

Celebrating Christian Education Week

Equip children, youth, and adults for a renewed commitment to growing in faith through education, worship, and service by celebrating Christian Education Week.

Although the church calendar lifts up a week in September as Christian Education Week—it is September 13–19 in 2015—many churches begin *routine activities* in August because of school calendars. No matter when the ministry year begins, it is a good time for remembering those who are leading and those who participate in the Christian education ministry of the church.

Help your congregation celebrate this special time of the year by making plans for commissioning leaders and disciples through services of worship and prayer. If your congregation needs help, find tools online at pcusa.org/education for planning celebrations as part of the church-year cycle.

Here are some ideas to help your congregation increase awareness of those who teach, serve, and participate in the ministry of Christian education in the church.

Promotion

Some congregations print all of the adult study options for the year in brochures and place them in the pews. Others produce brochures for all of their educational ministries and mail them in advance to each household. Church newsletters, websites, and social media networks are especially important tools for promoting what happens throughout the year.

- Postcards may be used to let children and youth know their groups' location and their leaders' names.
- Phone calls made to children and youth by a member of the Christian education committee (or the leaders) are a good way to begin . . . and a good way to keep in touch during the year.
- E-mail or text messages to youth and adults are also a great way to keep in touch. Be sure to get the permission of the family to use e-mail or text to publicize meetings and events.
- Christian Education Sunday provides the opportunity to have an open house or some other inclusive event. Invite the congregation to see where adult, youth, and children's ministries happen. Sunday's coffee time could be multi-generational or include different treats throughout the building as people fellowship and move from space to space.

- Use the local newspaper to promote educational options in your congregation, such as new classes that are beginning for adults, youth, and children. Pictures in the newspaper are great tools for evangelism.

Recognition and Commissioning of Leaders and Participants

On the Sunday designated to emphasize Christian education print a list in the bulletin of all the people involved in educational ministry. Have people stand or come forward as a litany is read or a commissioning service is conducted.

- Use the words *gifted* and *called* to emphasize the commitment to faith formation that the leaders and participants bring to their ministries and the faith community.
- Consider the word *treasure* to describe leaders and caregivers—folks who treasure God’s word and are a treasure to the church. Give a token of appreciation or remembrance of the day.
- Offer special recognition for those who have served for multiple years. Work with the worship committee to incorporate the recognition into the worship service rather than as a list that is printed in the bulletin.
- Offer back to school prayers not only for those participating or leading through the educational ministry of the church, but also those who learn and grow in public and private schools.