



Tower of Strength

**“The name of the Lord is a strong tower
The righteous runs into it and is safe.”**

—Proverbs 18:10

Get Excited About Upcoming Changes To Our Teaching Program!

Under the leadership of our elders, and our deacon of classes David Pierson, we are planning some exciting changes to our children’s Bible classes. These changes will take effect on October 4th, which is the first class of the next quarter.

First of all, let us say that these changes are NOT being made because we are disappointed with the current efforts. Our entire congregation owes a huge debt of gratitude to our many dedicated parents and teachers, for their hard work in raising our children, work that often stretches back years and decades. These changes are simply to accommodate some of the needs of our students.

Though these changes require additional effort, we believe they are well within the resources, manpower, and talent of this congregation. We hope that as the congregation grows, the pool of resources will grow as well!

The effort to strive for excellence in our teaching program is worth it. Remember how Jesus showed

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the importance of teaching. He knew His subject very well (John 1:1), He lived His subject in His daily life (Acts 1:1), He loved His students (Mark 6:34), and He went the extra mile to make His lessons interesting with visual aids and illustrations. We will endeavor to do the same for the children with whom God has blessed us, knowing that our stewardship over their upbringing is vital for their eternal salvation.

1.) Q1

Quarter number one starts in October. It may seem strange to number the last calendar quarter as the first scheduled quarter. But, it's more natural to roughly match the church's quarters with the school's quarters. This way, promotions may be done soon after the kids begin a new grade.

2.) Full-year Schedule

We will provide a schedule of every class slot for the entire year. (The first schedule will take us from Oct. 2015–Sept. 2016). In the past, it has been unfair to both the deacon and the teachers, to scramble to fill slots a few weeks before a quarter. We realize that assigning teachers months in advance isn't perfect either, but we believe that this will provide a more organized system.

One of the most common complaints about accepting a teaching position is the fear that the person will be stuck teaching the same class from then until eternity. With a full-year schedule, teachers will have the confidence to accept a class, knowing that another teacher is assigned to the subsequent slot.

We also hope that this will allow our teachers to have plenty of advance notice to prepare excellent material for their classes.

3.) Purchased Curriculum

We are adopting the "Shaping Hearts" curriculum for all classes toddler through age 8. We have spent hours researching the available curriculums, and we believe this is the best currently on the market, combining solid teaching that's true, with activities that are interesting.

We have purchased the entire first year of that curriculum. We will hand it out and walk you through it within the next few weeks, as soon as we have finalized our teaching schedule. We hope that you will agree it is great material! There will still be plenty of effort necessary to prepare for a quarter, and each week's class, but "Shaping Hearts" does a lot of the heavy lifting for us, and makes sure that we are all working together to comprehensively teach the Bible. Our teachers should never again have to say, "I have no idea what I'm going to teach!"

4.) Teacher's Meetings

We will host a teacher's meeting a few weeks before the start of each quarter, to be sure we are all on the same page, to be sure that everyone has what they need, to share ideas, and to pat one another on the back for taking on such an awesome responsibility. We will be sure that at least one person is a real expert on the material for a particular age group, so that she can guide new teachers through the job of preparing and teaching it.

5.) Recruiting and Training

We currently have a small number of people doing the majority of the work. We do not begrudge this at all, but we see the need to encourage others to develop their talents as well. We do not wish to simply turn people loose into classrooms who have no desire to be there, and no idea what to do (James 3:1). But, we will make efforts to develop new teachers first by bringing them into classrooms as assistants, and then giving them responsibility over their own classes.

Having an assistant will also provide a substitute when the main teacher cannot make it.

6.) Resources

We will provide a space upstairs for all materials necessary to teach. If there's something you discover you need that we don't have on hand, please let us know and we will get it and stock it. We will have an organized system for cataloguing and storing material. The curriculum

is designed as a three-year rotation, so our expenses should drop considerably the fourth year, if we file our lesson plans and books at the end of each quarter.

7.) Timeliness

We aren't scolding or pointing fingers here. Some are literally racing across town from work to get here on time to teach a class; we truly appreciate that! But we are asking all teachers to make promptness a priority. We would like the teacher to be the first person in a classroom. It gives a bad impression, especially to guests, to have children wandering around unsupervised at the start of class, or even 10 minutes into class, because the teacher is late.

8.) Bible Lab

We plan to continue the Bible Lab program for ages 9–11. It's a great program well-suited to our needs. We will encourage extra effort and accountability in the Bible Lab, so that students emerge with an excellent grasp of the basics of the Bible and its themes.

9.) Teen Curriculum

We will have a middle school class and a high school class. The classes will mostly be together, but occasionally segregated by gender. We are putting the finishing touches on a four-year rotating curriculum for these age groups, to help our teens develop a deep knowledge of Scripture, a strong faith in God, a capable toolset for answering skeptics, and a determination to avoid worldliness.

We will supplement this with a monthly teen devotional, which will meet at a member's home. There will certainly be some time for fun at these devotionals. But we will plan a spiritual lesson and activity to be presented first, at each of these meetings.

—*John Guzzetta*

Quote of the Week:

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith!” (2 Cor. 13:5).