**Children’s Bible traveling lesson**
By Lisa Durant
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I have done a traveling Bible with my many first grade classes. I found that most of the children did not have Bibles at home and knew very few stories and lessons from both the Old and New Testaments. They didn't know the stories of Jonah, Joseph, Moses, Lazarus, Zacchaeus, and even Jesus and his apostles.

I wanted the children to read scripture stories at home so their families could be involved and learn with them. I purchased a beautiful children's Bible with gold pages and very colorful illustrations. It was placed in a canvas bag with several pages of white drawing paper and an instruction sheet (addressed to parent and child).

Each week, the Bible went home for the week with a different child. The child could read as many stories as she/he wanted, from either testament. The children were encouraged to read with a parent to strengthen reading skills and have the parent involved in what they were learning in religious education. The child then had to pick his/her favorite story and draw a picture on one page. Some children picked one favorite story from the Old Testament and New Testament.

The following week after opening prayer, the child would come up to the front of class and tell us his/her favorite story, show us his/her picture and tell us what they learned from the story. I would put a sticker on the picture and hand it back to take home for display. Then the child would ceremoniously pass on the Bible to the next student to take home.

The children loved learning the favorite stories of their classmates and it prompted them to want to read stories that they were not familiar with when it was their turn. This also was a wonderful opportunity for the child and parents to read the Bible together and learn to love scripture.

**Family Faith Share Bags**
By Julie Buchanan
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This year we created “Family Faith Share” Bags for our first through sixth graders! We gathered materials for 85 bags!

First Grade: “Focus on Prayer”
The clear, vinyl bag contains a sticker with directions and one with the contents of the bag, three books on prayer for children with lovely pictures and a blank journal to share their thoughts as a family on the experience.

Second Grade: “Focus on Mary”
The clear, vinyl bag contains a sticker with directions and one with the contents of the bag, a statue of Mary, a rosary, directions on saying a rosary, several holy cards with pictures of Mary, and a blank journal to share their thoughts as a family on the experience.

Third Grade: “Focus on Saints”
The clear, vinyl bag contains a sticker with directions and one with the contents of the bag, a book of Saints for Boys, a book of Saints for Girls, and a blank journal to share their thoughts as a family on the experience.

Fourth Grade: “Focus on the Divine Mercy Chaplet”
The clear, vinyl bag contains a sticker with directions and one with the contents of the bag, a Divine Mercy statue, a rosary, directions on saying the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and a blank journal to share their thoughts as a family on the experience.

Fifth Grade: “Focus on the Rosary”
The clear, vinyl bag contains a sticker with directions and one with the contents of the bag, a wooden rosary, directions on saying a rosary, and a blank journal to share their thoughts as a family on the experience.

Sixth Grade: “Focus on the Traveling Chalice”
The clear, vinyl bag contains a sticker with directions and one with the contents of the bag, a Blessing Cup for the Chalice, a booklet of daily prayers for vocations and how to use the Traveling Chalice, and a blank journal to share their thoughts as a family on the experience.

Each Catechist is responsible for the bags and sending them home with the children. We went around to each of the classrooms and explained the program to the children, and told them how important it was to have a special place in their home to display the contents of the bag and do the activity with their family. We asked the first graders to draw a picture of their family praying together and to remember to label the picture with their names.

For the classes with the statues and the Chalice we talked about the importance of taking care of the statues, and to carefully rewrap them when it was time to bring the bag back to class.

We want all the children to experience the activities, so the catechists will call or email the families a reminder to return the bag. This is our first year to implement this program and we’re really anxious and excited to read the journal entries!

**Spend a week with Bennie and Bettie
Learn how to be a follower of Jesus**
By Sister Joelle Thren
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Two little bears travel to the families of our first graders. The purpose of the visit is to learn more about Jesus and his family and to learn what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Here is how it works.

A note is sent to the parents of our first graders prior to Christmas. It reads:

*Starting in the second semester, the 1st graders in Mrs. X's class will be hosting a very special friend, Bettie (or Bennie). Each week one of the children in the class will be bringing Bettie home for the week so that you can teach Bettie how to be a good Christian. She will come in her own little backpack with a journal inside. Inside the journal will be an explanation as well as a schedule of Bettie' travels. The week prior to her visit, the host family will receive a post card announcing her arrival. She will stay for one week (maybe two if there is a holiday).*

*Please follow the directions in the journal and have fun sharing your faith with her. She is adorable and will not be any trouble. She isn't very fond of animals so, if you have a family pet, please protect her while she is staying with you.*

The postcard sent the week before reads:

*The \_\_\_\_ Family will have the pleasure of entertaining Bettie, the visiting bear,* *from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She will come home with your child after class on Sunday. Please teach her something about being a good Christian and enjoy her visit. Please remember, she is not a toy, she does not like sleeping with anyone and she brings along her own kind of food. She eats alone when no one is looking (she is shy) so she doesn't need to eat people food. But she does need to learn her meal prayers.*

*At the end of the week, please record in her journal what experiences Bettie has had and what you taught her. Then return Bettie in her backpack with the journal so that she can go to another home for a week's visit. Thank you for taking good care of Bettie.*

When Bettie returns to class to be passed on to the next student, the catechist reads what the family taught her and encourages the next child to continue her instructions. It is inspiring to hear how creative some families are in helping their child teach Bettie true Christian values. It is an instruction for the whole family.

OR A LITERACY TAKE HOME BAG WITH A BOOK FROM RE TOPIC AND ACTIVITIES!

*http://www.rtjscreativecatechist.com/articles/activities/activity\_sheets/2012/01-06/traveling-lessons*