
Integrating Teen Witnessing Into the Curriculum

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ore than a hundred students at one academy are giving Bible studies and conducting Revelation Seminars?" a constituent asked with raised eyebrows. Whenever these statistics are cited, people seem amazed. How did it happen?

For students, teachers, and administrators of Adelpian Academy, the answer was to start small. After a weekend seminar on personal evangelism by Don Gray, church ministries director for the Michigan Conference, 17 students pledged two hours per week to prepare and conduct their own Bible studies. Several faculty and church members agreed to serve as drivers.

Tuesday Evening Volunteers

During the first six months these volunteers met each Tuesday evening at 6:30 for soup and sandwiches in the church fellowship hall, followed by instruction from local pastor Don Dronen, academy Bible teacher Cindy Tutsch, and conference lay evangelism instructor Cal Smith.

By 7:15 each group of two students had gone out to conduct door-to-door surveys of religious interest in the community and to establish initial contacts.

The last item of the survey asked, "If you had the opportunity, would you like to study the Bible more?"

If the people said "yes," the students would give them Lessons 1 and 2 of the Good News series and a special King James or New International Version Bible that coordinated with the lessons.

"We'd like you to look over these lessons. We'll be back next week around this time to get your opinion," the students would say in parting.

If the recipients didn't have the lessons done when the students returned, the young people said,

non-SDA at a Revelation Seminar.

BY CINDY TUTSCH

"We set aside this time just for you. We'd be happy to do the first lesson with you." If the people had already completed their lessons, the students offered to review the answers with them.

As the young evangelists witnessed the growing interest on the part of their contacts, their enthusiasm grew. By spring, when several people who had completed the Bible studies were baptized, more students were eager to become involved.

Witnessing in the Curriculum

At the beginning of the next school year, witnessing was incorporated into the curriculum as a credit class. Since the group had grown to 40 students, more Bible studies and drivers were needed.

The local pastor's participation was indispensable to the program. Through sermons, church board meetings, and individual contacts, he wholeheartedly supported the joint witnessing efforts of his church and the academy. He and the author followed up on the following contacts:

- Literature evangelists' lists (available from union publishing departments),
- Local *Signs* subscribers (available by zip code at a nominal cost from Pacific Press),
- Parents of children who had attended Vacation Bible School,
- Persons who had attended evangelistic crusades, a Breathe-Free or Five-Day Plan, and cooking schools.

One of the most effective ways to find interested persons proved to be an ad in the local paper.

Credit Classes for Outreach

Adelphian Academy closed in 1987. The philosophy and curriculum committee for the new school, Great Lakes Adventist Academy, voted to hire a full-time person to coordinate off-campus outreach activities. Three elective credit classes evolved.

Witnessing PM centers around Bible studies and Revelation Seminars. The class meets each Tuesday evening for 30 minutes of instruction. Each of the students in the class conducts Bible studies or is directly involved in a Revelation Seminar. A few students baby-sit or help with registration. These students also participate in the planning and prayer sessions that are integral to the seminar.

At the Revelation Seminar, the pastor in charge seats 6 to 10 attendees at each table. Two students at each table team-teach the lesson for about 30 minutes. Then the pastor calls everyone together to summarize the high points. Each Revelation Seminar concludes with a video on the current topic.

Students enrolled in Witnessing PM can also attend Bible camp and Lay Bible Ministry weekends conducted by the Michigan Conference several times a year. These programs teach the students to meet people, answer objections, under-

stand difficult Bible passages, and most important, actually learn how to invite someone to accept Jesus as his or her personal Saviour.

Success Secrets

The success of the witnessing class is undoubtedly due in part to the priority given to it by the Great Lakes Adventist Academy administration and faculty. No intramural sports events are scheduled on Tuesday evenings, only open recreation. No committees or parties are held that night. Thus the students aren't forced to choose between an important basketball game and giving a Bible study.

Actually seeing people baptized as a result of their efforts has inspired student participation in the class. More than 30 baptisms have taken place so far. Some converts have been witnessing students themselves who had never made the decision to be baptized, or who joined the class even though they belonged to another religion.

Jackie Kowalski belonged to a large denomination with many doctrinal differences from Seventh-day Adventists. She explained, "I never intended to become a Seventh-day Adventist. But as I taught the lessons to others, the Holy Spirit was teaching me! During the presentation of Lesson 14, the study on baptism, I became intensely convicted that I, too, needed to make that decision." Jackie was baptized in May 1989.

Volunteers Help, Too

Faculty members help drive every Tuesday night. GLAA accountant Rod Neal says, "Watching our witnessing program at church this spring was a real inspiration to me as a young SDA. The three baptisms were a direct result of our young people going out with their Bibles in their hand and studying in the homes of these individuals."

Most drivers for witnessing class are local church members who are not directly associated with the academy. Miriam Henson reflects the feelings of many of them: "Driving for these young people has been such a personal inspiration to me. I also feel that it has been a strong component in drawing the acad-

emy and the local church together."

Outreach Class

Another class available for credit at GLAA is called Outreach. This class meets twice a week during the school day to plan activities that usually occur on the weekend. Students enrolled in this class must complete two hours of community service outside of class each week. Computer printouts of each student's projects and hours are posted biweekly.

Some of the outreach projects include participation or leadership in Pathfinders, Breathe-Free clinics, children's Sabbath school, Neighborhood Bible Hour, singing bands, cooking for senior citizens, and raking leaves for the elderly. Students also staff an anti-substance abuse booth at the local fair.

Periodically the class schedules one Sunday for a group project—such as painting a church, organizing and cleaning a community-service center, or helping a small church with its Ingathering campaign.

The most popular outreach project is the annual trip to help the New York City Van Ministry. Participants register New Yorkers for blood pressure screening, pass out literature, and prepare and distribute lunches to hundreds of homeless persons. Witnessing the commitment of the New York City van personnel and their emphasis on prayer make the experience worth every mile of the long trip.

Discussion, In-depth Study

Witnessing AM meets three times weekly and confers one-half credit. In this theory class students look for biblical answers to various questions about Adventism. They also study the book of Revelation in depth. Students who want a stronger foundation for their own faith before they actually give Bible studies enjoy this informal, discussion-oriented class. None of these three classes takes the place of the traditional Bible class.

One reason for the high rate of voluntary participation in these classes (about two-thirds of the GLAA students) is the strong recruitment program. During the summer, every potential GLAA student receives a letter describing these classes. Most also receive a follow-up phone call.

Each student must stop at the witnessing table as part of his or her registra-

tion process. The mandatory community service points for senior Bible are waived for students in either Outreach or Witnessing PM.

The strongest recruiting factor is the changed lives of students. Says L.L. of Witnessing PM, "It has really helped me choose more and more each day to follow Jesus and let him lead in my life. I've been struggling, but knowing that I'm a witness to others helps me grow stronger with God."

J.S. speaks for many students when he says: "I was really apprehensive about the [witnessing] class initially, but I've learned so much. I'm really glad I decided to join." ☞

The General Conference has prepared an 11-

minute video of the GLAA witnessing program. It is available for \$10, postpaid, from Great Lakes Adventist Academy, Box 68, Cedar Lake, MI 48442.

Cindy Tutsch teaches Bible at Great Lakes Adventist Academy in Cedar Lake, Michigan, and is a licensed credentialed minister for the Michigan Conference of SDA. She has received the Thomas and Violet Zapara Excellence in Teaching Award (1990) and the Alma McKibbin Sabbatical Award (1991). During the summer of 1991 she coordinated the Detroit Youth Challenge project, sponsored by Adventist Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI), in which 30 students earned scholarships by conducting Revelation Seminars, participating in community service projects, and selling He Taught Love door to door. Ms. Tutsch is in the process of writing a handbook on how to begin and implement an active witnessing organization in an SDA educational setting.

COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS (Take 2 study guides only)

Good evening (It is good to find you at home this evening). We are taking a little survey and we would like your *opinion* on a few questions.

You may answer "Yes," "No," or "No opinion."

(Keep moving)

	Yes	No	Opinion
(slower)			
(show love, intense interest) (If hesitate, "Perhaps you have a question on that.")			
1. In your opinion, is there a God?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is there life after death?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is Christ coming again?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Who is Jesus, according to your understanding?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Son of God			
<input type="checkbox"/> Saviour of humanity			
<input type="checkbox"/> Creator			
<input type="checkbox"/> Prophet			
<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure			
5. Do you feel you understand the Bible as well as you would like?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. What church did your parents attend?			
7. Do you belong to the same church?			
8. About how often are you able to attend?			
9. In your opinion how does one become a Christian?			
10. If you had the opportunity, would you like to study the Bible more?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Thank you for taking the *time* to give us your *opinion*."
2. "We have something *NEW* we believe you will thoroughly *enjoy*."
3. As someone said, "They answer *questions we need to know answers to*."
4. *Gathers major* texts on major subjects - Bible big book.
5. *Very interesting/Just few minutes/learn much/for busy* people.
6. Show *How!* "I am doing the lessons, too. Perhaps we can *compare* answers."
7. "I will be back in the area next week about this *time*."