



Creative games help students discover God's depth

Colleen Moore | March 17, 2014

We spent several weeks in Sunday School talking about the seven synonyms for God (see *Science and Health*, p. 465) as a group class and as individual classes. To obtain some historical perspective, we emailed the Mary Baker Eddy Library in Boston to find out about the changes Mrs. Eddy made at different points in her writing to the number of synonyms and the order of the seven synonyms listed in three different places in *Science and Health* (p. 115, 465, 587). The Library could not tell us exactly why Mrs. Eddy placed the synonyms in different orders at different times, but we all concluded that she thought the synonyms were very important.

We also made two games to help us discover more about the synonyms. In the first game, we focused on showing the students how to look for synonyms in the Bible, even when the specific words for the synonyms are not used. For example, II Timothy 1:7 states that God gives us power, love, and a sound mind, but could "power" be another word for our synonym Life? If the student thought that "power" matched Life, then he or she would write "power" on a sticky note and place it on the Life section of a poster which included all seven synonyms. Each week we added sticky notes to our seven synonyms poster so that we were making our own synonym lists from the Bible Lessons. And, to make the poster colorful, we used a rainbow color for each of the synonyms.

In the next game, we related the seven synonyms to the seven days of creation. We found images on Google of the different Genesis 1 creations (fish, firmament, light, etc.) and images for scenes from other Bible stories featured in that week's Bible Lesson (wheat and tares, Moses handling the serpent/rod, etc.). We printed the images and taped them to index cards. Then we made a game board using standard-size poster board with a circle in the middle with seven sections. Directions on how to make and play this game are posted in a video on our local church website here:

<http://www.christianscienceneworleans.org/youth.html>

The students would take turns matching the Genesis 1 cards with the different days of creation, and then they would discuss the synonyms for God that they thought corresponded to the creation days. For example, the firmament belongs on the second day (Genesis 1:8). In *Science and Health*, firmament is defined as "Spiritual understanding; the scientific line of demarcation between Truth and error, between Spirit and so-called matter" (p. 586). Does this definition hint that the firmament might illustrate the synonym of Spirit or of Truth? Like with the first game, we also thought about how other Bible stories brought out aspects of the synonyms. For instance, considering the synonym of Mind, does the class think it matches the Bible stories of changing the water to wine or handling serpents unharmed? (p. 321).

Recently, I attended my son's high school open house where the physics teacher told the parents, "We don't give the students the formulas anymore. We make them find the formula." By looking at the synonyms in these different ways, our Sunday School was doing more than just memorizing a list; it was an opportunity for each of us to thoughtfully make our own discoveries.



Photo by Colleen Moore

1. Rob of the Rockies - 3/19/2014

Anything out from Scripture that teaches children how to metaphysically interpret God's goodness, is dear to my heart! I'm passing this link on to our Sunday School teachers-- thank you! --Rob of the Rockies

2. Kathy - 3/19/2014

Thank you for the good examples of how "games" can be teaching tools for spiritual truths and not just ways to pass time and have "fun" in Sunday School.

3. Sandi justad - 3/19/2014

Inspired creativity is a joy to behold, and I would assume fun and inspiring for the kids too!

4. **Warren Huff** - 3/19/2014

Wonderful examples, Colleen, how to have fun making spiritual discoveries in Sunday School! Thanks for sharing your fresh and helpful ideas!
Warren from the CedarS of Lebanon (Missouri)

5. **dian** - 3/19/2014

Thank you. I appreciate this approach. It expects the "angels" to be w/the children/youth & give them the inspiration to contribute to their Sunday School lesson. Your approach offers SS teachers freedom from a false sense of responsibility by respecting/expecting spiritual contributions from their students. Many thanks.

6. **Tina** - 3/21/2014

Thanks for sharing with us this interesting way of teaching sunday school studends. This approach makes students as well as teachers be involved in sunday school teaching. Many many thanks.

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