

Where are the children?

Where are the youth?

What are they learning about  
God's love and grace?

Does it matter?

The data is clear. Children's Sunday school attendance is declining faster than overall attendance in The United Methodist Church. And youth attendance is on ongoing struggle. We all know the trends:

- Declining and aging membership
- Changing family patterns
- Families attend worship but not Sunday school
- More competition for Sunday morning time
- Difficulty finding teachers and volunteers

In response, last fall The United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH) began shaping a program to prompt serious conversation across the UM connection. In partnership with *The United Methodist Reporter*, six articles examining critical questions about the faith development of children and youth were published in the spring. The **Kids and Christ** Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/KidsAndChrist](http://www.facebook.com/KidsAndChrist)) features links to the articles and opportunities to respond and interact around the questions and ideas raised. The conversation continues in this issue of *Circuit Rider*, as we rethink ministry to children and youth, and search for deeper understanding of profound changes in our church and our culture.

We at UMPH join each of you and your congregations in seeking vibrant and effective ways to help children and their teachers as they learn about God's love and take critical steps in becoming lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ. We continue to experiment and test new ways of teaching and learning, including video, web interaction, rotation learning, and curriculum built on faith experience with God and personal relationships. We invite you to examine the wide range of resources we offer under the Curriculum & Small Groups tab at [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) and to respond with questions or suggestions by e-mailing [mpon@cokesbury.com](mailto:mpon@cokesbury.com) or by calling 615-749-6219.

Let's brainstorm together. How can we create spaces and ways for them to come to know God and become followers of Jesus? How is your congregation reaching out to children? How are you as a pastor supporting the faith education of children and youth? How does your Annual Conference support your faith education efforts?

Join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/KidsAndChrist](http://www.facebook.com/KidsAndChrist) and be part of the conversation. As our church and our culture continue to change, we must work together to help children and youth—both those now in our congregations and those in our communities—grow in faith. □



Marjorie M. Pon  
Editor of Church School Publications

Join the conversation at [Facebook.com/KidsAndChrist!](https://www.facebook.com/KidsAndChrist/)



Kids and Christ Like

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Kids and Christ + Others Kids and Christ Just Others

Kids and Christ: A series of articles/discussions about faith education in church. The series seeks to answer questions such as, "If you're not teaching your kids about God, who is?" and "Kids take part in church, but what are they learning?"



Kids and Christ "Despite ill health, Sunday School will be with us long into the future, especially as a means of teaching the Christian faith to children. It will NOT be the primary instrument of discipleship development for most youth and younger adults." Do you agree with Bishop Lowry's assessment? If so, how is your church replacing or augmenting Sunday School for youth and young people?

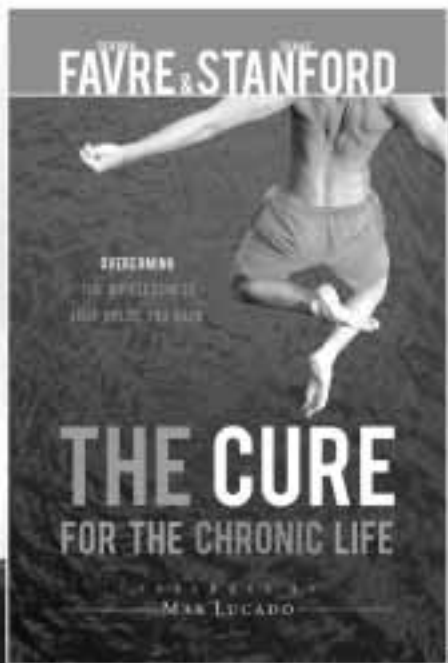
May 11 at 7:15am · Comment · Like

Elizabeth Nichols Gay and Carly Payne like this.

Casey Taylor Not if you call it "Sunday School,"  
May 11 at 9:17am

Jackie Vickers Jewett What do you call it? I agree that the name doesn't inspire kids to "want" to come.  
May 11 at 9:33am

Jerilyn Barlowe Adults need it as badly as children and youth...  
May 11 at 12:51pm



## ARE YOU LIVING IN CRISIS OR IN CHRIST?

A life of unanswered questions, broken relationships, and poor decisions disrupts a relationship with God and creates crisis.

Deanna Favre, a breast cancer survivor, and Shane Stanford, an HIV-positive minister, have both lived such a life. Chronic hopelessness was part of their everyday lives as it is for many people. But Shane and Deanna discovered the transforming grace and strength of a God who provides answers for questions and possibilities for uncertainties.

*The Cure for the Chronic Life* will be a guide for the journey out of hopelessness. In its pages, discover the power of redeeming love and the hope of living in Christ.

Also available by Shane Stanford:

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