

Curriculum: **Rotation Model**

Creator:

The Workshop Rotation Model for Sunday School began in 1990 when a Presbyterian church in Chicago decided it was time to reinvent Sunday School or close it down. By 1995 enough churches in the Chicago area had successfully adopted the Model to call it a movement. www.rotation.org was created in 1997 to provide resources, lesson plans, and community for the grassroots movement. Many of the original Chicago Rotation educators began organizing conferences. Several started publishing ministries. As of 2005, it is estimated that over 8000 churches in the U.S. and Canada have now adopted or adapted the Model. And after a decade of showing little interest, several major denominational and independent publishers are now publishing Rotation-style curriculum.

Publishers/Curriculum: (a sampling)

- **Rotation.org** – www.rotation.org - not affiliated with any denomination – all web based and a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation
- **Cornerstones** (United Church of Christ, independent) – www.cstones.com - Currently a 6-year scope & sequence track of 10 units per year, with 11 workshops within each unit. Full website with descriptions and downloads. Individual workshop \$15.00; Unit of 10 lessons \$150.00 – with computer lesson \$165.00; Full Year of 100 lessons on one theme \$1,000
- **WorkshopCycles** (*LeaderResources*) – www.LeaderResources.org - (Episcopal) A rotation curriculum for K-5 that includes sacraments and coordinates with the seasons of a liturgical year. Membership fee based on average Sunday attendance (\$150-350) or \$49.95 per individual cycle. Free “Miracles of Jesus” on website.
- **PowerXpress** (*Cokesbury*) – <http://www.cokesbury.com/curriculum.aspx?subsection=9&sid=126>
Designed for children in kindergarten through sixth grade, this curriculum provides complete lesson plans, scripts, and activities, as well as ideas for station setups, and a complete listing of resources needed. Also in each unit are a CD, print music, and lyric transparencies. 8 Stations: Art, Computer, Cooking, Games, Music, Science, Storytelling, Video (\$110.00 per unit)
- **Firelight** (*Augsburg*) – see Curriculum Overview for more info
- **Potter’s Workshops** (independent) <http://www.potters-workshops.com/index.php> believes that the workshop rotation model is more than just snazzy room environments and fun activities. We believe that Biblical concepts drive the rotational units, stories and engaging activities are the vehicles, and the room environment is an enhancement. The Potter's Workshops curriculum will uphold the integrity of your workshop rotation model Sunday school. It honors children as multi-dimensional learners with God-given multiple intelligences. It is solidly based on theology, current research in education, and educational best practices.
- **Come Join the Circle** (Logos Productions – ecumenical) is complete and self-contained with enough material and activities for learners ages 3-12 to

explore a Bible story for 3-6 sessions. No extra resources, CDs, or music to purchase. Having everything provided allows leaders to arrive feeling prepared and leave feeling energized. Centers include: music, community service, food, games, brainteasers, hands-on, show and tell. Reproducible unit newsletters include the whole congregation in the learning. Each workshop unit is \$109.00

Denomination: Developed in the Presbyterian Church, it is used by many denominations and independent, non-denominational churches.

Foundational doctrine: Concentrates on the major stories of the Bible over and over again. The model's philosophy recognizes that kids not only love repetition, but they need it to develop a lasting memory and understanding of content. The multi-intelligences (creative methods) approach in the model isn't a fad or merely kid-friendly, it is calculated to take advantage of our student's God-given thirst for multi-modal learning.

Scriptural/Theological Content: Teach major Bible stories and concepts through kid-friendly multimedia workshops: an Art workshop, Drama, Music, Games, A-V, Puppets, Storytelling, Computers, and any other educational media you can get your hands on. Teach the same Bible story in all of the workshops for four or five weeks rotating the kids to a different workshop each week. Keep the same teacher in each workshop for all five weeks -teaching the same lesson *week after week* (with some age appropriate adjustments) to each new class coming in.

Articulation: Each year is divided up into Cycles of 4 to 6 weeks long (or more) based on a theme of particular scripture.

Interest / Abilities of Teachers: The model allows teachers to get better at their lesson. By the second week of the rotation, the teacher is already improving the original lesson plan for the next class. No more "if I only would have...." in the parking lot after class. No more Saturday night planning. No more recruitment hassles, --teachers are happy to sign up for five week rotations. And because the teacher is assigned to teach in the creative mode they are comfortable with, the teaching and learning experience are enriched. No more lectures and music cassettes still in their cellophane wrappers, no more overused worksheets, or fumbling popsicle stick Jesus' crafts.

Learning Activities, Format & Media: Modeled after Howard Gardiner's theory of multiple intelligences, workshops use a variety of learning styles and experiential activities.

Setting: Dedicated space is needed. Each room is organized around a specific teaching medium, dramatic makeovers don't get torn down a week or a month later like they do in traditional classrooms or VBS. Theater workshops can sprout theater seats and a popcorn machine. Drama workshops get a stage and accumulate props and lighting. Computer workshops get dedicated secure space for their equipment. Art Workshops become messy exciting places to learn.

Inviolate Principle of Choice: Experiential activities that are leader led.

Age group differentiation: Varies from congregation to congregation

Home Involvement: Developed by each congregation to fit their needs

Language: Dependent on the curriculum / publisher used.

Sociological: Dependent on the curriculum / publisher used and how intentional planners are in being inclusive and mindful of current events

Attendance Pattern: Each lesson stands alone, although children would benefit from regular attendance to experience the biblical story through its various methods of presentation.

Cost: Little to nothing to thousands of dollars. The initial start-up involves redecorating and configuring rooms. The average suggestion is \$1,500 - \$3,000 the first year. See www.rotation.org/howmuch.htm for specific suggestions.