

Snow days

Five inches of snow fell the other night, enough to disrupt the morning rush hour and close local schools. By mid-February, our readers in frosty regions like Minnesota and Ontario greet a few inches of snow with a matter-of-fact shrug, while children in sunny Florida and Arizona probably wish they could have a few days off for sleeping and sledding.

In a hilly mid-American city like Cincinnati, however, snow days are big events. Weather bulletins dominate the airwaves. Children eagerly tune in to local TV and radio stations to find out if their schools will be closed. Churches and other organizations cancel events, postpone meetings, reschedule ballgames, and send workers home early.

Funny thing. A lot of grownups seem just as eager for a snow day as the children are. Of course, not all adults welcome the snowflakes. Not the highway maintenance worker who has to clear away the drifts. Not the teacher who has an important exam to give. Not the police officer, fire fighter, truck driver, or utility worker who has to be outdoors navigating dangerous highways during the storms. But many seem to greet snow days with a quiet sigh of relief. For them, a snow day means an extra hour or two of sleep, time to catch up on some overdue projects at home, or the chance to read a good book or watch a video they've been wanting to see.

I suspect snow days have something to teach us about patience, about handling interruptions, and about the relative unimportance of many of the things we worry about. Eventually the snow will melt and life will return to normal. The postponed meeting will be rescheduled, the ballgame will be played, and somehow the work will get done.

Maybe everyone could use a snow day now and then—or at least a little more space in schedules so hectic it takes a blizzard to slow us down.

I should ponder this in more depth, but I really need to clear the snow out of my driveway. Now, where did I put that shovel?

It's fitting that this week's issue of THE LOOKOUT deals with Sunday school. Throughout its 115-year history, this magazine has been distributed in churches and classes that value the practical, Bible-based articles we publish each week. One of our most famous editors, Guy Leavitt, was known as "Mr. Sunday School" because of the way he promoted the cause with such tireless vigor.

When Robert Raikes started the Sunday school in 1780 in Gloucester, England, it was not a glamorous beginning. Classes met in the kitchen of a woman named Mrs. Meredith who lived in Sooty Alley (so named because chimney sweeps lived there). Although Bible teaching was an integral part of the curriculum, it was not the sole purpose of Raikes' Sunday school. His goal was to teach reading, writing, and religion to poor children. By shaping their character, he hoped to reform society.

Today, many churches are discovering ways to reinvigorate, update, and use Sunday school to the glory of God. While we applaud every effort to teach God's Word through small groups and other methods, we still believe a healthy Sunday school is one of the most effective ways a church can teach the Bible, shepherd God's flock, connect Christians in meaningful relationships, mobilize them to serve, and instruct children and new believers in the faith. ■

How important are the things we worry about?

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