

NEWS FROM THE BALTIC UNION CONFERENCE

**Alla Nõmmik, Children, Women and Health Ministries Director
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania**

Children's Ministries training

In November 2018, children's teacher from the three conferences of the Baltic Union came together to participate in a CM training day in Riga, Latvia.

Karen Holford from the TED introduced the approach called Godly Play, which has proved to be the most effective way to nurture children's faith. The participants of the training could experience what it was like to be present in such a lesson. The reverent way of telling the Bible story, the questions in the end, and freedom to use one's creativity created a special atmosphere and made also adults go deeply into the story and meditate on the Word of God. The participants found the method very useful and expressed their desire to learn more about it.



Clair Sanches-Schutte from the TED introduced the first topic of the course for Sabbath School teachers — “Understanding Children”. Many participants found the explanation of different ages and stages of childhood and faith development very useful and they are looking forward to the future topics. They liked also the opportunity to participate in several interesting discussions during the lecture. In her presentation, Clair Sanches-Schutte told us three parables of leading children to the heavenly Father and made us ask ourselves whether we stand between them and Father with our “I know better” attitude; or whether we hurry them to exhaustion with too much of everything; or whether we really teach them to know the Father, to trust Him and love Him.



At the end of the event, we had also a little lottery (since Christmas was getting closer) to give away a Nativity set of knitted Bible characters.

Connecting for growth

In September the Baltic Union organised a weekend called Connecting for growth for all departmental leaders and their teams.

Almost 60 department leaders with their teams from Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian conferences and church administrators came together to share their joys and challenges, listen to and pray for each other. We had several guest speakers invited from the Trans-European Division — Karen Holford, Zlatko Musija and Peter Bo Bohsen.



Karen Holford and Zlatko Musija from the TED talked about How to be one church family, how to value and include all the church members (iCore), how to listen to each other, make peace with each other, and connect successfully with each other, while Peter Bo Bohsen led practical team building activities.

On Sunday, there was a special discussion time in groups, when department leaders from different conferences could talk about what worked well in their countries, and also share their challenges and needs.

That the TED representatives were present, made this sharing time even more valuable and profitable.



When asked, how was this event useful for their ministry, the participants answered that they got encouragement, new ideas, new contacts, inspiration, new knowledge and skills. And yes, they all wanted to repeat it.



Children health expo in Latvia

We had a children's health expo in Liepaja, Latvia, in May 2018. Each workshop had 2 banners and two health principles, for example: Food + Water; Air + Activities; Sunshine + Temperance; Rest + Trust. Participants were divided into four groups and so all kids could participate in all four workshops. Teachers at the each banner (workshop) explained to the kids the most important health principles. At each workshop there were distinctive activities for kids, according to the presented health principles, so the teachers included visual, verbal and tactile tools for teaching.



Messy Church

A few pictures from Liepaja, Latvia.



Estonian Conference

In November there was a hiking trip for children, where they could learn survival skills in the nature:



Music camp

Already a tradition, each summer musically talented children of the BAUC come together as an orchestra to practise and to give concerts. This year the camp took place in Põltsamaa, Estonia.



Messy Church has started in Tartu and is led by a church plant called Majakas (Lighthouse).



Girls and Boys Camp

Traditionally there were boys' camp and girls' camp during summer in Estonia.



Singing festival

Each year, the Adventist children of the Estonian conference have a singing festival. This year the festival took place in a small town called Türi. Every year we have a great number of children attending this wonderful event.



Children and youth orchestra concert

Below you will find a few pictures from the children and youth orchestra concert. It was at the 100 year anniversary of SDA Põltsamaa church in Estonia, but it was celebrated in the local Lutheran church, which is big enough to accommodate all the visitors and the orchestra itself.



Lithuania

From 21 to 24 June there was a children's camp, called „Tu ypatingas” (“You are special”) in Birzai district, Daunoriai village. Camp was organised by Vilma Marusauskiene (Lithuanian CM leader) and other volunteers.

40 children up to 12 year old participated. Kids had a great time in the camp.

They were playing, socialising, making new friends, enjoying a pond, performing various tasks in groups, listening to stories of a penguin and learning from its experience.



In August 3-5th, there was a children camp in Plunge district, Zvirblaciai village, for kids up to 10 years old, which was organised by Vilma Marusauskiene, Rimantas Marusauskas, and Danute Eiciniene. Kids participated in the camp. 10 kids were from Adventist families, 5 participated for the first time. In the evenings Bible worker Rimantas Marusauskas delivered lectures “Tu ypatingas” (“You are special”). Kids had a great time in the camp.

