



5 Stars of



Excellence in



Christian Education

2010-2011

**Information Packet
Application Forms**



Application Deadline: May 2, 2011

Sponsored by:

**Texas Conference Committee for Faith-Forming Relationships and
Spiritual Formation**

Texas Chapter of Christian Educators Fellowship

5 STARS OF EXCELLENCE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education has been an on-going program of the Texas Conference and the Texas Chapter of Christian Educators Fellowship for 11 years. The goals of the program are:

- to assist local congregations to make and grow disciples of Christ;
- to encourage, promote, strengthen, and facilitate the growth of Christian Education programs, especially the Sunday Schools of our churches;
- and to connect Christian Education to the overall ministry of the local church and the connectional church.

This program is designed to help churches develop and maintain the following:

- Mission statements and goals for Christian Education that reflect a connection to the mission of the local congregation
- Involvement of the clergy in Christian Education
- Calling, Equipping, and Affirming leaders
- Caring, Inviting, and Reaching Out
- Providing resources and support for all persons involved in Christian Education.

The Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education program has three levels of awards:

- The original award is the “Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education.” This award is given to churches that fully complete the criteria set forth within the five different areas. Churches should strive to receive this award every year.
- The second award is the “Rising Star Award.” This recognizes the work being done in churches that are striving to improve, create, or strengthen their local Christian Education program. A church may only receive this award once.
- The third award is the “Shooting Star” award, which recognizes programs and/or events that are exemplary in nature. This award may only be received every two years, and churches must have received the “Five Stars of Excellence” award the previous year and qualify to receive the award in the current year.

The Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education program runs from April 15th to April 15th each year. All churches wishing to be considered for recognition should submit their information and completed form to the program administrator by May 2, 2011.

For more information or assistance contact:

Ellen Edwards
713-528-0527, ext. 17
St. Paul's United Methodist Church
5501 Main St., Houston, TX 77004
eedwards@stpaulshouston.org

5 STARS OF EXCELLENCE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Guidelines for Completing the Application

The Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education is an annual event. Each year churches are encouraged to strive to complete as many of the 5 Stars and their objectives as possible. At the CEF Luncheon, held during Annual Conference, churches meeting the criteria in all five areas will receive special recognition. Each year, churches are requested to submit their 5 Stars of Excellence forms to the program administrator by April 30th (extended to May 2, 2011 due to the late date of Easter). All criteria must be met between April 15, 2010 and April 15, 2011.

Please submit the following information to the program administrator **on or before May 2:**

1. Church Information page.
2. 5 Star application form, with a check mark for each area completed by the submitting church.
3. Purpose statement and mission goals for one of the areas: Sunday School/Christian Education/ Age-level programs along with a statement of how your church is incorporating the core values of the Texas Conference in your Christian Education program (category 1).
4. Brief explanation for each item you check on the 5 Star form (categories 2 – 5). These explanations should be submitted in outline form; an example is located on the back of this sheet.

These items along with the completed form should be mailed or emailed to:

5 Stars of Excellence Administrator
Ellen Edwards
St. Paul's United Methodist Church
5501 Main St.
Houston, TX 77004

Applications postmarked after May 2 cannot be accepted. Applications will be reviewed by a team of members from the Texas Conference Committee on Faith-Forming Relationships and Spiritual Formation and the Texas Chapter of Christian Educators Fellowship.

For more information or assistance in completing the forms, contact:

Ellen Edwards
5 Star Administrator
713-528-0527, ext. 17
eedwards@stpaulshouston.org

EXAMPLE SHEET

5 STARS OF EXCELLENCE

Below are examples of how to give brief explanations in outline form for each of the items checked (categories 2 through 5).

Star 2: Involve clergy as Christian Educators

- B. Our senior pastor teaches Companions in Christ Study.
- C. Our associate pastor teaches monthly in an Adult Sunday School Class.
- D. Our associate pastor has led two short-term studies. Our senior pastor led a Lenten Prayer study.
- E. Our associate pastor has taught Methodism 101 class and participated in confirmation.
- F. Our senior pastor attended the East Texas Leadership School. Both pastors attended the District training in January.

Star 3: Call, Equip and Affirm Laity

- A. We celebrated Christian Education Sunday and Promotion Sunday in worship on June 4.
- B. We recognized Sunday School teachers and leaders during the worship service on June 4th. All teachers and leaders participated in a Covenant Service at that time.
- C. We held a "Keeping the Faith" Sunday School teacher appreciation dinner and teacher training on November 13. The dinner was well attended. We had a delicious dinner, a fun and interesting program, and great fellowship.
- D. The majority of our Sunday School teachers attended teacher training on November 13th.
- E. Wednesday Night Bible Study and Monday Morning Bible Study are both offered at our church for spiritual enrichment of our teachers and leaders. In July two members participated in Emmaus, and they are encouraging other members to attend as well.

5 STARS OF EXCELLENCE CHURCH INFORMATION FORM

This application is for the:

_____ Rising Star Award _____ 5 Star Award _____ Shooting Star Award

Church Name: _____

Street/Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Contact Person's Name: _____

Contact Person's phone and email: _____

Pastor's Name: _____

District: _____ Annual Conference Year: 2011

Date this document was reviewed by key laity working in the area of
Christian Education or Age-Level Ministries: _____

Please mail this completed form along with the Five Stars form, and brief
descriptions to:

Ellen Edwards, 5 Star Administrator
St. Paul's United Methodist Church
5501 Main St.
Houston, TX 77004

DEADLINE IS MAY 2, 2011

Please check each area completed by your church/charge. Provide a brief explanation for each item that you check in each category. Please put your explanations in outline form (see the example sheet).

5 STARS OF EXCELLENCE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. Mission and Goals (both are required)

- _____ a. Develop and submit a purpose statement and mission goals for one of these areas: Sunday School, Christian Education, or age-level ministry. Demonstrate how the mission goals of the work area help fulfill the overall mission statement of your local congregation.
- _____ b. Write a statement about how the education programs of your church (Sunday School, children's ministry, youth ministry, small group ministry, etc.) are working toward incorporating the core values of the Texas Conference into your ministry. The Core Values of the Texas Conference are: Passionate Worship, Radical Hospitality, Extravagant Generosity, Faith-forming Relationships, Risk-taking Mission and Service, Connectional Ministry, and Fervent Prayer and Diligent Study of Scripture.

2. Involve Clergy in Christian Education (do 5 of these 9)

- _____ a. Participate in formal training for small-group ministries (such as Disciple, Christian Believer, Alpha, etc.) within the last conference year. Formal training is training that is provided by the conference, General Board, or Cokesbury.
- _____ b. Teach a long-term Bible Study (Disciple, Jesus in the Gospels, etc.).
- _____ c. Teach regularly in Sunday School.
- _____ d. Teach a special short-term class or study.
- _____ e. Teach or help lead a new-member class or confirmation class.
- _____ f. Do five hours of Christian Education reading or attend a leadership education school within the past year.
- _____ g. Be a part of a teaching team for a quarter or a particular teaching opportunity.
- _____ h. Clergy are involved in helping to teach persons to grow in Extravagant Generosity. This could be writing or teaching Sunday School lessons on stewardship, including education components in the annual stewardship drive, etc.
- _____ i. Share your story of how the clergy are involved in the education ministry of your local congregation.

3. Call, Equip, and Affirm Laity (do 6 of these 11)

- _____ a. Incorporate the celebration of Christian Education into worship. This could include celebrating Christian Education Sunday, Covenant Service/Recognition of Teachers, Rally Day, Promotion Sunday, small-group ministries, etc.
- _____ b. Hold one or more appreciation events for teachers.
- _____ c. Provide opportunities for discovering spiritual gifts within your church.
- _____ d. Develop a plan and criteria for calling individuals into the teaching ministry according to their gifts.
- _____ e. Have at least 25% of teachers and Christian Educators attend training (this includes activities within your own church as well as district and/or conference events.)
- _____ f. Provide opportunities for spiritual enrichment and diligent study of scripture for teachers and leaders in Christian Education.
- _____ g. Provide job descriptions and/or covenant agreements for each teacher.

- _____ h. Encourage laity and clergy to participate in the connectional ministry of the church by having at least one person attend a regional leadership school, conference sponsored training, CEF meeting, CEF annual retreat, or to join TCCEF.
- _____ i. Have laity participate in formal training for small-group ministries (Disciple, Christian Believer, Alpha, etc.) within the last conference year. Formal training is considered training that is provided by the conference, General Board, or Cokesbury.
- _____ j. Demonstrate how your church undergirds its education ministry with prayer.
- _____ k. Share your story of how you call, equip, and affirm leaders other than what is listed here.

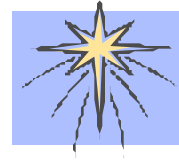
4. Care, Invite, and Reach Out (do 7 of these 12)

- _____ a. Develop a plan or implement a plan that has been developed that incorporates a system of compassionate caring for the needs and hurts of members, including inactive and prospective members.
- _____ b. Maintain regular up-to-date lists of prospective Sunday School and/or small group members. Make regular contacts with prospective members.
- _____ c. Demonstrate how your education program (Sunday School, small-group ministry, age-level ministry) provides radical hospitality to visitors, prospects, and new members.
- _____ d. Start a new or renew an existing Faith Forming Sunday School Class or small-group ministry.
- _____ e. Start or renew an existing Bible Study, short-term study, or fellowship group for adults.
- _____ f. Start or renew an existing children's or youth ministry (VBS, Youth Disciple, Kids' Club, etc.)
- _____ g. Involve Sunday School and small groups in Risk-taking Mission and Service or hands-on mission projects.
- _____ h. Start a new ministry focused on the needs of the community that includes an educational component.
- _____ i. Work cooperatively with the Evangelism Committee or appropriate ministry area to demonstrate Radical Hospitality to new persons entering the church and the educational ministries of the church.
- _____ j. Share how your congregation includes acts of worship within the Education ministries of your congregation.
- _____ k. Develop and/or implement a Safe Sanctuaries policy for your local congregation.
- _____ l. Share the story of how your congregation Cares, Invites, and Reaches Out to others in ways that have not previously been demonstrated.

5. Provide Resources and Support of Christian Education (do all 4 items)

- _____ a. Demonstrate through a brief paragraph the priority of Christian Education in your local congregation.
 - i. Budget
 - ii. Material and supplies
 - iii. Classrooms and facilities
 - iv. Making the nursery a very important room in the church
 - v. Organizing a library or resources for teachers and leaders
 - vi. Other (give examples of how your congregation has made Christian Education a priority)
- _____ b. Hold a teacher/leader meeting at least annually for the review of curriculum, calendaring, training, and fellowship.
- _____ c. Have a structure in place that involves laity and staff in the process of Christian Education. Please provide documentation such as: flow chart, minutes of age-level ministries, or a short narrative paragraph.
- _____ d. Choose curriculum that is best suited for your United Methodist education setting. For informational purposes only, please provide a brief synopsis of what curriculum you are using in various age-levels. If you are not using United Methodist curriculum, please provide a brief paragraph explaining why you chose an alternate curriculum. This will help in the development of curriculum resources that will better fit your local congregation's needs.

Rising Star Award



The Five Stars of Excellence Award is intended to be attainable by all churches no matter what their size. However, the conference and the Christian Educators Fellowship recognize that not all churches are equal. In order to encourage and promote Christian Education in all churches the “*Rising Star Award*” has been developed. This one-time award will honor those churches that are making a concentrated effort to improve, promote, and advocate Christian Education in their church but are unable to meet all the criteria necessary for the Five Stars of Excellence.

Criteria for the award are as follows:

A. Submit in writing the following information:

Church membership

Average number of children in Sunday School

Average number of youth in Sunday School

Average number of adults in Sunday School

B. Share information about your education ministry. For example: what have you attempted to improve, change, or create in your educational ministry as a result of participating in the Five Stars of Excellence process.

C. Complete Star # 1, “Develop and submit a purpose statement and mission goals for one of these areas: Sunday School, Christian Education Program, or Age-level ministry.”

D. Complete at least one criteria in each of the remaining four stars in the Five Stars of Excellence program.

All churches that wish to be considered for the *Rising Star Award* should submit their request no later than May 2, 2011. Awards will be announced at the Christian Educators Luncheon, held during Annual Conference. Churches may receive the *Rising Star Award* only once. After receiving the award, churches are encouraged to fully participate in the Five Stars of Excellence Award. Assistance in obtaining the *Rising Star* or *Five Stars of Excellence Award* is available. Contact the program administrator for more information.

SHOOTING STAR AWARD



The *Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education* honors churches who seek to promote, support and advocate quality in Christian Education. Each year there are churches that have had exemplary success with one special Christian Education program. To honor these churches, the **Shooting Star Award** has been developed. The criteria for receiving this award are as follows:

- A. The church must have received the Five Stars of Excellence Award in the previous year.
- B. The church must be eligible to receive the Five Stars of Excellence Award in the year the church submits to receive the **Shooting Star Award**.
- C. An overview of your church profile must be submitted (church size, average attendance in worship, average attendance in Sunday School, etc.)
- D. A statement about the education program/event that is being submitted as exemplary. This statement should include the following components: name of program; goal of the program; targeted audience; how the program was structured; time line of organization, planning and the event itself; cost; how the goal for the program was met; what you would do differently; and long-term benefits of this program for your church.
- E. Churches are only eligible to receive the **Shooting Star Award** once every two years.

Churches wishing to be considered for the **Shooting Star Award** should submit their church profile, overview of the program, and their Five Stars of Excellence application no later than May 2, 2011. Awards will be presented at the Christian Educators Luncheon held during Annual Conference.

Shooting Star Award descriptions will be assembled in a document presented to attendees of the luncheon and available on display tables at Annual Conference.

Questions or comments concerning this award should be directed to the Five Stars of Excellence program administrator.