

Teacher goes all out to combine fun with faith



Ric Lucas holds Bible scavenger hunts in his religious classes. Chris Miller, Western Catholic Reporter

"I made a Bible scavenger hunt in our school. I selected common things in our school that most kids would know about, and then I typed those key nouns into www.BibleGateway.com and it gave me Scripture passages to go with it," said Ric Lucas, a teacher at Holy Rosary High School in Lloydminster.

For example, the students would look up a passage in Deuteronomy, and find the word "weight." The clue led them to the school's weight room for the next clue, and so forth.

"Any time you can get Catholic kids running with a Bible in hand, I think that's a good thing," he said.

Like many teachers, Lucas at times allows his students to watch movies and play games in class. However, he cautioned teachers about which games they choose and which videos they watch, and how much those fun activities relate to actual content.

Lucas led a session on putting fun in faith at a recent teachers' conference, held Oct. 28-30.

About 60 educators from across Alberta and Saskatchewan attended the annual TRACE Conference in Lloydminster. The conference is aimed at re-igniting teachers' passion for Christ, liturgies, teaching Christian ethics and religion, and personal prayer life.

GAMES DAY

Fridays are usually the games day in Lucas' classroom, and he makes the activities more meaningful by encouraging exploration of the Bible and reinforcing classroom concepts. Lucas incorporates fun into faith by playing Bible games with his students.

He plays Jeopardy based on Bible questions, and has word search puzzles and Sudoku puzzles that are Bible-themed. He also encourages his students to read and discuss Christian fiction, including Anne Rice's *Out of Egypt* and *The Road to Cana*.

"The students want to study the good guys, bad guys, parables and miracles, and they want it in an easy language for them to understand," said Lucas.

The games are rewards in his class to encourage schoolwork. Game winners receive gum as an extra incentive.

"Everybody gets a prize in my class. Good sports get a prize. Winners get two sticks of gum vs. one stick of gum for the non-winners. I know it's bucking the trend, and you're not supposed to be rewarding kids, but it's only gum, and it's sugarless. Even those kids who are hard-nosed characters, they are motivated for gum," he said.

BIBLE GAMES

Game sites he recommends include www.biblegateway.com, www.newadvent.com and www.puzzlemaker.com. Other suggested resources to help set up games are Universal Church Supplies and Verses.

Newadvent.com he recommends for answering students' questions when teachers do not know the answers. If his students inquire about the saints, beatification, transubstantiation or the sacraments, he uses the site to help him answer their questions.

The keynote speaker at the conference was Father Stefano Penna, who has dedicated the last few years to working with Catholic educational communities across Western Canada in faith formation of educators and in leadership development.

Students from Lloydminster's Catholic youth leadership program played music and proclaimed the readings at the Friday morning liturgy.