

A United Methodist Prayer for the Classroom

A new school year can be exciting or scary--or both. We can try to make that transition easier by praying to God and giving thanks for the people in our schools. Share this back-to-school prayer from United Methodist Discipleship Ministries with your friends, family, church, and classmates to help prepare your hearts and minds for the upcoming year.



Back-to-School Litany

Learning is a gift from God.

As we begin this new school year, we give thanks that God has given us the ability to learn many things in many ways.

Loving God, sometimes a new school year seems exciting or scary or both.

Help us remember to show our thanks for your gifts of learning by doing our best every day.

We ask that you bless our schools, teachers, classmates and friends.

We ask that you bless those who prepare our lunches, those who drive us to school, and those who keep our schools clean and safe.

We ask God's blessing on this new school year, that it may be a time when we appreciate and fully use God's gift of learning.

Amen.

From <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/a-united-methodist-prayer-for-the-classroom>. .



Are you feeling healthier yet? Thank you to everyone who has been singing the hymns during the choir's sabbatical! We still have August 6th, 13th, and 20th to learn more about each other and sing together. Come join in the fun!

And if you think this is fun, plan to join the choir any Wednesday on or after August 23rd.

Lay Servant Ministry Training – Registration Open

We were able to open registration early for the Fall Lay Servant Ministry Training. The training will be held on September 22-23, 2017 @ Keystone UMC in Keystone Heights. You must attend all 10 hours of training to receive certification. In addition, you must register in advance to attend. No walk-ins please. If you need help registering, please contact our district office. Register today at <http://www.flumc.org/eventdetail/7362641?month=9&year=2017&day=1&display=m!>



Northeast Florida District Calendar

August 2017

- August 10-11, 2017 - Global Leadership Summit @ CrossRoad UMC

September 2017

- September 16, 2017 – MissionInsite Training Event with Tom Bandy. Churches will be invited to attend for a nominal fee. We are finalizing the details and will put everything in the next Friendly Friday Reminder.
- September 22-23, 2017 - District Lay Servant Ministry Training @ Keystone UMC
- September 25, 2017 - A Conversation with Bishop Carter @ Mandarin UMC

October 2017

- October 13-14, 2017 - 21st Century Man Cave Renovation Conference @ LEC

November 2017

- November 4, 2017 - DLC Nurse & Learn Passport to Riverside and Avondale Event. Purchase your ticket to Passport 2017 now!
- November 11, 2017 - Super-Charged Conference, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. @ CrossRoad UMC
- November 15, 2017 - Finance/Trustees Training, 6:30-9 p.m. @ Riverdale UMC. This will be a brown-bag meal training. Bring a brown bag meal with you. The District Office will provide drinks and snacks. This training is free but you must register to attend.
- November 16, 2017 - Finance/Trustees Training, 6:30-9 p.m. @ Lake Shore UMC. This will be a brown-bag meal training. Bring a brown bag meal with you. The District Office will provide drinks and snacks. This training is free but you must register to attend.
- November 18, 2017 - Fresh Expressions Event, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. in Deland, at Collective Church. This is a one-day intensive with acclaimed writer, pastor and emergent spiritual leader, Brian McLaren. Brian will discuss themes from his recent book, The Great Spiritual Migration. Following conversation with Brian, we will workshop next steps in our own projects. The cost for the day will be \$29 per person. Sign up at www.freshexpressionsfl.org/events! Questions? Email us at freshexpressions@flumc.org.
- November 28, 2017 - SPRC Training with the DS, 7-9 p.m. @ River of Life UMC. This training is free but you must register to attend.

December 2017

- December 11, 2017 - SPRC Training with the DS, 7-9 p.m. @ Riverside Park UMC. This training is free but you must register to attend.

2018

- January 20, 2018 - District Leadership Event - Location 1 @ Keystone UMC, Keystone Heights
- January 27, 2018 - District Leadership Event - Location 2 @ Beach Church, Jax Beach
- April 2018 - District Lay Servant Ministry Training - Location TBD

This calendar and the following excerpts from the article of the District Superintendent are from <http://www.flumc.org/august2017districtnewsletter>.



Dear North East District Family,

When I practiced law, one of the most basic questions you had to answer when you were involved in a legal action was, “Who is the client?” At first, it sounds like a simple question to answer, but it wasn’t always. It was the client was to whom you owed a duty to represent zealously and competently. If you got the answer to that question wrong, you could totally fail to achieve the purpose for which you were hired.

“Who’s the client?” is a question I think the church needs to ask itself. For many years, decades even, I think there’s a good argument to be made that clergy and churches saw themselves as the client. Clergy were the client in the sense that there was an expectation that as pastors grew in experience that they would be “promoted” to serve larger churches with greater salaries. Churches were seen as the client from the standpoint that they were owed an outstanding pastor.

That system worked well in a culture where the church had an established place in the community and people went to church because it was the expected thing to do. Those days no longer exist. Community expectations no longer include you and your neighbor attending a church. The “nones” and “dones” are increasing in our society. Some experts say those two categories equal almost 40% of our population.

It’s time to ask the question, “Who is the client?” I, and many others, believe the client is the mission field and that clergy and churches are resources by which we reach the mission field. On his journeys across Asia Minor and Europe, the Apostle Paul saw the mission field as his client. He wanted to reach unchurched people for Jesus. The churches he established in Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Rome, Philippi, etc., were the resources through which he reached those unchurched people. Their clergy were resources to further the mission Jesus gave us in Matthew 28 to go and make disciples.

I want to encourage you, clergy and laity alike, to ask yourselves the question, “Who is the client?” when it comes to your faith community. Are you a resource to help achieve our mission of reaching people who don’t know Jesus or who have been hurt by the church and possibly abandoned their faith?

When you’re the client, your preferences are the things that matter most. The music style in worship matters more than the music style that might best achieve the mission. Your fondness for Sunday school classes matters more than whether small groups might have a better chance of reaching the mission field. If you’re a clergyperson, the size of your congregation might matter more than whether you’re effectively engaging the unchurched and de-churched. When clergy and churches are the clients, budgets for local churches and Annual Conference are centered around making them happy and served.

When you understand that clergy and churches are instead resources to reach the mission field, personal preferences matter almost none. You’d rather reach young people for Jesus than have your favorite hymn or song played. You’d rather reach new people in new places in new ways than make sure your favorite ministry that exists for the people already in the church continues. The church’s money is oriented to follow the mission to ensure the faith community is best positioned to reach new people.

It would be easy to mourn for the “good old days,” but I actually think we’re finally getting it right now. The more we see our mission fields – the communities around our churches – as our client, the more fruit we’ll have in making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. If you’d like to talk more about this, let me know. I’d be glad to chat with you.

As always, I’m so grateful for all you do in service to Jesus! God bless you!

All God’s love, Jay Therrell

Rev. Barry Andrews, Senior Pastor, has left the country!

Rev. Barry and his son Ryan are RV'ing in Europe from August 1st to August 23rd. They started their trip out of right with fish and chips.

Rev. Barry will be putting more blurbs and pictures on his Facebook account and I will email some of them for those who are not on Facebook. If you don't have Facebook or email accounts, corner me or anyone else in the church for updates.

Please pray for their safe journey and for the rejuvenation of their minds, bodies, and spirits.



AHA! Moments

At our last Heart-to-Heart circle meeting I had an AHA Moment. We studied the first commandment, *You shall have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3)* from the book, The Ten Commandments From the Back Side by J. Ellsworth Kalas. It referred to Benjamin Blech's love test, "Do I want to do more for him or her than I want him or her to do for me." When we asked if we were willing to do more for God than we wanted in return, my lightbulb went off! I remembered my prayers asking God for so many things and then looked at my life and how little I do for Him. True, there is no way I could possibly do more than God does for me, but do I want to? Do I try to?

And then Father John Reynolds said, "Many of us are trying to *be* God instead of being *like* God." And my lightbulb went off again! How often do I take charge instead of giving control to God?

And then I thought of other Aha Moments I've had in my life. I remember my Dad telling me I couldn't change out of my Sunday clothes because they let others know I am a Christian and I went to church, along with Rev. Barry's stories of his family observing the Sabbath. I remember singing *Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me* at a women's retreat many years ago. I remember the third verse of *Abide With Me*, (I need Thy presence every passing hour; What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r? Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.) and ??? bringing me to tears. I remember Bible verses, sermons, answers to prayers, the feeling of God's presence, blessings beyond belief, and the kindness and inspiration of others. There have been many Aha Moments that have deepened my love for God and inspired me to try to be more like Him (I know, I have a long way to go!).

What are some of your Christian "Aha" Moments? Please share them with me by email to LLFPickett@aol.com, by text to 904-703-2930, or give them to me in writing at church so I can share them with everyone in the next newsletter.

P.S. If there are any women looking for a place to find more Aha Moments, you are welcome to join us in our Heart-to-Heart Circle meetings on the second Thursday of every month at 6:30 PM at Piccadilly Cafeteria, 3216 University Blvd S, Jacksonville, FL 32216. See Susan Davis or any Heart-to-Heart member for more information.



Assisting those fleeing siege in Philippines

By Gladys Mangiduyos

July 13, 2017 | UMNS

Excerpts from <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/assisting-those-fleeing-siege-in-philippines>:

Photos by the Rev. Israel M Painit of an evacuation center in Bito-Buadi, Marawi City, Philippines, where people have fled with their families to escape fighting between government forces and Islamic State militants on the island of Mindanao.



Dr. Emilio S. Caoagdan (right), a volunteer from Makilala UMC, sees patients.

Bishop Rodolfo A. Juan (left) hands out crayons to children.

United Methodists are among those reaching out to assist Filipino civilians caught in the continuing battle between government forces and Islamic State militants on the island of Mindanao. With support from the United Methodist Committee on Relief

(UMCOR), church members from the Davao Episcopal Area led the pooling of resources on July 10 to assist the thousands displaced by violence in Marawi City over the past six weeks.

The interfaith 'Help Marawi Project' is a collaboration among the Davao episcopal area office, First UMC-Iligan City, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Humanitarian Emergency and Action Response Team (ARMM-HEART) and UMCOR.

Bishop Rodolfo A. Juan said the Davao area office provided a psychosocial briefing at the evacuation centers in Iligan City and Marawi City and distributed medicines and food items. "We also brought the mobile bus clinic for our medical optical dental outreach program."

The \$50,000 grant from UMCOR covers food and non-food items, health care, and psychosocial assistance to 650 internally displaced person's households affected by the ongoing armed conflict. Ela has closely coordinated the church's response with Noralyn Null of ARMM-HEART and Nadia Bubong who is working with home-based Internally Displaced Persons in Iligan City. The Rev. Israel Painit said the humanitarian mission contingent also included some government offices and other participating United Methodist churches and individuals.

The three UMC bishops in the Philippines issued a pastoral statement on the crisis calling church members to:

- Uphold the rule of law;
- Pray for all risking their lives to defend established law and order as well as to engage in rescue missions;
- Organize local church initiatives and financially contribute donations in order to augment the dwindling supplies of food for Marawi residents in evacuation centers;
- Encourage more dialogue and peace negotiations between the government and Muslims;
- Strongly oppose and condemn all terrorist activities that resulted in the senseless deaths of many civilians, soldiers and police officers.

"Let us be vigilant in working for the protection of human rights in the midst of war, and do all we can to assist our people in need by providing food and medical assistance to them," Juan said.

Bishops Pedro M. Torio Jr. and Ciriaco Q. Francisco said that the pastoral statement has re-affirmed the concern of The United Methodist Church for peace anywhere in the world but most especially in Marawi.

"Let's continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Marawi so that they will be able to go back to their homes, schools and livelihood. Let God's peace and justice reign in Marawi," the bishops said.



United Methodist volunteers, including Bishop Rodolfo A. Juan (in clerical collar), hand out relief supplies to families.

Bikes boost church growth in Sierra Leone

By Phileas Jusu July 24, 2017 | BO, Sierra Leone (UMNS)

Excerpts from <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/motorbikes-boost-church-growth-in-sierra-leone>:

The Bikes and Bibles program, coordinated by Joe Kilpatrick of the North Georgia Conference, provides motorbikes, bicycles and native-language Bibles to pastors in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Since the Bikes & Bibles program began three years ago in Sierra Leone, churches have been planted in communities that previously were Muslim or practiced traditional African religions. In Kortumahun, a new congregation of 70 members worships where there were previously no Christians. In Sembahun, a new congregation of 92 has grown out of a community that had only practiced traditional religion. Gbanahun, which was predominantly Muslim and had a few African traditionalists, now has a Christian congregation of 92. The New York Section of rural Bo City, which started with just 10 members, now has a congregation of 145, said the Rev. Francis Charley, Bo district superintendent.



Steven Senesie, circuit minister for the Mongere Circuit in Bo, received a motorbike from the Bikes & Bibles program in 2015 and said his experience has been great. “I work in a very difficult terrain where mobility is a huge challenge,” he said. “The commercial motorbikes are so expensive that a pastor cannot afford paying on a regular basis, and pastors have to reach out to congregations in remote communities all the time.”

Before he received his first bike, Senesie walked to some stations in his circuit — 12 miles to supervise a pastor and his congregation at Mbawomahun. Membership there had dwindled to 15, and Senesie said the congregation felt abandoned and deserted by the church due to the lack of visitation from circuit ministers. With Senesie’s regular visits after he received a new bike, membership in that congregation is now up to 150.

“Before Bikes and Bibles, there were just three stations in my circuit; today we have seven,” he said. “For Mongere, where I am pastor, membership at the time was between 30 and 40; today, it is 150. Membership in Gumahun had dwindled also to 16 before Bikes and Bibles; today it is up to 150.” Senesie added that Kpakebu attendance has doubled to 80, Golala has tripled to 45 and Mbawomahun had gone from 15 to 100.” His success is being rewarded this year with a new motorbike.

The Rev. Matthew Kainyande, the new Bonthe district superintendent, said the new motorbike he received after the training is the most effective gift his ministry has ever received. “Where I would have used weeks to move from one station to another, I’d now use days or even hours.” His district is on an island, and Kainyande would ride the bike on the main island to reach out to schools and churches and would have to load it on board a boat to cross over to other smaller islands where he would again use it to reach out into suburban communities. He said some of his churches only have teacher evangelists, who cannot serve Holy Communion. “The bike is going to be very useful to me because there are times I would have to conduct services in more than one location on Sundays and Wednesdays, I will now be doing such services in record time,” he said. He anticipates increase in membership because regular visits will mean concern for those congregations that had felt forgotten by the church.

A recent training program, attended by 30 clergy and lay leaders, focused on sustaining the gains made in the communities. It covered integrity, mentoring, goal setting, financial stewardship, time management, spiritual leadership, servant leadership and transformational leadership. Three new motorbikes, 12 bicycles and 40 English Bibles, together with several Bibles in Sierra Leonean languages, were given to participants at end of the training. Participants were urged to go into their communities to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This year, Bikes and Bibles donated another \$7,000 to the Sierra Leone Conference to purchase motorbikes, bicycles and Bibles, while the local churches in the Bo District also contributed to support the training.

Donations can be made at <http://www.bikesandbibles.org/ways-to-give/give-a-bible/> or can be included with your church offerings. Or if you are interested in having a fundraiser for this cause, please see Linda Pickett.

Although the article below is aimed at bringing young men into the church, the ideas apply to everyone. Read the full article at <http://www.flumc.org/newsdetail/becoming-fishers-of-young-men-8793892>.

Becoming fishers of young men

July 24, 2017 By Heather Hahn | UMNS

Workshops at the group's national gathering offered ideas for the best ways to get millennial men hooked on Christ.

It starts with meeting potential disciples where they are, said Joseph Strausbaugh, the 33 year old charter system administrator for the Commission on United Methodist Men. If United Methodist Men want to be fishers of young men, they need to cast their lines in new waters. "Men's ministry needs to be more than a monthly meeting."

Per the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan pollster, and the Barna Group, which collects data for Christian marketing, millennials are born between 1981 and 1999. The vast majority — 81 percent — say they believe in God, and 59 percent report praying at least weekly. However, more than half of this generation are missing from Sunday worship (52 percent of millennials are unchurched, according to Barna). Instead, they are sleeping in, meeting for brunch, heading to work or spending time with family.

However, Strausbaugh said in many cases churches have exactly what wired and stressed-out millennials are seeking. The typical millennial, he said, is "drowning in connections but thirsting for authentic relationships." So how can United Methodist men begin building relationships with these potential disciples?

Strausbaugh suggested reaching the religiously unaffiliated by starting a gym group or a meditation group. "Quiet space is valuable to millennials," he explained. He also suggested being visible at the events where millennials are likely to be, such as local festivals or community run/walks. "Get a booth and consider just handing out water bottles," he said. "When you do, say, 'May I pray for you?'"

Still, forming a personal relationship is just the beginning. For United Methodists, the main mission is to nurture discipleship — to help people recognize Jesus as their Savior and help them lead the life Jesus wants for them

The Southeastern Jurisdiction Young Men's Think Tank offered an overview of their research on what disciple-making entails. They outlined five aspects to successful men's ministries: Small groups, recreational and social ministries, strong missions, leadership formation and rebranding.

Odell Horne Jr., a think-tank member who attends Impact Church near Atlanta, said small groups come in three forms — affinity groups based on shared interests, curriculum-driven groups such as Bible studies, and transformational groups that follow John Wesley's spiritual accountability model. Horne also pointed to church sports leagues and social events such as Super Bowl or NBA viewing parties as ways to involve men in church

Mission work and mentoring are additional ways United Methodists can help younger men lead a Christian life. "With the mindset that no man should be left behind, your church should offer a number of opportunities to engage men," Horne said.

By rebranding, the think tank means considering what works and changing what doesn't, said the Rev. Drew Oakley, associate pastor of discipleship at Immanuel United Methodist Church in Florence, Kentucky.

"We don't change our message. The message of Christ has stood for thousands of years and will continue to stand," Oakley said. "But do we change our program? Do we change our methods? Rebranding means embracing the need to adapt."

Ultimately, both Strausbaugh and the think-tank members cautioned older United Methodist Men against expecting young men simply to show up. Transforming men into Christ followers often requires casting a wide net and some heavy lifting.

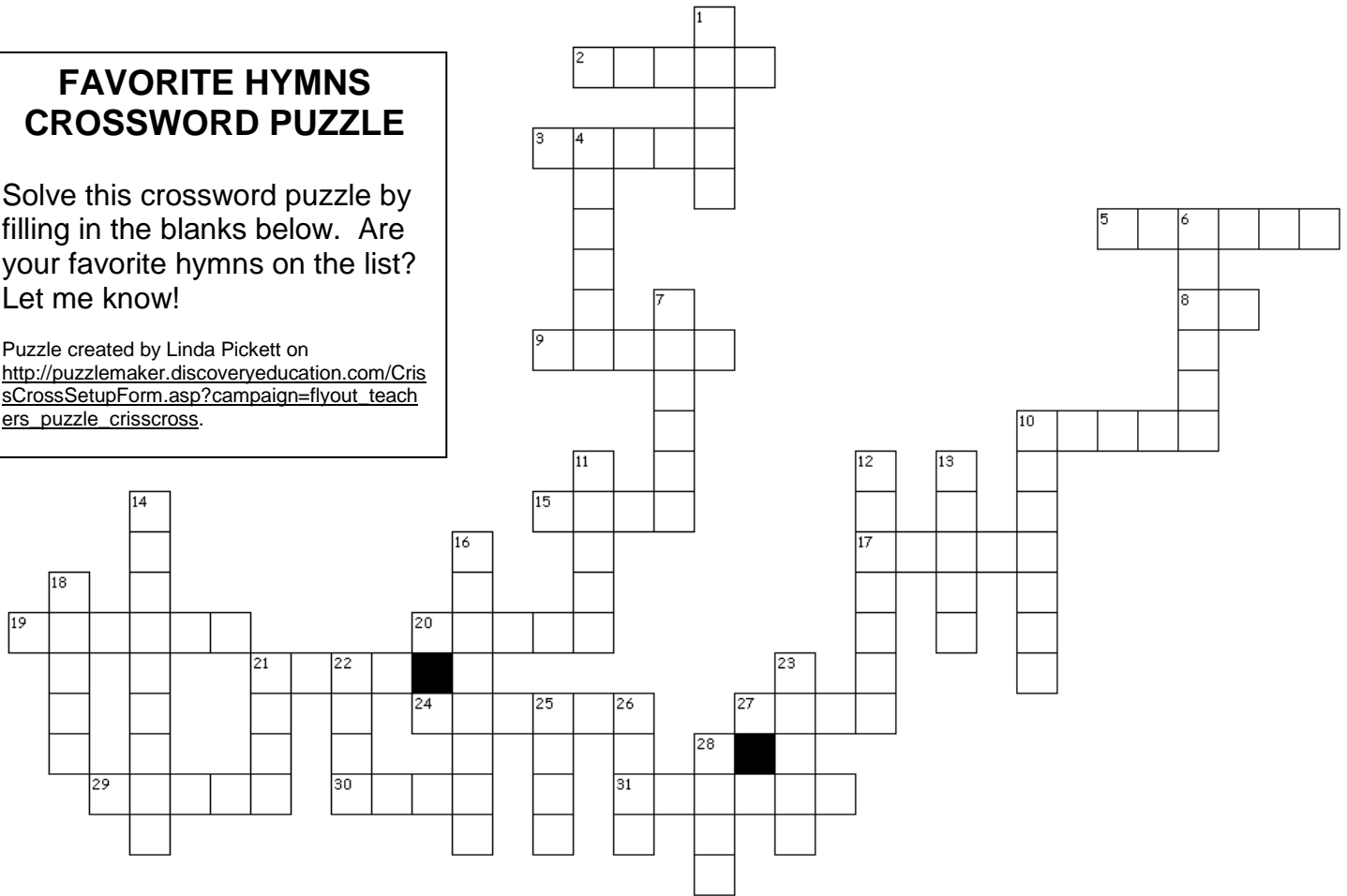
Russell Mapfumo, a think-tank member from Millbrook United Methodist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, puts it this way: "It's like this. You have to catch a fish before you can clean it."



**FAVORITE HYMNS
CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

Solve this crossword puzzle by filling in the blanks below. Are your favorite hymns on the list? Let me know!

Puzzle created by Linda Pickett on http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/CrossSetupForm.asp?campaign=flyout_teachers_puzzle_crisscross.



Across

- 2. Revive Us _____
- 3. Amazing _____
- 5. Sweet Hour of _____
- 8. Just As I _____
- 9. Joyful Joyful We _____ Thee
- 10. Nothing But The _____
- 15. Praise to the _____ The Almighty
- 17. At the _____
- 19. Be Thou My _____
- 20. _____ Is Thy Faithfulness
- 21. Just A Closer _____ With Thee
- 24. Crown Him With Many _____
- 27. Holy _____ Holy
- 29. My _____ Looks Up To Thee
- 30. Turn Your _____ Upon Jesus
- 31. _____ My God To Thee

Down

- 1. Because He _____
- 4. The Old _____ Cross
- 6. I Stand _____ In The Presence
- 7. What A _____ We Have In Jesus
- 10. _____ Assurance
- 11. Come Thou _____ of Every Blessing
- 12. _____ In Jesus
- 13. To God Be The _____
- 14. Onward _____ Soldiers
- 16. A Mighty _____ Is Our God
- 18. Christ the Lord is _____ Today
- 21. Abide _____ Me
- 22. _____ Lifted Me
- 23. All Hail the _____ of Jesus' Name
- 25. It Is _____ With My Soul
- 26. O For A Thousand Tongues To _____
- 28. Jesus _____ It All



Religious Jokes

- ☺ A Weekly Reminder
Without GOD, our week would be:
Sinday, Mournday, Tearsday, Wasteday, Thirstday, Fightday & Shatterday.
Remember seven days WITHOUT GOD makes One WEAK!!
- ☺ "Little Johnny's Pain"
At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and said, "Johnny, what is the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."
- ☺ At a picnic for a Catholic school, the Mother Superior stacked a pile of apples on one end of a table with a sign saying, "Take only one apple please - God is watching."
On the other end of the table was a pile of cookies, on which a second grade student had placed a sign on saying, "Take all the cookies you want -- God is watching the apples."
- ☺ A preacher's little boy inquired, "Daddy, I notice every Sunday morning when you first come out to preach, you sit up on the platform and bow your head. What are you doing?"
The father explained, "I'm asking the Lord to give me a good sermon."
The little boy said, "Then why doesn't he?"
- ☺ It's a beautiful day and three men go golfing.
 - ☺ The first guy, Moses, steps up to the tee and hits the ball which lands smack in the middle of the lake. Moses goes over to the lake, touches his gold club to the water, the waters part, and he walks up to it and hits it out. The ball lands 10 feet away from the hole. Satisfied, he steps back and lets the next man, Jesus, go.
 - ☺ Jesus also goes up to the tee, hits the ball, and watches as it lands on a lily pad in near the center of the lake. Jesus then goes to the lake, walks across the surface of the water, hits the ball out, and it lands 2 feet from the hole. Happy, he walks over to stand with Moses.
 - ☺ Next the last person steps up, hits the ball, and watches as it heads right for the lake as well. However, before it hits the surface somehow a frog manages to swallow it, followed by a large bird swooping down and grabbing the frog in its beak, flying away with it. Terrified, the frog spits out the ball as they pass over the roof of a nearby house, the ball goes into the rain gutter then trails back out into the field, headed straight for the hole. He gets a hole in one! Moses then turns to Jesus and says: "Do you always have to bring your Dad golfing with us?"

Don't blame me! These jokes came from: <http://www.smilegodlovesyou.org/jokes.church.html>.