

**Case Studies on Learning Disabilities**  
**Rebecca Fast, April 2008**

**Case Study #1 - Sally's Shame**

Sally is in the fourth grade Sunday school class. Sally's teacher is very creative and has started using a new technique of asking questions at the beginning of class and then having students write and read their response to the class. The first time Sally tried reading, members of the class laughed at her challenges. Now Sally's mother tells the Sunday school teacher that Sally is refusing to go to Sunday school.

Points to ponder:

- How could the teacher of this class have responded more helpfully to the students who were laughing at Sally?
- How could the teacher have responded more positively to Sally herself upon seeing the difficulties Sally had in reading?
- How might the teacher structure this activity more effectively to bolster Sally's self-esteem and help her feel included?
- How can a Christian education program address the wide ranging interests and learning styles of all the participants?

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**Case Study #2- Bible Sword Drills**

Jim is seventeen years old and in the youth group at church. Jim is a skilled athlete and very competitive. He says that he hates to play games even though everyone in the group knows that he is the most competitive person in the group. Something unexpected happens every time the group does Bible sword drills. To play this game, all members place closed Bibles in their hands and then race to look up the cited passage. Jim says he can never remember what passage comes where in the Bible, but his friends don't believe him since they know he can recite almost any passage in the Bible by heart. Jim becomes very angry when the group plays this game.

**Point to ponder**

- How could the youth group leader respond to Jim's anger? To the teasing of other youth group members?
- What are the skills that the youth leaders are trying to teach? How important are those skills? What might be some additional or alternative methods for teaching that are more enjoyable for all group members and help them feel like they belong?
- How could the youth group leader structure a competition with a variety of games that use different skills?

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**Case Study #3 - Tony's Sense of Direction**

Tony and Liz are work colleagues and good friends. Liz invited Tony to her church a number of times, and Tony said he enjoyed coming. However, in subsequent weeks, Liz wondered why Tony always made some excuse for not driving himself and always needing to be picked up for church. One Sunday morning, Liz was busy and couldn't pick Tony up for church, so he didn't show up at all. At work on Monday, Liz confronted Tony, wondering what was wrong with him and why he couldn't come to church without depending on her. Tony told her reluctantly that he had a very bad sense of direction and couldn't find his way to the same place twice.

Points to ponder

- How could this church make available maps and directions to the church for new attendees? Think about the use of brochures, bulletin boards, the church website, etc.
- What would be some alternative ways of structuring church transportation that would be helpful to Jim without relying solely on Liz? For instance, might public transportation be available? Could attendees from the same neighborhood carpool?
- What might be some other alternatives for helping Jim to successfully drive independently to church without calling undue attention to his sense of direction?