

JUDSON SUNDAY SCHOOL. THEOLOGY? SURE, BUT WITH STYLE!

Tommy Lee Jones and the Unbearable Uncomfortableness of Sunday School

Sunday School.

Two words which will have your average New York hipster squirming like they have wet sand in their swimsuit or like they just noticed David H. Koch's name on the side of the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center as they make their way inside to watch a performance of the New York City Ballet.

Really? David H. Koch?

Really? Sunday School?

Add the phrase "Bible study" and your average New Yorker will get a look on their face much like the look Tommy Lee Jones had when marriage counselor Steve Carell told him he needed to "pleasure" Meryl Streep, his wife in the movie *Hope Springs*, the DVD of which I made the mistake of watching this summer with my saintly, 79-year-old mother. (The "ewww factor" for watching Tommy Lee Jones and Meryl Streep get it on as one sits across the room from one's mother is off the charts.) And since we're on the subject, attention Hollywood: while Meryl Streep can do anything she damn well pleases, Tommy Lee Jones is supposed to catch "bad guys," period. I never ever ever want to see another movie in which Tommy Lee Jones is asked to "pleasure" anyone.

Now where was I? Oh yes, Bible Study, it can make some people uncomfortable. Take me for example. It's the political season here in New York City and I, a progressive liberal, am being asked to considering voting for the most progressive liberal candidate running, a man who also just so happens to be an avowed Red Sox fan. I hate the Red Sox. No, I mean I *really* hate the Red Sox. It's a pure, Old Testament, "Lord, take up thy sword and smite them" kind of hate. Why, I would rather vote for Anthony's actual wie- um, maybe I'll just leave it at I hate the Red Sox. I fear I may have lost track of what I set out to say, which is that perhaps a little discomfort can lead to a good thing.

Except in the case of David H. Koch.

Welcome back to Judson Sunday School! I am so happy to be back for this my 21st year as Grand Poobah. (Unless, of course, David H. Koch reads this, buys me, and ships me off to some penal colony. Then it will be, *So long, everybody!*)

We have so much in store for your children this year. For the impressionable preschoolers, it's "Images of God" time once again, a curriculum which uses everything from the story of the Good Samaritan to *Llama, Llama, Mad At Mama* or even *Walter the Farting Dog* to allow your children the opportunity to explore ideas of who or what God might be like. For those elementary through high schoolers living amongst us, it's "Timeless Themes," a curriculum of, yes, Bible study, but hopefully, taught in such a way as to prevent your children from growing up and joining a conservative Christian cult - or the Tea Party (one in the same).

As for who will be doing the teaching, we've had a lot of turnover in the Judson Sunday School Poohbette backfield this summer. We said goodbye to Joshua and Anne Marie (St. Michael's, where Anne Marie is doing her seminary field work this year), Lottie (junior year abroad in Prague), Nathan (looking for love and employment in San Francisco), and Marisol (dodging bodies in Brooklyn). We're so happy to have the very tall and talented Alec Caro back for his second year with us, and to announce the return of former Judson kid, teacher, and kid fave, Lulu Fogarty, who has spent most of the past year in Taiwan. Lulu will rejoin us in October. And thanks to some nifty recruiting on the part of Judson's own Dr. Allison Squires, I am very pleased to announce the addition of four new teachers to our Sunday School staff: Rachel Vitale is an NYU psychology major. (Is that ever going to come in handy around here! *"It all started when I was just a little Poobah and my parents didn't appreciate how truly grand I am."*) Rachel Robins is a nursing student, also at NYU, and as I said, also a Rachel. (Perhaps we'll call all the teachers "Rachel" this year, just to make it easier on everyone.) Amy Hua is also a nursing student at NYU. (Hey Allison, I'm starting to sense a pattern here.) And finally, Susie Wang, who just graduated from - wait for it - NYU, with a degree in - you're never going to believe this - nursing! This leads me to announce the imposition of a new Judson Sunday School program I have long advocated but never felt fully qualified to lead, called "Children Running With Knives!" With all these nurses employed at Judson this year, what could possibly go wrong? Thanks again, Allison, for your help!

Hey, don't forget Kids Choir. Seriously, don't forget it, and to make it easier for all our aging minds to remember, Kids Choir will take place this year on Agape Sundays at 10 am. If it ain't an Agape Sunday (the first Sunday of the month), then no, there is no Kids Choir.

And how about that Judson Weekend Retreat, September 20-22? Childcare provided. (We knew that would get you.)

Wow, I've said so much, yet I haven't even asked how your summer went? Please tell me all about it this Sunday, September 8th, as Judson Sunday School cranks up the "ewww" – no, make that "Ooh" factor once again.

See you in church!

Sincerely,
Rachel

Uh, make that
Andy
Grand Poobah