Exploring Of Water and Spirit with All Ages

The First Presidency recommends using *Of Water and Spirit* with children ages 7–11, even if they have been baptized and confirmed. In fact, because this updated lesson series holds such important foundational information on Community of Christ identity, message, mission, and beliefs, all ages are encouraged to explore it together. When the congregation learns and grows together, it more fully experiences the blessings of community.

Ideas for teaching a multiage group:

1. **Form a planning team with members from all ages** to gather books and resources, plan an open house and other events, and invite participants. Younger students should receive a *Disciple Journal*. Leaders should have the *Facilitator Guide*. Adult students may wish to buy the *Facilitator Guide* as well.

2. **For larger congregations, you may wish to divide into learning groups of four to five people** of varying ages in each group. This is not so adults can teach children but rather that all can learn from one another.

3. **Encourage everyone to explore** this foundational information and support children and seekers on their journeys of discipleship. People of all ages bring insight, energy, and questions that benefit the whole group. Adults should not sit by while children create posters or play games.

4. **Use icebreakers to build relationships.** For instance, toss a ball of yarn from one to another asking questions like “Can you drive a motorcycle?” or “What’s your favorite pie?” The yarn connects everyone as they answer. Or, play a “Stand Up If” game to affirm likenesses (“Stand up if you walked to school”) and differences (“Stand up if you lived in another country”). Everyone takes turns as the leader.
5. **Celebrate learning with the “Aha!” moment** of each lesson. Don’t use it as a test or to seek “one right answer.” Everyone will remember and learn something different from each lesson. Perhaps it will be “I didn’t know learning with older people could be so much fun!”

6. **Live out your learning.** Teach with an emphasis on how to live out new ideas in your congregation or community. Take learners from hearing to doing. The purpose of learning is action to effect change in your discipleship, congregational life, community, and mission. For instance, after Lesson 2: Sacred Story—Scripture, invite learners to share their personal stories of God’s love with people not in the class; or share in the neighborhood, school, or workplace. Or after Lesson 3: God’s Vision for Creation (Shalom), create a worship setting from natural items collected during a nature hike or care for the sacredness of creation by planting and tending flowers or herbs.

Remember that adults can usually understand abstract ideas but children are at a concrete stage of learning. Focus on action and application of what you learn together: what will we do as Christ’s disciples? How can we make real and sustainable changes in the places where we live, work, and go to school by living out these beliefs and ideas? Therefore, don’t allow your exploring to end with lesson 12. Continue to interact, learn and grow. Be there when your co-learners need understanding or support as all continue to grow in their discipleship. Share the joy of becoming disciples of Jesus Christ and members of Community of Christ.

8-1-2013 OWAS

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**Ideas to extend the lesson:**

1. **Find and learn a new hymn** from *Community of Christ Sings* hymnal that fits each lesson theme.

2. **Tie learning to congregational events**—a celebratory dinner or congregational retreat—or opportunities to minister, such as offering a prayer in a worship setting.

3. **Explore the lesson ideas further** in a young adult or adult group by meeting after the lesson or at another time. Discuss how ideas have evolved over time, or how your personal discipleship is growing and expanding.

4. **Plan an open house** to share Community of Christ with seekers and neighbors. Show the *We Share* PowerPoint slides (included in the *We Share* book with CD, which has book pages in a PowerPoint format). Host it with learners from the class available to answer questions.

5. **Hold a “Where Do We Go from Here?” planning session.** What more do members want to learn about Community of Christ—history, mission, scripture study, *Sharing in Community of Christ*? Plan the next classes and adventures.