out the children, saying in effect, "Boys and girls, I know that you are bored stiff by Christian worship, that you can't get anything out of what we do when we praise God, so come down front and I'll take a few minutes to try to make this interesting for you."

Be suspicious when someone says, "My child doesn't get anything out of worship." Children can sing, pray, read or simply enjoy being with others in praising God. Children can be asked to prepare and read the Scripture on Sundays, or to usher. I have been in the habit of producing a "Children's Bulletin" for our children each Sunday (Dale and Kelly Clem began this practice at Duke Chapel when I was there.)

I was deeply moved when I visited an African-American congregation in our conference, where the children all processed with the choir and the children's choir sat in the choir loft for the service.

"It's our way of saying to them how proud we are that they are here with us," explained the pastor.

United Methodism has a problem, as do a number of denominations, in retaining our young. I saw a study a few years ago that proved to me that those churches that remove their children from worship on Sunday (taking them off to "children's church") have a difficult time of retaining their children in their church as the children grow up.

Those churches that lovingly find a way to keep their children with them on Sunday tend to keep their children throughout their lives. We must not squander the most formative years of our children's lives by removing them from the central, defining act of the Christian faith--the Sunday worship of the congregation.

I therefore hope that our churches will show their full commitment to the full inclusion of children in our Sunday worship, that we will not imply that they are not full and valued members of our fellowship.

Our Lord has expressly given little children a place at the center of his Kingdom. We are not in any way to hinder or to forbid them.

Let's pray that God will give us the determination and the creativity truly to include our young in our church.

*Bishop Willimon leads the North Alabama Area. Reprinted from his blog, "A Peculiar Prophet," available along with his podcasts at [northalabamaumc.org](http://northalabamaumc.org).*

[umportal.org](http://umportal.org)

Bishop William H. Willimon, Aug 18, 2010

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Leigh Meekins

From: GBOD [christianed@gbod.org]  
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2010 3:36 PM  
To: Leigh Meekins  
Subject: GBOD iTeach August 2010--Understanding the Bible: Unpacking the Doctrine of Scripture

# iTeach



**GBOD**  
EQUIPPING WORLD-CHANGING DISCIPLES™

## Support for Christian Educators

## August 2010

### Understanding the Bible: Unpacking the Doctrine of Scripture

By *Diana L. Hynson*

If you have a class of 12 people (particularly youth or adults), you may easily find that there are a dozen different understandings of what the Bible is and what any given passage means.

How can that be possible? The Bible is, well, the *Bible!* It is what it is; everyone knows that! Well... yes and no. Consider these statements:

1. The Bible is the authentic, inerrant word of God, complete and true in every respect, "dictated" by God to human writers, and unchangeable. The Bible means what it says.
2. The Bible is full of varieties of literary forms—poetry, fable, parable, history, prophecy, exposition—and this form determines how literally, or not, the Scripture can be interpreted. The Bible means what it means.
3. The Bible is God's instruction book to humankind. What is not expressly prohibited is permitted, and the spirit of the law is what matters most.
4. The Bible is God's instruction book to humankind. What is not expressly permitted is prohibited, and its instructions must be followed to the letter.

These four contradictory statements are different doctrines of Scripture, and there are many more. People of good faith hold these ideas or others about what the Bible is, and these ideas—these doctrines of Scripture—determine how we use and interpret the Bible. It is only a small leap to the recognition that your doctrine of Scripture not only influences how and what you believe, but also influences what and how you teach.

If you hold to statement 1 and can't imagine the Bible in any other

iTeach is a toolbox of wisdom to develop, nurture and encourage teachers, small group leaders and pastors in their teaching ministry.

Many people have little understanding of their own doctrine of Scripture, and much of it may have been taught and learned unconsciously or unintentionally.

### Events

Christian Educators Fellowship Event:

The Holy Spirit: Wild and Free  
October 22-25, 2010  
Louisville, KY  
[www.cefumc.org](http://www.cefumc.org)

### Facebook

If you're on Facebook and would like to network or receive helps and tips from time to time, search for the group GBOD-Christian Ed Friends and ask to

way, you may struggle with a student who holds just as strongly to statement 2 (or she may struggle with you). When we teach children, our doctrine of Scripture is particularly important because children will receive it the way we teach it. Of course, if the first/second grade teacher believes doctrine 4, the third/fourth grade teacher holds doctrine 1, the fifth/sixth grade teacher holds doctrine 2, and so on, the children may be confused and frustrated by the time they get to high school. We don't even have to spell out what our doctrine is (if we even realize it); it comes through implicitly in the way we teach and explain our lessons.

We recognize that, in general, different denominations may lean toward a particular set of doctrinal understandings. Our churches are made up of people with a wide range of denominational and doctrinal beliefs, even within the small group of "cradle Methodists." Many members have little understanding of the denomination's doctrine, and much of it may have been taught and learned unconsciously or unintentionally. What we encourage is not that everyone must adhere to an identical doctrine with every other person, but that we are mindful of what we do believe and are sensitive to the differences among our class members.

As you prepare to teach or lead the next class or group, think about these questions:

- Are you conscious of your own doctrine of Scripture? Can you state it clearly?
- Have the teachers, as a group, thought about what doctrines of Scripture are acceptable? Have they approached how to communicate that?
- What have your students or group members revealed about their approach to the Bible? What have you revealed about yours?
- Have there been marked differences of opinion about what some biblical passages mean? Could differing doctrines of Scripture be the key?
- How have you handled differences of biblical doctrine in your class discussions? Have you welcomed it? Dismissed it? "Corrected" it?
- What might you do differently to accommodate and explore the different biblical nuances that surface through a variety of approaches to the Bible?

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This newsletter was created by the Christian Education Team at GBOD and is made possible by your generous giving to the World Service Fund. You're receiving this

*Diana L. Hynson is the Director of Learning and Teaching Ministries at the General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, TN.*

## Resources

- The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, Part II (Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task).
- Christian Believer (Abingdon Press)
- This We Believe Leader's Guide by Kathryn Armistead and William H. Willimon (Abingdon)

- United Methodist Beliefs: A Brief Introduction by William H. Willimon (Westminster)

## Quick Links

- GBOD Christian Education
- GBOD Family Ministries
- Christian Educators Fellowship (CEF)
- Nothing But Nets

## Feedback?

We'd like to hear from you! What would you like to see in our next issue? Drop us a line

# Welcoming Children with Special Needs

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## *Scripture Reference:*

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs" – Matthew 19.15a

## *Resource for Leaders:*

**Social Principles of the United Methodist Church** on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?mid=1752>

**DISC (Disability Concerns)** is a resource from the UM General Board of Global Ministries for persons with disabilities, their families, friends, caretakers, congregations and clergy

<http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/umcor/work/health/disc/>

**Autism and Faith** is a resource for including individuals with autism in faith communities written so that others will not feel alone

<http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/products/documents/AutismandFaith.pdf>

**Developing Inclusive Ministries in Congregations** provides a list of resources to support congregations in welcoming people with special needs

[http://rwjms.umdj.edu/departments\\_institutes/boggscenter/projects/documents/BeginningandStrengtheningInclusiveMinistriesandCongregations.pdf](http://rwjms.umdj.edu/departments_institutes/boggscenter/projects/documents/BeginningandStrengtheningInclusiveMinistriesandCongregations.pdf)

**Vanderbilt Kennedy Center** provides downloadable tip sheets on supporting, teaching, and understanding people with specific disabilities while meeting their spiritual needs

<http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/site/services/disabilityservices/tipsheets.aspx>

**Autism and Alleluias** by Kathleen Deyer Bolduc provides insight into the life of a family with a child with autism, and their struggles and blessings in being a part of a congregation.

## *Books for Children:*

**MY FRIEND WITH AUTISM: A COLORING BOOK FOR PEERS AND SIBLINGS** by Beverly Bishop.

Ages 4 through 8, ISBN: 1885477899

**WHY CAN'T CHARLIE TALK?** by Debbi Spencer Ages 4 through 8. ISBN: 0646437437

Compiled in 2010

Melanie Gordon, GBOD, Ministry with Children, Director



# Leading Children's Moments



Melanie Gordon, Director, Ministry with Children, GBOD

*Children's Moments done well are an opportunity to proclaim the Word of God, and to affirm that children are full participants in the life of the congregation. Liturgically, there is no explicit placement in the Order of Worship for Children's Moments. So, how do we visibly show that children are a part of the church in the midst of worship?*

## *Meaningful Children's Moments*

**Prepare and Practice** - Leading children's moments requires preparation and practice so that the Word of God will be proclaimed intentionally and carefully. Take time to get comfortable with the lesson. Keep your lesson at three minutes in order to respect children's short attention spans.

**Tell a Story from the Bible** - Talk with the pastor about the text that he or she will be following, and tell the story. Resist the temptation to explain the meaning. Use visuals thoughtfully as a helpful addition to the story.

**Avoid Questioning the Children** - Often, children will begin telling stories, which the congregation may find amusing. Congregational laughter does not affirm a child who is sharing a significant life event, and takes away from the act of worship.

**Limit Use of Abstract or Symbolic Phrases** - Children understand things literally. Using abstract language like "Jesus is in your heart" will only lead to confusion, and a need for explanation. Instead say, "Jesus loves you".

**Close with Prayer** – Take this opportunity to remind children that they are a blessing.

## *Resources*

**Little People, Big Word** is a website devoted to providing children's leaders with lectionary based lessons for children's moments <http://littlepeoplebigword.wordpress.com/>

**Lesson Plans that Work** is a ministry of the Episcopal Church that provides lesson suggestions for children [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452\\_115790\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452_115790_ENG_HTML.htm)

**Inclusion in a Faith Community** is a resource that includes tips on including children with disabilities in the congregation [http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy\\_files/CongregationalCareCommitteesTips.pdf](http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy_files/CongregationalCareCommitteesTips.pdf)

## Leigh Meekins

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**From:** Melanie Gordon [mgordon@GBOD.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 06, 2010 12:11 PM  
**To:** Leigh Meekins; Alaska; Arkansas; Arkansas; Baltimore-Washington; California-Nevada; California-Pacific; California-Pacific; Central Texas; Dakotas; Desert Southwest; Detroit; East Ohio; East Ohio; Eastern Pennsylvania; Florida; Greater New Jersey; Holston; Illinois Great Rivers; Indiana; Iowa; Iowa; Kansas East; Kansas East; Kansas West; Kansas West; Kentucky; Kentucky; Louisiana; Memphis; Minnesota; Mississippi; Missouri; Missouri; Nebraska; Nebraska; Nebraska; New England; New Mexico; New York; North Alabama; North Carolina; North Georgia; North Georgia; North Georgia; North Texas; Northern Illinois; Northwest Texas; Oklahoma; Oklahoma Indian Missionary; Oregon-Idaho; Pacific Northwest; Pacific Northwest; Peninsula-Delaware; Red Bird Missionary; Red Bird Missionary; Rio Grande; Rocky Mountain; South Carolina; South Georgia; Southwest Texas; Susquehanna; Tennessee; Texas; Virginia; West Michigan; West Ohio; West Virginia; Western North Carolina; Western Pennsylvania; Wisconsin; Yellowstone  
**Cc:** Mary McDonald  
**Subject:** Children's Sabbath Manual Available for Download

Greetings!

Please let your congregations know that the Children's Sabbaths Manual for 2010 is now available for download.

## Worship Resources for Children's Sabbath

**This year, the United Methodist Church will observe Children's Sabbath October 8-10, 2010.** Children's Sabbath is an ecumenically celebrated weekend committed to educating the congregation about the state of today's children and families in America. Children provide leadership through music, sharing of gifts, and reading of scripture.

Downloadable resources for this event are available through the Children's Defense Fund <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/2010-childrens-sabbaths-manual.html> .

Use an interactive map to find ideas that worked in congregations and communities in 2009 <http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs-campaigns/faith-based-action/childrens-sabbaths/interactive-map-2009.html>

*peace,  
melanie*

melanie gordon  
Director, Ministry with Children  
Discipleship Ministries Division  
GBOD - The United Methodist Church  
877.899.2780 - ext.1762  
[Ministry with Children Website](#)

Subscribe to the [\*Ministry with Children Newsletter\*](#)

Subscribe to the [\*Ministry with Children Blog\*](#), and click on "Subscribe to this feed" in the yellow box.

## Leigh Meekins

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**From:** Melanie Gordon [mgordon@GBOD.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2010 2:42 PM  
**To:** Leigh Meekins; Alaska; Arkansas; Arkansas; Baltimore-Washington; California-Nevada; California-Pacific; California-Pacific; Central Texas; Dakotas; Desert Southwest; Detroit; East Ohio; East Ohio; Eastern Pennsylvania; Florida; Greater New Jersey; Holston; Illinois Great Rivers; Indiana; Iowa; Iowa; Kansas East; Kansas East; Kansas West; Kansas West; Kentucky; Kentucky; Louisiana; Memphis; Minnesota; Mississippi; Missouri; Missouri; Nebraska; Nebraska; Nebraska; New England; New Mexico; New York; North Alabama; North Carolina; North Georgia; North Georgia; North Georgia; North Texas; Northern Illinois; Northwest Texas; Oklahoma; Oklahoma Indian Missionary; Oregon-Idaho; Pacific Northwest; Pacific Northwest; Peninsula-Delaware; Red Bird Missionary; Red Bird Missionary; Rio Grande; Rocky Mountain; South Carolina; South Georgia; Southwest Texas; Susquehanna; Tennessee; Texas; Virginia; West Michigan; West Ohio; West Virginia; Western North Carolina; Western Pennsylvania; Wisconsin; Yellowstone  
**Subject:** Children and Grief

Hello, All!

There have been many questions from church leaders concerning children and grief. We know that the quote, "children are resilient" is often used as an excuse for adults not to help children address loss and uncertainty. Along with the resources on my blog, I have become aware of two more resources that leaders in ministry with children and parents may find helpful.

Hello Grief - <http://www.hellogrief.org/> is a website that provides helps and resources for parents and guardians of children dealing with grief. There is a section on faith, and there is a page that provides state-by-state resources.

Comfort Zone Camp - <http://www.comfortzonecamp.org/> is an actual camp for children to be with other children dealing with grief. Their counselors have lived through the loss of a parent. You may have seen this on the CBS morning show this week.

I hope that you will pass these along to the congregations in your Annual Conference. Have a great weekend.

*peace,  
melanie*

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**From:** Melanie Gordon [mgordon@GBOD.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2010 4:21 PM  
**To:** Melanie Gordon; Leigh Meekins; Alaska; Arkansas; Arkansas; Baltimore-Washington; California-Nevada; California-Pacific; California-Pacific; Central Texas; Dakotas; Desert Southwest; Detroit; East Ohio; East Ohio; Eastern Pennsylvania; Florida; Greater New Jersey; Holston; Illinois Great Rivers; Indiana; Iowa; Iowa; Kansas East; Kansas East; Kansas West; Kansas West; Kentucky; Kentucky; Louisiana; Memphis; Minnesota; Mississippi; Missouri; Missouri; Nebraska; Nebraska; Nebraska; New England; New Mexico; New York; North Alabama; North Carolina; North Georgia; North Georgia; North Georgia; North Texas; Northern Illinois; Northwest Texas; Oklahoma; Oklahoma Indian Missionary; Oregon-Idaho; Pacific Northwest; Pacific Northwest; Peninsula-Delaware; Red Bird Missionary; Red Bird Missionary; Rio Grande; Rocky Mountain; South Carolina; South Georgia; Southwest Texas; Susquehanna; Tennessee; Texas; Virginia; West Michigan; West Ohio; West Virginia; Western North Carolina; Western Pennsylvania; Wisconsin; Yellowstone  
**Subject:** RE: Children and Grief

Another contact and downloadable resource for your congregations:

<http://www.kintera.org/atf/cf/%7B3482e846-598f-460a-b9a7-386734470eda%7D/INTIMEPAINCRISIS.PDF>

*peace,  
melanie*

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**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2010 2:42 PM  
**To:** 'Alabama-West Florida'; 'Alaska'; 'Arkansas'; 'Arkansas'; 'Baltimore-Washington'; 'California-Nevada'; 'California-Pacific'; 'California-Pacific'; 'Central Texas'; 'Dakotas'; 'Desert Southwest'; 'Detroit'; 'East Ohio'; 'East Ohio'; 'Eastern Pennsylvania'; 'Florida'; 'Greater New Jersey'; 'Holston'; 'Illinois Great Rivers'; 'Indiana'; 'Iowa'; 'Iowa'; 'Kansas East'; 'Kansas East'; 'Kansas West'; 'Kansas West'; 'Kentucky'; 'Kentucky'; 'Louisiana'; 'Memphis'; 'Minnesota'; 'Mississippi'; 'Missouri'; 'Missouri'; 'Nebraska'; 'Nebraska'; 'Nebraska'; 'New England'; 'New Mexico'; 'New York'; 'North Alabama'; 'North Carolina'; 'North Georgia'; 'North Georgia'; 'North Georgia'; 'North Texas'; 'Northern Illinois'; 'Northwest Texas'; 'Oklahoma'; 'Oklahoma Indian Missionary'; 'Oregon-Idaho'; 'Pacific Northwest'; 'Pacific Northwest'; 'Peninsula-Delaware'; 'Red Bird Missionary'; 'Red Bird Missionary'; 'Rio Grande'; 'Rocky Mountain'; 'South Carolina'; 'South Georgia'; 'Southwest Texas'; 'Susquehanna'; 'Tennessee'; 'Texas'; 'Virginia'; 'West Michigan'; 'West Ohio'; 'West Virginia'; 'Western North Carolina'; 'Western Pennsylvania'; 'Wisconsin'; 'Yellowstone'  
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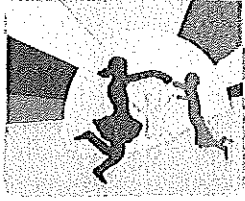
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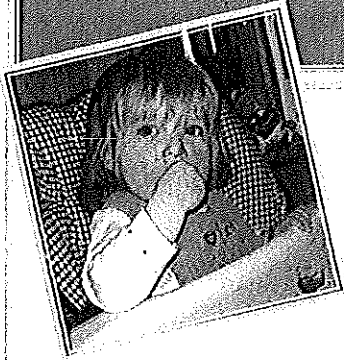


# Ministry With Children

ADDRESSING TOPICS OF CONCERN FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN

*"... for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs."*

July 2010



## Invitation to the Table

### ..... Compassion and Community

Do you remember gathering around the table as a child, and your parents telling you to finish your dinner because there were starving children in the world? I remember hiding green peas in a napkin, because I just did not like green peas. As a five-year-old, I would have been delighted to share my peas, but over time I realized that deeper lessons were being taught around that table – compassion and community.

Two recent events have given me pause on the issue of the healthy development of children in the United States today. I led a retreat for a large group of preschool teachers and shared with them current health trends which indicate that today's children are likely to be the first generation to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. As we began to peel back the layers, and talk about a more sedentary lifestyle combined with technology, greater accessibility to foods filled with empty calories, and the absence of recess in many elementary schools, deep concerns emerged.

The second event involves discussion around the book that our church is reading during the season after Pentecost - *Rediscovering Values*, by Jim Wallis. During Sunday School, our senior Pastor raised a question that led us to consider "how much is enough," referring not to money, but to food. While our plates may be full, many children have no table. Five loaves of bread and two fish were enough for Jesus to feed five thousand. Enough for everyone.

As people who are to be "advocates for the needs of children in our community," we hold a responsibility to the health of the children we serve. Studies have shown that nutrition for healthy aging goes beyond the right number of calories, vitamins, and protein. It also "depends on where we eat, with whom we eat, and whether the meal nourishes our heart, mind, and soul as well as our body" [Snowdon, 2001]. For United Methodists, the communion meal is an opportunity to receive God's grace, and it is at the table where we build community as we "seek to live in peace with one another." At mealtime, who is gathered at our table, and what are we serving?

*What are we serving the children?*

## Reading and Resources



***We Eat Food That's Fresh***  
by Angela Russ-Ayon  
encourages making healthy food choices, preparing food in community, and sharing meals with others  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



***Milk and Honey Cooking School***  
by Daphna Flegal and LeeDell Stickler  
walks us through the history of God's people from Adam's first bite of the forbidden fruit to the breaking of bread at the Last Supper—recipes included  
[www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)



## Practical Ways to Support Healthy Choices

.....  
A few ideas from Melanie

*There are some strategies that we can use to encourage and support healthy choices in the nursery, preschool, Sunday school, and in other areas of ministry with children.*

**Prevention** – Supply healthy snacks during Sunday school, weeknights, Vacation Bible School, and at all ministries that involve children. Work with programs within the community that advocate healthy eating habits for children and expectant mothers. Offer a variety of healthy foods in feeding programs.

**Physical Activity** – Structure learning opportunities that include physical activity. Encourage active play.

**Outdoor Play** – Plan physical activities that combine learning and serving, like planting gardens. Create a stimulating outdoor play space that provides opportunity for children to form community with one another.

**Food Security** – Work within the community to see that all families have access to healthy food sources. Protect vulnerable children from food deprivation in our local communities.

**Technology** – Use technology as a tool instead of the center of activity.

**Building Community** – Provide opportunities for the congregation and the community to gather around the table. Invite neighbors to share a meal.

**Staying Informed**— [Making Healthy Choices Resource Page](#)

*Melanie Gordon is Director of Ministry with Younger Children at the General Board of Discipleship, and a member of the South Carolina Annual Conference*



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## Ministry with Children

### Related Links

**GBOD Ministry with Children**  
<http://www.gbod.org/children>

.....  
**Ministry with Children Blog**  
<http://blogs.gbod.org/younger-children>

.....  
**GBGM Serving for Children**  
<http://new.gbqm-umc.org/work/women-children>

### Related Resources

**Let's Move**  
<http://www.letsmove.gov/>  
provides information, activities, and service opportunities that promote healthy habits for children and the people who care for them

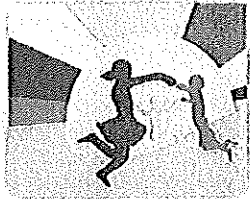
.....  
**The Sustainable Table**  
<http://www.sustainabletable.org/home.php>  
celebrates local sustainable food, educates on food related matters, and works to build community through food

### Feedback

*I would enjoy hearing from you!  
Are there topics that you would like to see addressed in this newsletter?*

*Please email me at  
[mgordon@gbod.org](mailto:mgordon@gbod.org)*

*Grace and Peace,  
melanie*



# Ministry With Children

ADDRESSING TOPICS OF CONCERN FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN

*"... for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs."*



## Yes... It's Back to School

### Let's Walk in Love

Proverbs 22.6 tells us that if we "Train children in the right way, when old, they will not stray."

What about when we send our children back to school this year? Have we laid a solid enough foundation that when they begin this new year they will make choices that are pleasing to God? Research tells us that family involvement in a child's early education improves developmental outcomes, and frequent contact between the home and school is beneficial to a child. [Weiss, Caspe, & Lopez 2006; McWayne et al. 2004] What about the Church community? How does your congregation fit into this equation?

John Wesley spoke often about educating children. In his sermon, *On the Education of Children*, what strikes me is the conclusion. "Ye that are truly kind parents, in the morning, in the evening, and all the day beside, press upon all your children, 'to walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us;' to mind that one point, 'God is love; and he that dwell[s] in love, dwell[s] in God, and God in him'." He presses upon parents to encourage their children that in all things to "walk in love."

Imagine children entering school each morning walking in the love of Christ. How might they approach their classmates and teachers, science and history, differently? Instead of seeing the fashionable child as someone to emulate, maybe she will reach out to the new child in school. Instead of thinking that a teacher is being too tough on him, maybe the pressure from the teacher will be interpreted as a concerned teacher who wants her students to excel academically. Radical ideas, I know, but wasn't Jesus pretty radical in his teaching?

Parents have access to far too few resources for supporting them in raising their children "in the right way." Church should be a place where we teach children, and also support parents in laying a solid foundation for their children. As a congregation, begin this school year by equipping parents with the resources needed to help children make the choice to "walk in love", with the hope that as children grow they will stay connected to God and the Church.

August/September 2010

*How are we sending our children out into the world?*

## Reading and Resources



**At Home with God**  
from Upper Room Books

equips families with school-age children with solid spiritual help for use in the home  
[www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)



**The Best School Year Ever**

by Barbara Robinson

will help your child to recognize the good qualities that people possess, even if they are the "meanest kid in school"

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



## Fill Their Backpacks with the Fruit of the Spirit!

.....  
A few ideas Melanie gleaned from Galatians

*There are some strategies that we can use to encourage and support a healthy school year for children in the nursery, preschool, Sunday school, and in other areas of ministry with children.*

- Surround children with **Love** so that they may reflect the love that God has for all of us
- Encourage a **Joy** of learning by showing interest in what children are learning at school
- Teach **Peace**
- Show **Patience** when children struggle with a new concept or academic subject
- Remind children that **Kindness** is part of making new friends
- Encourage children to show **Generosity** to the teacher by offering assistance when needed
- Model **Faithfulness** through your own spiritual practices
- Remind children that **Gentleness** with others can go a long way
- Practice **Self-Control** in difficult situations

### Stay Informed— After School Weekday Ministry Resources

*Melanie Gordon is Director of Ministry with Children at the General Board of Discipleship, and a member of the South Carolina Annual Conference*

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## Ministry with Children

### Related Links

GBOD Ministry with Children  
<http://www.gbod.org/children>

.....  
Ministry with Children Blog  
[http://blogs.gbod.org/younger\\_children](http://blogs.gbod.org/younger_children)

.....  
GBGM Serving for Children  
<http://new.gbam-umc.org/work/women-children>

### Related Resources

A Place of Our Own  
[www.aplaceofourown.org](http://www.aplaceofourown.org)  
devoted to the unique needs of those who care for children

.....  
Center for After School Education  
<http://afterschooled.org/>  
training and support for after school programs and faith-based after school ministries across the country

### Feedback

*I would enjoy hearing from you!  
Are there topics that you would like to see addressed in this newsletter?*

*Please email me at  
[mgordon@gbod.org](mailto:mgordon@gbod.org)*

*Grace and Peace,  
melanie*

**Children's Directors Gathering  
Worship  
August 19, 2010**

Call to Praise

This is the day that the Lord has made;  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Hymn #273 *Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Grant to me, O Lord, to worship thee in spirit and in truth; to submit all my nature to thee, that my conscience may be quickened by thy holiness, my mind nourished by thy truth, my imagination purified by thy beauty. Help me to open my heart to thy love and to surrender my will to thy purpose. So may I lift up my heart to thee in selfless adoration and love. Through Jesus Christ my Lord.

The Oxford Book of Prayer

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 12:12-31

Quiet Meditation

Thoughts on Scripture

Leigh Meekins

Blessing of the Body (folks will pair up for this blessing)  
Lord's Prayer

Blessing of the meal and dismissal

### **Blessing of the Body**

Receive the cross on your forehead. It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with this sign of love.

Receive the sign of the cross on your ears, that you may hear the voice of the Lord.

Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes, that you may see the glory of God.

Receive the sign of the cross on your lips, that you may respond to the word of God.

Receive the sign of the cross over your heart, that Christ may dwell there by faith.

Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders, that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.

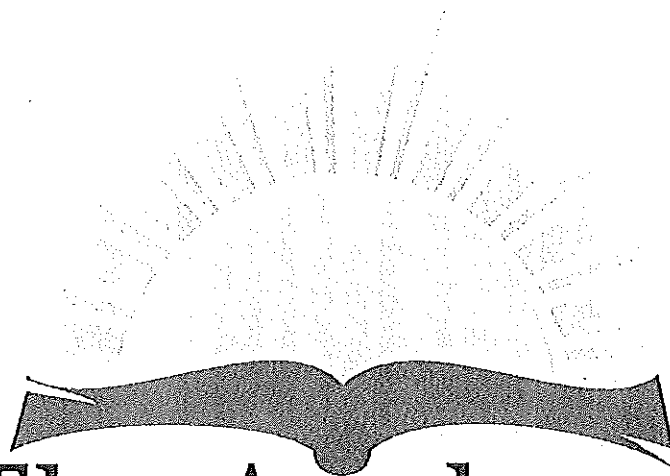
Receive the sign of the cross on your feet, that you may walk in the way of Christ.

I sign you with the sign of eternal life in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And now with the confidence of God's children let us pray:

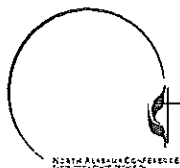
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

North Alabama &  
Alabama-West Florida Conferences  
Present



# The Academy for Ministries with Children

A Two-Year Cycle of Courses  
Offering Paraprofessional Certification  
for Children's Ministry Workers



[www.northalabamaumc.org](http://www.northalabamaumc.org)

Alabama-West Florida  
United Methodist Church  
[www.awfumc.org](http://www.awfumc.org)

# The Academy for Ministries with Children

Designed for persons seeking training in children's ministry, the Academy for Ministry with Children offers local church workers paraprofessional certification through a two-year cycle of courses. The courses are developed to affirm and strengthen the passion and love for ministry through a holistic and theological understanding of children and children's ministry.

## Requirements

Participants will be required to read two books prior to the beginning of each course, and complete an assignment to be handed in at each class. You will receive a syllabus upon completion of registration. In order to receive certification, all eight courses must be completed. However, individual courses may be taken. The academy does not offer academic credits.

## Registration

To register, contact:  
Rev. Leigh Meekins, Coordinator for Ministries with Children  
Alabama-- West Florida Conference  
100 Interstate Park Drive, Suite 120  
Montgomery, Alabama 36109  
334-356-8014 / [leigh@awfumc.org](mailto:leigh@awfumc.org)

## Cost

The cost to attend is \$100 per class, which includes meals, classroom supplies and resources. Scholarships are available. Contact Beth Sanford (256-458-7800 / [bsanford@northalabamaumc.org](mailto:bsanford@northalabamaumc.org)) or Leigh Meekins (334-356-8014 / [leigh@awfumc.org](mailto:leigh@awfumc.org)) for more information. Participants will be responsible for the purchase of books and out-of-town lodging.

## Year-A Courses

### **United Methodist: Who Are We?**

Dr. Bob Winstead

*Candler School of Theology*

October 1 & 2, 2010

Highlands United Methodist Church, Birmingham, AL

### **Administration: The Nuts & Bolts**

Rev. Joy Melton

*UMPact Chief Resource Officer*

Rev. David Melton

*Dunwoody UMC*

November 12 & 13, 2010

Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Montgomery, AL

### **Theology of Children**

Dr. Ed Trimmer

*Cal Turner, Jr. Center for Church Leadership*

February 25 & 26, 2011

First United Methodist Church, Montgomery, AL

### **Books, Buildings, & Curriculum**

Dr. Jennie Knight

*Candler School of Theology*

April 1 & 2, 2011

Asbury United Methodist Church, Birmingham, AL