

AN EGG FOR EVERYONE

Book Review of Marci McPhee's *Sunday Lessons and Activities for Kids*

By Kate Wangsgard • Cambridge, Massachusetts

I am currently teaching Sunbeams for the third time in ten years so I'm willing to try just about anything to keep those wiggly little bums in their chairs. After reading through *Sunday Lessons and Activities for Kids*, I found what looked to be a secret weapon in the war against squirmy three-year-olds. Last Sunday I sat down next to my row of Sunbeams, waiting for the perfect moment to use my new trick. It wasn't long before one of the kids starting hopping out of his chair. So I squatted down in front of him and whispered "I have a special job for you. I need you to pretend you're a bird and your chair is an egg that you need to keep warm. Make sure you stay in your chair so your egg stays warm!" His eyes lit up as he settled into his chair with a proud smile. It was working! Throughout the rest of Sharing Time, whenever he started to get out of his chair, I reminded him of his little egg and he quickly returned to keep it warm. My co-teacher was impressed and I sat back and smugly marveled at my newfound Sunbeam wrangling skills.

Sunday Lessons and Activities for Kids, edited by Marci McPhee, ought to be required reading for anyone serving in the Primary - especially those of us who have squirmed in our seats as we've listened to an uncomfortable Sharing Time lesson or groaned when we've opened up the lesson manual to see a topic we know will be hard for us or our students. Don't be turned off by the the cutesy cover and generic title; this book is a great resource for anyone who works with children. While it is full of clever ideas and tricks like the egg-warming one above, its greatest value lies in the suggestions for sensitively dealing with difficult situations you encounter while teaching children in the Church. Primary workers aren't trained, professional teachers, yet they are often faced with situations that go beyond flannel boards and singing fun songs. There are a range of ideas that go from quite detailed and involved lesson plans, to simple tricks and tips you can work into any lesson, no matter the topic. The book gives suggestions for how to navigate a lesson on honoring your parents when you know some of your kids don't have a positive relationship with their parents. It

discusses how to deal with bullying and other behavior issues and includes suggestions to reach children of all learning styles or children with special needs. There is a lesson to teach children about the valuable role of women in the Church by introducing them to strong female leaders, past and present. Any efforts to help teach the Gospel to the next generation in a more open and loving way gets my vote.

Not just for teachers, *Sunday Lessons and Activities for Kids* would be a great help to Primary Presidencies. It suggests simple but helpful rules for establishing a smoother running Primary and ways to help the kids learn and remember those rules each week. There are ways to improve Singing Time, Primary training meetings, and suggestions for working with the Bishopric on staffing issues. McPhee has also included a detailed plan for transitioning new Sunbeams from Nursery to Primary. It seems as foolproof as anything involving a room full of three-year-olds can be.

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Interspersed among these valuable ideas is a collection of personal stories which are funny, inspiring and helpful. They come from a range of experiences - from teachers and parents to bishops. My favorite line is, "I promise not to believe everything my daughter tells me about Primary if you promise not to believe everything she tells you about home." These are words I think every parent and teacher will agree with.

Sunday Lessons and Activities for Kids is a quick read but will be a great resource to have on hand when you find yourself facing a particularly daunting subject or difficult situation. Or, it could be the perfect thing to slip into your Primary President's bag when she's not looking to cut down on the squirming in your seat.