



JANUARY 2019

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing



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SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Behold the Star!



“And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him” (MATT. 2:9–11).

Mary and Joseph journey to Bethlehem. There is no room in the inn. Jesus is born in a stable. The Angel shares good tidings of great joy! The shepherds rejoice! Then wise men come from the east following a star and searching for a king. They encounter the One who is God’s Wisdom come down from above. They seek a king and discover God’s Child, His only-begotten and cherished Son. They follow the light in the heavens to find

the Child who is the Light and Life of all.

Epiphany is more than following a star; it is a season of light progressing from the bright star guiding the wise men to the shining dove at the Baptism of Jesus to the glory of the Transfiguration — a season that proclaims the mission of God’s people.

January 6 marks the beginning of the season of Epiphany. Around the world the Epiphany is often observed with special customs. In some European countries, children leave their shoes out on the eve of Epiphany to be filled with gifts or leave straw out for the wise men’s animals. Parades may have camels, colorful puppets and floats.

With the celebrations it is important to remember that Epiphany is a season proclaiming the mission of God’s people. In Lutheran schools, pastors and teachers are God’s emissaries who model this mission. It is through their faithful and diligent nurture that children can come to know Jesus as their Savior, God as their Father and the Holy Spirit as the one who works faith in their lives!

January is the time we observe Epiphany and a time to celebrate the mission of Lutheran schools. Annually, National Lutheran Schools Week is celebrated across the nation. January 27 – February 2, 2019, our schools gather with many special activities to celebrate 1,127 schools and to share the mission of God’s people. With the light of Jesus in the world, schools across the nation are serving over 187,000 students and are equipping them for a life with God, through faith in Jesus Christ. Just as the shepherds and wise men did so long ago, we rejoice!

January 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
		Circumcision and Name of Jesus New Year's Day	"Someday We'll Laugh at This" Week	J.R.R. Tolkien born, 1892	Trivia Day	George Washington Carver dies, 1943	
			1	2	3	4	5
Epiphany	International Programmers' Day	Earth's Rotation Proved anniversary, 1851	Aviation in America anniversary, 1793	Common Sense published anniversary, 1776	Alexander Hamilton born, 1755	National Hot Tea Day	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Radio Broadcasting anniversary, 1910	National Clean-Off-Your-Desk Day	Martin Luther King, Jr. born, 1929	Religious Freedom Day	Kid Inventors' Day	The Confession of St. Peter	National Popcorn Day	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Clean Out Your Inbox Week	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observed	Answer Your Cat's Question Day	National Handwriting Day	St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor	The Conversion of St. Paul	St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
Lutheran Schools Week	Challenger Space Shuttle Explosion anniversary, 1986	Curmudgeons Day	National Croissant Day	Jackie Robinson born, 1919			
27	28	29	30	31			

Visit lcms.org/worship to find resources and information connected to the church year.



Computer File



The Maker Movement – Part 2



After a school wrestles with the value of and the function they want their makerspace to serve, they then need to think about programming, curriculum integration and what most people jump to first: STUFF!

Whatever grade level the context is, schools need to think about programming and curriculum integration. As with any space in the school, you don't want it to be used for 20% of the day and then sit empty for the rest. Yes, you can fill the makerspace time with dedicated design and robotics classes; however, integrating design across all curricula is where you can see huge benefits for student learning. Taking a look at [The](#)

[Next Generation Science Standards'](#) Engineering Practices is one great place to start. Schools should also pay attention to how they are applying the [ISTE Standards](#) across the curriculum. Makerspaces give teachers a dedicated space to actually creatively integrate those standards across their curriculum.

Of course, teachers need support when thinking about curriculum integration, so schools will want to spend professional development time on Project-Based Learning and Design Thinking. Give teachers the opportunity to think deeply about their practice in collaborative teams and come up with ideas on how to practically integrate these skills into their curriculum. Scheduling Open or Genius hours into the school day will also fill your makerspace with students that want to experiment with turning their thoughts into a reality. (It will hopefully fill your music labs, art rooms and science labs as well!)

Some schools will want to offer specific electives in that space as well. In a recent workshop that I attended on makerspaces, Michael Bycraft (Head of Design and Innovation at Korean International School; [@mabycraft](#)) creates units for these classes using a single word, like illumination, music, games or fashion. Then he guides the students to create a project that is under that theme. He is always surprised at the creativity that the students have when interpreting and working under those themes. Another great resource is MIT's [Toy Product Design](#) class. The resources they use to teach their undergrad students to design games make great resources for your students as well. Designing games is a fun way to get kids involved in problem solving, creativity and design.

Afterschool programming also should not be ignored. That is a great time to get students that are really passionate about design and creating to spend even more time on their own projects.

The last thing to think about is the stuff! But you don't know what stuff you need until you know what your goals are and the type of space that the school has envisioned. Obviously, you can't put a drill press inside of a library.

Bycraft shared a [Technology & Hardware guide](#) that I thought was useful. It details some of the basic electronic components, links to guides and specifies at what grade level each activity is appropriate. He also provided a [useful inventory](#) of his school's makerspaces and what they found to be useful at each level. Keep in mind that they do have dedicated physical and electronic fabrication spaces for their elementary, middle- and high-school students. In his inventory, however, he does indicate what resources are used most often and can help you prioritize your wish lists. Here are some other tips regarding tools and spaces:

- › Choose between physical vs. digital fabrication as an overall shop. It is tough to have both in a single space. Saw dust hurts 3D printers.
- › Do not buy cool things without a plan or support.
- › Cost/benefit analysis is important.
- › Upkeep is a huge hidden cost.
- › Laser cutters are the best big tool.
- › 3D printers are awesome, but pricey in the long term, as well as being temperamental things.
- › You or your students should not be afraid of big tools, but a healthy respect for them is immensely important.

There are many other great resources that schools can tap into when looking at building a makerspace. Be sure to check each of these out and keep on learning. Makerspaces are amazing places for students to learn and express their creativity, and at the same time build real-world skills that will help them in both their personal and professional spaces moving forward.

OTHER RESOURCES:

- › MAKE MAGAZINE
- › EDSURGE GUIDE TO MAKERSPACES
- › RENOVATED LEARNING
- › MARKERSPACE PLAYBOOK



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Computer File

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Writer: Jonathan Orr Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

FOCUS: Jesus Is Real. Jesus Is Present. Jesus is God.

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

LUKE 2:41-52



Before You Teach

Jesus demonstrated at an early age that He knew who and whose He was, and what He was to be and to do. We can build our teaching on His response to His parents worried questioning. Jesus knew He belonged in His Father's house, or, as the King James translation puts it, "about my Father's business" (LUKE 2:49). As we teach, we are laying foundations for life, for learning and, most importantly, for an understanding of our relationship with our Father, God. No matter what we will be when we grow up, our baptisms place us into the Father's business and locate us in the Father's house.

Greeting

Welcome each child upon entry to the classroom. *"Good morning (afternoon), child of God. I am so happy you are here! We have important things to do and learn today."*

Gathering

Follow your established routine, signaling children to gather while playing or singing a gathering song. (See options in the songbook *LOSP*.) Introduce the biblical focus for the day: *"Jesus was a learner just like you. He was a teacher too. Teachers are learners just like you. We are all learning throughout our whole lives."*

Tell the Story

Sometime after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph returned to their home in Nazareth. **Walk in place.** Jesus grew bigger and became stronger. He was wise and was filled with the love (**hand over heart**) and the grace of God.

Every year Jesus' parents went to the city of Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When Jesus was 12 years old, they once again journeyed there. **Walk in place.** After the feast Jesus' parents were returning home with many other travelers, thinking Jesus was walking with another family. Unknown to them, the young Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. At the end of the day, Mary and Joseph began to look for Jesus (**hand**



over eyes, look right and left), searching everywhere and asking others if they had seen Him. When they did not find Jesus, they walked all the way back to Jerusalem to search for Him. **Walk in place.** Three days later they found Jesus in the temple courts sitting with teachers, listening (**hand at ear**) and asking them questions. Everyone was amazed at all Jesus knew and understood. When Mary and Joseph saw Him, they, too, were amazed. Mary said to Him, “Son, we have been very worried, and have been searching for You everywhere.”

“Why were you searching for Me?” Jesus asked. “Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?” Mary and Joseph did not understand what He meant. The three of them then walked together to their home in Nazareth. **Walk in place.** Living in Nazareth, Jesus played with friends, went to school and grew taller and wiser as He got older, just like you!

PRAY TOGETHER

Dear God, thank You for sending Your Son to cover us with Your saving love. Bless us now and always with Your gifts of grace: water, Word and Holy Spirit. Amen.



Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation” (Ps. 25:5A).

Gr. 1 & 2: “Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long” (Ps. 25:5).

ACTIVITIES

Create: Decorated Stars. You will need: precut lightweight tag board stars, decorative materials (glue, markers, glitter, etc.). Stars remind us the light of Jesus shines in our great big world. Decorate stars precut from lightweight tag board using a variety of decorative materials. Display with the words “Shine, Jesus, Shine.”

Do: Write a letter to families. Say: Mary and Joseph found Jesus sitting in the temple church, speaking with and listening to teachers. We listen and learn more about Jesus every day. Let’s write a letter to your families telling what we know about who Jesus is and what He has done for us and all people. Record children’s thoughts, compiling them into a letter format. Send copies home. Post a large-print version of the letter in your classroom and/or on a hall bulletin board.



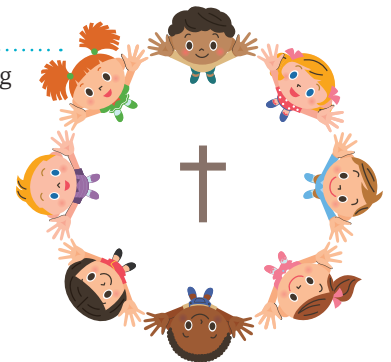
Sing: “Come and Go with Me” (LOSP, P. 99).

Live the Story

Teachers are learners too. Be a learner for life, whether formally or informally. Subscribe to and read educational journals as well as theoretical and practical books. Model for others, including children, the importance of life-long learning. There is self-satisfaction in dedicating time for professional growth and development. With confidence you are credibly able to lead or guide professional conversations and discuss important new insights.

Sending

Gather children in a “Sending Circle.” Pass a beanbag or small cross, guiding each child to in turn offer a brief prayer or to silently pass the beanbag/cross along. As children depart say to each, “Follow Jesus in all you do and say.”





Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

Real Opportunities



“What is real?”

This is a question asked by philosophers, physicists, theologians and other deep thinkers throughout the ages. It was also a consideration by a velveteen rabbit.

For parents and homes, “real” can look like:

- › A child’s cry in the night;
- › A teenager’s first break-up;
- › Going to visit grandma for the last time;
- › Hosting a delightful birthday party for a 5-year old;
- › A scratch on the car after the 17-year-old came home; and
- › A sad kid who didn’t make the team, or the squad, or get a part in the show.

Sometimes our lives seem too real for us as parents. There are so many things going on around us and inside our heads. It can seem overwhelming, and we wonder if we might ever experience a moment of peace.

One of the ways in which we can “get a handle” on things is to become more proactive. This means that we identify our priorities and then choose to act accordingly, rather than simply living in reaction to everything that comes our way. There are so many things swirling around us in this 21st-century world that if we try to respond to it all, we will struggle even more and experience continued frustration.

As the people of God, redeemed by Christ, walking in the newness of life, we can implore the power of the Holy Spirit in our day-to-day lives. Yes, life is sometimes all too real — but so is God! We have the promise that our God will never leave us nor forsake us (HEB. 13:5). When life gets real, we can unburden our hearts to God and request the Holy Spirit to surround us in care and to bring us comfort.

What an opportunity! We don’t walk alone; we don’t have to go it on our own. We have the comforting presence of God. This is good news in the midst of the confusing news of the world.

As we begin a new year, it is a great time to create a list of priorities to focus on during the 12 months ahead. Begin with prayer. Ask God to place on your heart those simple things that need attention, as well as larger items of importance that would be good to map out as 2019 unfolds. God gives us the gift of time in this world. We have freedom in Christ to live a life to His glory which results in service to others and peace within our homes and our hearts.

FAMILY LINKS // Activities for families to reinforce Bible truths in the home.

Gather the family together in a comfortable place for study and discussion using the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER

Led by the family member who will have the first birthday in 2019.

FAMILY DISCUSSION TIME

As a family, play the little conversation game outlined below.

The “I have/have not” game: go around in a circle, having family members share a moment that they “have” or “have not” experienced. Do this 3–4 times. Examples: “I have been to the ocean.” “I have not owned red shoes.” “I have been to a professional football game.” “I have not eaten anchovies.”

Follow-up questions:

What is something new that you learned about a family member?

FAMILY STUDY TIME

Have someone in the family read Ps. 51:10–12 and then discuss the following questions.

- 1 What does it mean to have a pure heart?
- 2 How do others see a steadfast spirit in us?
- 3 What would it be like to be cast away from the presence of God?
- 4 How do we experience the joy of salvation in our lives?
- 5 What does it look like when we have a new and willing spirit?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

NEW Family Plans

As a family, answer the following questions. Find a large adhesive notepad, write down the answers given for each question on different sticky notes, and then place the notes in a prominent place in your home where they will be seen often to remind family members to try something new in the coming year.

- 1 Where is a NEW place that we would like to visit this coming year?
- 2 Are there some NEW people whom we would like to meet this year?
- 3 What is something NEW that we want to do in our home/to our house?
- 4 What is a NEW food that we want to try this coming year?
- 5 What is a NEW type of service that we want to do for others this coming year?

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER

Have an older sibling or adult read the following prayer, with everyone else in the family repeating the words, phrase by phrase.

Dear God. Thank You for a new year. Thank You for new opportunities. Guide us and direct us this year to follow Your Word and walk in Your ways, every day. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.





Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Students with Attention Difficulties, Part 2



In last month's *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, we mentioned some of the signs and strengths of students with attention difficulties. Let us now explore the struggles of as well as appropriate strategies for working with these students.

Students with attention difficulties often have a weakness in working memory. This makes it extremely challenging for the student to remember and follow directions given orally. Using visuals to reinforce auditory information will help with this issue. It is often difficult to judge whether the student is not remembering information due to lack of attention, or lack of working memory, or a combination of both. Incorporating visuals regardless of the cause will lessen frustration for both the teacher and student. When numerous directions are given orally, such as "Take out your math workbook, turn to page 95, and complete the odd-num-

bered problems," students with attention and working memory difficulties may not be able to hold more than one or two items in their working memory while also completing the tasks. It is likely that a student will remember the first or last of these directions, but not all three. If these oral directions are also written on the board for the student to refer to, then remembering that information while completing the tasks is not required. This will save a teacher from having to repeat directions multiple times for students with attention difficulties and becoming frustrated when the directions are not remembered and completed accordingly. Also remember that it is frustrating for the student as well to have difficulty remembering instructions and completing tasks, even if this frustration is not visible.

Another struggle for students with attention difficulties is listening to lectures or other auditory information and taking notes. These students may have difficulty processing the information, gleaning the



critical points, remembering what to write down and then actually writing it. Many times, by the time these steps are accomplished, the lecture or video has moved on to the next point and the student has nothing written down and forgets what was said. Providing this key information in writing to the student ahead of the lecture,



or providing a transcript of the video, allows the student to follow along with the auditory information without the demand of writing while comprehending. Teachers may require that a student with an outline or transcript highlight key words and phrases as the lecture progresses or leave a few one-word blanks for the student to fill in while listening. The student is still required to attend to the information, but the task of writing and listening concurrently is reduced.

Students who are prone to hyperactivity may have difficulty sitting still for long periods of time without some kind of movement or fidgeting. Incorporating movement or short breaks into lessons may seem difficult from a teaching perspective. However, even simple changes such as posting individual questions or problems in different areas of the room and having all students move around to respond to the appropriate question on their paper before moving to the next allows for movement and a break from sitting and writing at a desk. Also, while fidget items may have gotten a bad reputation from the fidget spinner craze, there are many more appropriate and less irritating fidgets that may provide the stimulation a student needs to focus on work. Rules for appropriate use of fidgets should be established, but often when there is the right combination of fidget with student need, the fidget will serve its purpose and help the child focus rather than create a distraction. If these ideas are difficult to incorporate for an entire classroom, keep in mind that an individual student with attention difficulties will need to somehow move more than the average student. Even adults typically do not do well sitting for long periods of time

without at least getting up to get a drink or move around their workspace, so it is even more challenging for students, and in particular students with attention difficulties, to sit and remain completely focused for the length of a school day or class period.

Much like any other type of learning difference, different strategies will work in different ways for each student. When one strategy seems to fail, that does not mean it is hopeless; it is simply a reminder that each student is fearfully and wonderfully made and that each one will need different strategies, but each one will also bring different gifts to the classroom. It is the challenge and reward of teaching to identify what makes each student unique and help each one to learn and succeed in a way that works for that student.



For more assistance in finding successful strategies for students with attention and other difficulties, please reach out to Lutheran Special Education Ministries for help! Visit luthsped.org or contact us at lsem@luthsped.org.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Kara Bratton Designer: Frank Kohn

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Growing in Governing

GROWTH TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS



Budgeting for Success



If there is any one subject that can bring stress to the forefront in our Lutheran schools, it is finances. Budgeting properly can bring some stress relief to a school through a systematic process of gathering data and planning out the future.

Budgeting will never be easy. Resources are not unlimited. Enrollment trends can change. Expenses tend to go up, not down. In this article we share some points and tips that can be helpful in building a process to assist schools to make good decisions. Begin by praying for clarity, for answers, for dynamic discussions and for foresight in putting together the plan. Every aspect should be God honoring by seeking His will in humility and in cooperation. “But seek first the kingdom of God

and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (MATT. 6:33).

How early to start?

Develop the timeline. Whether it is a fiscal-year or calendar-year budget approval, begin ten months in advance to ensure all details come together in a way that promotes understanding and confidence in the year to come. Why so early? There will always be new questions, challenges and opportunities. Extra time can only be helpful.

Who should develop the

budget pieces?

It is good to have a committee to do the actual launch. Consider the principal, business manager, bookkeeper, and other church/school staff and lay leaders. Key personnel who have the gifts and vision to plan, create and implement are the people to have on board. There must be a sense of strong communication and transparency as well. This group will visit, re-visit and eventually fine-tune what will be presented.

Analyze the current year

Compute year-to-date amounts. Monthly reports will ensure there are no surprises. Look at income and expenses. Estimate the amount for the end of the year. Compare year-end estimates to the actuals on the budget.



Determine new fiscal year goals and assumptions

Develop preliminary estimates for the new fiscal year. Will there be a stewardship campaign? Will there be any major changes in personnel? Get the latest estimates for health insurance and other benefit costs. Are there new initiatives to put in place? What will they cost and how should they be funded? There will be many important questions to deliberate on. All assumptions should be looked at carefully, for both income and expenses.

Do preliminary calculation and review

Have team members fill in line-item numbers. Create assumptions based on present reality and vision needs. Adjust as needed. Determine if the budget is viable. Is it balanced? Make sure to use a powerful lens to look at income needed and at ways to cut expenses. Create a stewardship emphasis based on scriptural principles (LUKE 14:25-33, MATT. 6:33, ETC.). Adjust tuition as needed, keeping the balance of income needs vs. family budgets. If there are needs instead of wants and the budget projection will not sustain them, investigate third-source funding options that can add dollar value. Examples include annual funds, scholarship opportunities and major fundraisers like galas. Other initiatives like summer programs, renting out church or school spaces and



business partnerships can all be considered. Keep in mind that staff raises should be a first consideration, as well as benefit packages. At times we have tendencies to practice “fourth-source funding,” which means we balance budgets by taking away from our personnel. Work hard to move away from such practices.

How important is a Contingency Fund?

In this life there are no certainties. With proper planning and a great amount of foresight, consider having contingency funding built into the budgetary process. Within our own families, we might call this an “Emergency Fund.”

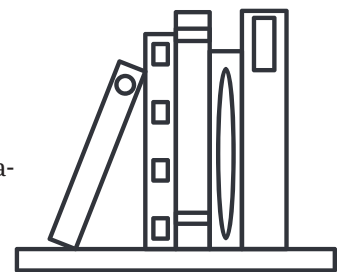
Presentations and Discussion

Best practices can dictate how much information is shared with various groups. Involve the staff for input; allow the boards or directors to prepare and explain their line items. Vigorous debate is not a bad thing, but consensus is the goal. Make the presentation to the congregation with fewer details, but with the most pertinent ones included to make sure the plan is understandable and can be supported.

Perhaps we should rename our budgets “Ministry Plans.” After all, everything we have belongs to God. Indeed, if we think past ourselves, we seek how the Lord would have us use the resources He blesses us with to carry out ministry and to “declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples” (PS. 96:3). May God help us to always keep this in front of us!

Resources

- ▶ *LCMS Congregational Treasurer's Manual*
- ▶ Your district compensation guidelines
- ▶ A one-page template for third-source funding option



Resources or continued conversations are available by contacting the author at thomas.wrege@zionwalburg.org.

Growing in Governing

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Thomas Wrege Designer: Frank Kohn

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Insights & Ideas

FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



Happy Anniversary *Insights & Ideas!*

Here's a little bit of history! In 1945, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) recorded 127 kindergartens and one nursery school in operation. Twenty-six years later, 52 nursery school programs were listed in the *Lutheran Annual*. In 1973 at the LCMS Synod Convention, the Board for Parish Services presented Resolution 7-03 titled “To Encourage Development of Early Childhood Education Programs.” The result was the vision of Melvin Kieschnick (LCMS Board of Parish Education) with *Project Young Child*. Joanne Eisenberg was its first director. One of her initiatives for equipping teachers was the creation of the *Insights & Ideas* newsletter, designed for educators working in the field of early childhood education in Lutheran schools.¹

This school year we are sharing nine issues of *Insights & Ideas* from the 1978–79 school year to celebrate Joanne Eisenberg's inspiration and 40 years of talented writers and their remarkable resources for the Lutheran early childhood classroom.

¹ Judith Christian, “Early Childhood Education in the LCMS,” *Issues in Christian Education – A Publication of Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska*, Vol. 47, no. 2 (2014): 7–9.

1979 January

Fifty years ago, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed 1979 as the International Year of the Child. This proclamation, signed into effect on January 1, 1979 by United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, was intended to bring attention to problems that affect children throughout the world particularly malnutrition and children's lack of access to education.

In *Insights and Ideas*, Joanne Eisenberg takes this opportunity to support The Year of the Child and urges Lutheran educators to care for the children in their churches, schools and communities by being aware of what children need. She emphasizes the importance of caring for the whole child and strengthening children's relationships with God, family and others. In this article, note the increase of resources designed to educate adults working with children. Eisenberg highlights tips for families for viewing television, developmental guidelines for learning for ages 1–6 and the importance of parent involvement and Christian resources for faith development. She challenges readers to make a New Year's resolution to make 1979 an “exciting YEAR OF THE CHILD” for the children and families entrusted with their care — a great idea in 1979 and still relevant today. Happy New Year's!

1979...THE YEAR OF THE CHILD...1979

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 1979 as THE YEAR OF THE CHILD. What a perfect opportunity to highlight the child as an important part of the community of Christ.

During 1979, we want to concentrate on these 3 areas with children in our schools, churches and communities:

1. Awareness -- what are children's needs and concerns? What opportunities does the church have to serve children? What resources are available to meet these needs?
2. The total child -- the spiritual, physical, social, mental and emotional being. As Christian educators we are most concerned with the child's spiritual welfare. But what about child abuse, nutrition, racism, poverty? Can we really meet the child's spiritual needs if we ignore the bruise marks and empty stomachs?
3. Relationships -- with God, family, others. A child doesn't live in isolation but is dependent upon mom, dad, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandmas, grandpas. What is the child's relationship with people? Does the child feel accepted by the members of the church? Does the child contribute as a member of the church? As part of the family, as part of society? Has the family discovered the value of "being together?"

You'll hear more about THE YEAR OF THE CHILD as 1979 progresses. We plan to include resources and ideas in the monthly School Department mailing to help you celebrate this year.

It is interesting that in planning for THE YEAR OF THE CHILD, it seems impossible to emphasize JUST the child without the family, particularly mom and dad.

This issue of INSIGHTS AND IDEAS deals with God, the Young Child, and Parents. You can say all you want about parents in today's changing society, but I'm convinced two factors remained unchanged. First, parents are the child's first and long range teachers, and, most parents really do want to be good parents.

Often teachers assume an attitude that says, "I am an educator." "I have spent years studying children, curriculum, methodology. I know what is best for your child!" Such an attitude will only cause apprehension and antagonism. Fostering a cooperative venture with parents in the Christian nurturing process is what it's all about.

INSIGHTS AND IDEAS FOR "EARLY" YEARS

Make 1979 an exciting YEAR OF THE CHILD in your congregation and school.

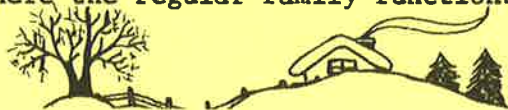
Make a New Year's Resolution to reach out to your parent partners.

JOANNE EISENBERG, BOARD OF PARISH EDUCATION, LUTHERAN CHURCH-MO. SYNOD
3558 S. JEFFERSON, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, 63118

JANUARY... 1979

Tips for Parents Regarding TV:

1. Start early to develop good viewing habits - many children are already regular TV viewers at the age of two or three.
2. Develop planned viewing with specific programs - don't just turn on the set and see what's on.
3. Plan physical activities with younger children in between planned programs.
4. Seek out programs which were made for kids and which involve kids in your child's age group.
5. Where possible, have a TV viewing area separate from the living room, kitchen, bedrooms, etc., where the regular family functions occur.



6. Differentiate between "make-believe" and real-life situations with young children - explain how the terror, pain, and violence portrayed on TV are happening to actors, that these things are much worse when they involve real people.
7. Don't let kids use TV as an excuse for not participating in other activities.
8. Read to your preschool-age children - develop the book habit at an early age.

--Reprinted from PTA TODAY

"TV Program Review Guide" rates TV programs for overall quality and violence content. Copies are available at 3 for \$1.00 from Business Office, National PTA, 700 N. Rush Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

WINTER FUN

Four BIG snowmen (arms curved out in front, voice lowered)
 Standing in the sun (arms down at side)
 Four BIG snowmen
 Having so much fun (clap hands)
 Four BIG snowmen
 Oh, how funny they felt (rub stomach as if ill)
 Because four BIG snowmen
 All began to mmmeeelllittt (weave down to floor slowly)



--Jeanette Robinson, Toledo, OH

Make a "Zipometer":

Make a thermometer with a red zipper attached to a piece of tagboard. Mark temperature numerals on the tagboard with black felt pen.

Bulletin Board: For a really fun bulletin board which the children make themselves, draw a large snowman outline on a piece of colored paper. The children then put glue on pieces of white packing styrofoam and stick them on the snowman. A real scarf, carrot nose and charcoal eyes complete the snowman which brightens up any cold, blustery January day!

--Kathy Koch, Twin Falls, ID

Snow Icy: Use a package of pre-sweetened Kool-Aid plus 1/4 of the amount of liquid called for on the package. Pack a paper cup with clean snow. Pour the liquid over it. Cool!

--Peggy Sanders, Buffalo, WY

Take one group of preschoolers. Add one set of coats. Try to get the coats on the preschoolers, BEFORE play time is over!

KIDS' KORNER



The following excerpts were taken from a little book, ALL ABOUT MOMS AND DADS, written by the children of Our Redeemer Preschool, Dubuque, IA. You can come up with a best seller by asking the kids specific questions or jotting down things they say from time to time. Have the kids illustrate it, run it off on the ditto or mimeo machine and send it home for Mother's or Father's Day.

"Dads go to work and pick up milk when you're out of milk. Moms go grocery shopping, clean bedrooms, go to the Mall and have babies."

"Mommies give you breakfast. They like to wear perfume. Daddies lie down to watch TV. They go to work and cook their own soup."

"My mommy makes me pick up the soap and take it downstairs. She picks up toys for me-sometimes. Daddies yell at you. They cover you up at night."

"Mommy likes to take a bath. She fixes me Rice Krispies. My Daddy's name was Bill. My daddy's in Heaven now."

Books for Parents:

Children's Reading in the Home by May Hill Arbuthnot. Scott, 1969. Helpful, well-annotated guide to books to read and to share at home.

I Saw a Purple Cow and 100 Other Recipes for Learning: An Activity Book for Mothers and Teachers of Children from 1 to 6 years old. Little, 1972.

What To Do When There's Nothing To Do by Elizabeth M. Gregg and Boston Children's Medical Center Staff. Delacorte, 1968. "A mother's handbook -- 601 tested play ideas for young children."

The Family Guide to Children's Television by Evelyn Kaye. Pantheon, 1974. "What to watch, what to miss, what to change and how to do it."

Learning Begins at Home by Doris V. Brown and Pauline McDonald. Lawrence Publishing Co., 1969. Readiness for school does not happen automatically. It takes time, patience, and effort to develop successful learning attitudes before a child enters first grade.



In many hands my future lies,
Yours the means to praise or chide.
Take note, this child will find in you
The pattern and the guide.

--June Holman Rios



Need Help for Parents and Teachers?

The Board of Parish Education has available two sets of Parents' Magazine filmstrips. These sets will be loaned upon request to schools and churches.

Set 1 - "Understanding Early Childhood - Ages 1 through 6." Areas covered include: The Child's Relationship with the Family, The Child's Point of View, The Development of Feelings in Children, and Preparing the Child for Learning.

Set 2 - "Parent Involvement." Areas covered include: The Importance of Parent Involvement, Working In the Classroom, Parents and Policy Making, Parent-Teacher Communication, and Viewpoints on Parent Participation.

Each area listed above is comprised of 5 filmstrips, 5 audio script booklets, tape cassettes and a discussion guide.

Also available:

LOVE JOY PEACE LONGSUFFERING GOODNESS
GENTLENESS HUMILITY



"Growth In Love," Dorothy Dixon, Twenty-Third Publications.
"Christian Living With Young Children," Methodist Publishing House.

"Systematic Training for Effective Parenting," Dr. Don Dinkmeyer, AGS Publication.

SELF-CONTROL

FAITH WISDOM

List alternative dates and order from: Mrs. Miriam Anderson, Board of Parish Education, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63118. The rental fee for any of the above is \$5.00, payable to the Board of Parish Education.

Pamphlets for Parents:

3 R's and a Big Hug, The Economics Press, Inc., 12 Daniel Road, Fairfield, NJ 07006.

Children's Reading: What Parents Can Do To Help, 50¢, by Richard Robinson, University of Missouri Press - Columbia, 107 Swallow Hall, Columbia, MO 65201.

WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS GAL.3:26

Notes for Parents, \$4.50, Southern California Association for The Education of Young Children, Box 691, Sierra Madre, CA 91024.

Your Child From One to Six, by Richard Granger, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20201.

Parent - Child Programs for Early Years, Ferguson - Florissant School District, 655 January Avenue, Ferguson, MO 63135.

Listening, Ignoring, Cooperative-Interaction, Consistency, Requests versus Commands, Reflection of Feelings (Series of pamphlets - slight cost for out of state residents) Mendota Medical Health Institute, 301 Troy Drive, Madison, WI 53704

TEACHERS' CORNER

TEACHERS: Contact the Parenting Materials Information Center, Southwest Educational Development Lab, 211 East 7th Street, Austin, TX 78701, for a complete list of parenting resources and materials, some of which are suggested below:

Guiding the Character Development of the Preschool Child, Leona J. Smith. New York: Association Press, 1968. 127 pp. Simple and largely preventative suggestions to parents by the head of Union College Character Research Project. Has one chapter on developing the child's concept of God. Deals with development from ages 2 to 6.

The Ways Children Learn, Lois B. Murphy and Ethel M. Leeper. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. No. (OCD) 73-1026. 16 pp. Visual and simple. Written for preschool teachers but highly useful to parents.

Parents: Active Partners in Education, Mary Lou Sayler. E/K/N/E. 32 pp. Needs and methods for schools to promote school-parent teamwork. May be useful for pastors and other leaders in building relationships between church preschool programs and parents.

The Magic Years, Selma H. Fraiberg. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. 305 pp. Helps parents and others understand problems in the young child's development. Deals with moral and religious development too. Sees the need for adult intervention in child development. Though over 300 pages, popularly written. Almost a classic today.

The First Three Years of Life, Burton L. White. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975. Written especially for parents. Based on the belief that the first three years are the most crucial. Traces a child's development, evaluates current child-rearing practices, makes suggestions. Deals heavily with intellectual and, to a lesser degree, emotional development.

Parenthood, A Commitment in Faith, Kathryn Wickey Orso. New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1975.

God Help Me -- I'm a Parent, Gordon McLean. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1972.

You Can Have a Family Where Everybody Wins, Earl H. Gaulke. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975.

Your Child's Self-Esteem, Dorothy Corkille Briggs, Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1975.

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN...

SOURCES FOR FURTHER RESOURCES:

U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Child Development, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.

National Lutheran Parent - Teacher League, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63118.

ERIC/ECE, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 805 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801.



NLSA Powerful Practices



“We can mention only one point (which experience confirms), namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. No greater commendation than this can be found – at least not by us. After all, the gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both word and music, namely, by proclaiming [the Word of God] through music.”

–Martin Luther (from Luther's preface to Georg Rhau's *Symphoniae iucundae*, 1538)

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear
Now to His temple draw near,
Joining in glad adoration!” (LSB 790)

“Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore His sacred name.” (LSB 837)

Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, S.D. 'Praise God with both word and music'

These lyrics and the tunes that accompany them are familiar to us as Lutherans. For some, they may be so well known that your brain subconsciously adds the sound of an organ in the background as you read the words on the page.

However, from time to time at Sioux Falls Lutheran School (SFLS), these songs may sound a little different. Instead of typical keyboard accompaniment, you'll often hear the tunes sung to the beat of a peppy guitar ensemble, combined in a choir tune with a Swahili hymn, beautifully drawn from the strings of a violin or echoing serenely through the hall from a set of tone chimes.

Twenty years ago, Martin Luther's cue, together with modern brain research, served as the catalyst for a major focus on and subsequent overhaul of our music programs. The result is an expansive music program that not only allows our students to proclaim “[the Word of



Under the direction of Karen Dooley, the SFLS advanced band plays for a special Reformation chapel service in October 2017.

God] through music,” but also has a profoundly positive impact on our students' brain development, academic achievement, self-confidence and self-discipline.

Beginning in kindergarten, our students participate in a Suzuki-based violin program. Also known as the “Mother-Tongue Method,” the Suzuki Method of music instruction stems from the idea that all children have the ability to develop and enhance skills that are taught in a nurturing environment. Much like learning language comes naturally to children as they hear it spoken, learning to make music can be a natural process when similar teaching methods are applied.



Left: The SFLS guitar ensemble performs at the annual Christmas concert in December 2017. Right: The Marching Eagles of Sioux Falls, a group which consists of students from SFLS and Lutheran High School of Sioux Falls, made their debut during the summer of 2017. They took first place and received awards for best drum major, best drumline and best color guard at their first-ever marching competition that fall.

SFLS students in grades K – 3 participate in two small-group violin lessons per week. The lessons draw from the Suzuki Method by starting instruction at a young age, teaching children to play music before they learn to read it and placing special focus on producing good sound.

In kindergarten, students spend their first several lessons learning how to hold the violin and bow and making foot charts to help them master proper posture. When they begin making music, students learn by listening and replicating the sounds and movements of their instructor. Through the process, our young musicians build fine motor skills, learn how to listen, strengthen brain synapses and practice self-control.

Once violin students reach third grade, they begin learning to read sheet music. By fourth grade, they can choose to continue with private violin lessons and join our orchestra.

Since its implementation in 2011, the Suzuki-based violin program has received high praise from parents like Jen Sohre, who has children in third and fifth grade.

“I know many parents cringe at the sound of a beginner playing the violin ... the squeaks and squawks of the bow ... but not me,” she said. “I enjoy every single minute of it and am overcome with how wonderful the Suzuki-based program is.”

While our violin program is robust, it’s certainly not the only way students learn to make and appreciate music at SFLS. From kindergarten through eighth grade, students

participate in weekly general music classes where they explore everything from playing the recorder to music history. As our students progress through elementary and middle school, they can expand their musical horizons by joining choir, orchestra, band, guitar ensemble or tone chime ensembles. They can also take private voice, instrumental or piano lessons during the school day. Offering private lessons during the school day not only improves musical skills and enhances brain development, but also allows our families to enjoy uninterrupted family time at home during the evening hours.



Kristi Prouty leads music and movement time at Kid’s Day Out, the 2-year-old preschool program at SFLS.

Music also has a prominent presence in our preschool. Classroom teachers incorporate music into their daily schedules, and twice each month a member of our music team leads music and movement classes in preschool.

As a former Kindermusik® teacher, Kristi Prouty works with children as young as 2 to develop foundational music skills, such as rhythm and counting, by building on the children’s natural love of music. During music and movement time, our preschoolers learn how to keep time with their bodies by clapping hands, tapping feet and counting out loud. They also experiment with a variety of hand-held instruments, such as wood blocks, drums, tambourines and bells. Our preschoolers have an opportunity to showcase the things they learn throughout the year at our annual Christmas programs and preschool graduation ceremonies.

In addition to Christmas and spring concerts, our K – 8 music students participate in winter and spring recitals,



where they have the chance to share their musical gifts with peers, parents and other friends and family. Several students also participate in local honor choirs, all-state band and all-state orchestra on an annual basis.

During the summer of 2017, our music department teamed up with the Lutheran High School of Sioux Falls to form a marching band program. That fall, the Marching Eagles of Sioux Falls took first place and received awards for best drum major, best drumline and best color guard during their debut performance at the Missouri Valley Marching Festival in Platte, S.D.

Finally, as a school that is owned and operated by five local LCMS churches, we take a choir or small music ensemble to our local congregations each academic year for Sioux Falls Lutheran School Sundays. The special worship services provide us with opportunities to join our supporting congregations in worship, to share and showcase what our students are learning and to thank church members for their investment in Lutheran education.

At the conclusion of their SFLS careers, many students carry their musical skills forward into high school, college and the real world. Countless alumni expand their musical horizons in high school by joining new groups like jazz band or show choir. A smaller, but still numerous, group continues to grow as musicians at the collegiate level by participating in ensembles like choir, orchestra and concert, jazz or pep band. Finally, some



choose to take their talents into the church and serve as members of worship bands at churches near and far.

All in all, the comprehensive music programs at SFLS provide us with an uncommon and impactful way of achieving our mission to develop capable, Christian servant-leaders in a complex world who are “World Ready, Faith Secure.”

Clockwise, from top left: Under the direction of Karen Dooley, the SFLS orchestra performs at the annual Christmas concert in December 2017. The Shepherds Chorale performs excerpts from Handel's *Messiah* at the annual Christmas concert in December 2017. First-grade students at SFLS showcase the skills they've learned in the Suzuki-based violin program during a spring concert. Kindergarten students rehearse during small group lessons twice each week as part of the Suzuki-based violin program at SFLS.

NLSA Powerful Practices

VOL. 9, NO. 4 // JANUARY 2019

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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PHOTOS: SIOUX FALLS LUTHERAN SCHOOL



Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Being Smarter Than a Smart Phone

It seems that today's children are born with smart-phone skills. Young children, just beginning symbolic play, will turn anything into a phone that they stare at, swipe at and try to text on. If it were up to children, they would get a smart phone as soon as they could say the words to ask for it. However, for parents, the decision of when to add your child to the family phone plan requires some careful thought.

When it comes to children and smart phones, there is both good and bad. Smart phones offer direct communication between parents and children, allowing for more safety as our children become more independent. With the privilege of a smart phone comes the opportu-

nity for your child to show that he can be trusted with information technology. In this way a smart phone can act as a rite of passage.

However, not every child is ready for the responsibilities of a smart phone. With computers children might have more supervision, but with phones they have easy access to inappropriate content and entertainment on a device they can fit in their pockets. The temptation to use the phone in less than God-pleasing ways is very strong, even for adults. In addition to this temptation, phone apps are designed to draw in your attention with a false sense of urgency or small rewards that distract you from the real world. Most parents would not even



consider allowing their middle-school-aged child access to beer in the refrigerator, yet phone use can be addictive too.

It is not likely we can prevent our children from using a smart phone until they become adults, but it is a good idea to consider some guidelines before handing that preteen a computer with more power than the computers that landed men on the moon. Here is some advice for introducing your children to the world of smart-phone technology.

- › **Wait:** Make sure that giving your child a smart phone is your decision and not your child's. Try to delay providing a smart phone for as long as possible to allow your child to mature. If a phone is necessary, consider one that only calls and texts so your child can work up to the temptations of internet access and apps. Keep in mind that smart-phone use may interrupt development of social skills and attention span, so this piece of technology is not recommended for children who struggle with these issues already.
- › **Teach:** Have the tough conversations about cyberbullying and sexting. Many children who would not participate in these activities in a face-to-face context will indulge when they can hide behind social media. Don't assume that your child would never participate; instead, make sure that your child knows the likely harm caused by these activities. Have the conversation first and repeat it every year so your child is armed when temptation and opportunity arise.
- › **Supervise:** Be sure you have complete access to your child's phone and then use that access to periodically check on apps, texts and browser history. Do this with your child so you can help her to distinguish good choices from ones that might cause trouble later. This checking is not about a lack of trust; it is about teaching good discernment.
- › **Moderate:** Teach your children how to moderate their use as part of teaching them how to be smart with



a smart phone. They will likely think it is fine to use the phone all the time. It will be up to you to teach them how to evaluate choices by setting some guidelines early on. It is wise to plan particular down times such as riding in a car or eating a meal so that the phone does not displace family discussion time. Encourage your children to keep the number of apps they load to a minimum, and show them how to turn off notifications so their phones aren't continually competing for their attention. Help your child to see that there is an important difference between using the phone as a tool and using it for entertainment. Encourage them to find entertainment with friends and family.

- › **Recharge:** Make sure the phone is recharged overnight in a location *outside of the bedroom*. This will prevent late night use and promote better sleep.

“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 TIM. 4:12).

A large part of raising children is showing them how our faith needs to be a part of everything we say, do and believe. Wise smart-phone usage is a great way to teach your children how to communicate God's love in a modern world.



Professionally Speaking



Professionally Speaking ... About Life

It's **Life Month**. Psalm 139 will be shared multiple times this month, especially near January 18 this year when the March for Life occurs in Washington, D.C. The Psalmist writes, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them" (PS. 139:13-16).

Life Month is simply a celebration of life itself! The Giver of every perfect gift is the giver of life. His breath into clay brought about mankind. Of all of His creation, only in man does God share intimate attention as He

"formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (GEN. 2:7). For the rest of creation, it took God's Word alone; for His most prized possession, the crown of creation, it was personal.

As protecting the rights of life for those who can't protect themselves has become the focus of this month (as is greatly needed), it's important for Lutheran schools to speak to life issues and address God's great gift of life. The Bible (PSALM 139) and science agree that life begins in the womb and is cared for by the Author of Life. The elderly in our midst are also in God's care through us. Their lives are precious; our love for them is demonstrated through keeping them confident in faith and in peace through the trials of life, including "the valley of the shadow of death" (PS. 23:4). The infirmed and those unique in any physical and mental way are given life and need protection and love.

"Their lives are precious; our love for them is demonstrated through keeping them confident in faith and in peace through the trials of life, including 'the valley of the shadow of death.'"



But *Professional Speaking*, this month of life has implications for two other areas influencing ministry.

First, this notion of man as the crown of creation is not limited to Christians. The crown of creation is human-kind and all are made in His image. Though damaged through our first parents' sin in the Garden of Eden, the image of God has its influence on the whole concept of Luther's use of "neighbor." Jesus said we are to love our neighbor (more on "as ourselves" part in the next section!). In his March 30, 2016, article on Acton Institute's website, *acton.org*, titled "Martin Luther on Vocation and Serving Our Neighbors," Gene Edward Veith Jr. concludes, "God is hidden in vocation. Christ is hidden in our neighbors." The point of including these thoughts is this: as we serve as leaders in our schools, we play out various vocations. But as we do, our treatment of others, our attitude, our planning and even our policies and procedures should demonstrate living out this ideal of loving our neighbor. In a day when we are often placed into a defensive posture for our schools, its beliefs and its staff, we have a command to love our neighbor and love in ways driven by God's grace in our own undeserving lives. How does this tension affect admission policies? How does this affect discipline processes that bring removal from enrollment? How does "the image of God" affect the contentious colleague? How does one show love to a parent who does not desire a loving relationship but instead a defense of their child's actions and words ... or maybe even their own actions and words? This side of heaven, it's difficult to live out perfect love. However, as Paul says, we "eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness" (GAL. 5:5) and are "working through love" (GAL. 5:6).

Finally, Life Month is also about you! You — made in the image of God. You as a fellow redeemed. You as a part of the mystical body, the Church. You as a chosen person.

School leaders are first responders in our schools. School leaders tend to the grief, trauma and crises of others on a frequent basis. This empathy for others can

have a significant impact on our own mind, body and soul. The busyness of being an administrator can also weaken our lives. Unrealistic expectation, long hours and high levels of stress can be damaging for ministry, especially when we do not heed the warning signs of our minds and bodies.

In the article "*The Elijah-Decision: When Stress Sucks Away Your Will To Go On*," the writer addresses some physical, emotional and spiritual signs of burnout — the extreme of NOT addressing personal care.¹

Some of the signs of burnout include physical symptoms of constant tiredness, loss of sleep and loss of perspective. Emotional symptoms include fear, loss of optimism and loss of courage. Spiritual symptoms include guilt and lack of enthusiasm.

So while we teach our students and families about the gift of life and encourage them to love our neighbors, how can we care for self? What's our preventative medicine for burnout?

1) Pray. Burnout can be caused by constant "people pleasing" and by lack of goals and priorities. Praying for God's will to be done will help align our hearts and minds with the will of our Father.

2) Take care of yourself and make self-care a priority for ministry. Eat well, exercise and respect the needs for a Sabbath rest and schedule balance. It's impossible to have a 40-hour week in our ministry world — and it's wrong to pursue it. It is right to respond diligently to our many vocations and provide timely balance to such loving service.

3) God's gifts. Divine Service is God's gift to us. Be in worship weekly. Hear and sing His words. Receive His assurances of forgiveness and the certainty of God's promises.

¹ Christian Leadership website, accessed December 15, 2018, christian-leadership.org/stress-mini-course-mk-2/the-elijah-decision-when-stress-sucks-away-your-will-to-go-on

Professionally Speaking // JANUARY 2019

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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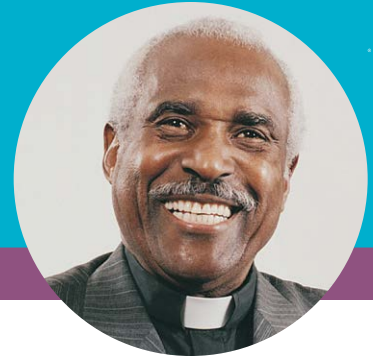
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School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

The School Shepherd: Real and Present to School Staff



ing and supportive of the staff. The school staff can be truly real and present in their relationships with one another when Christ is real and present.

The school shepherd has doctrinal oversight of the school ministry. Every servant in the ministry knows and lives under the direction of God’s Word, and every aspect of this ministry is determined by it. Depending on the dynamics of the school ministry setting, the

school shepherd may have

additional administrative oversight of the school board, administrators and other partners. The supervisory relationships are “not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you.”

Peter’s inspired words remind us that all school ministry leaders and servants by virtue of their Baptisms are united in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Through the workings of the Spirit, they share in the blessings of faith. The school shepherd is called to “shepherd the flock.” The pastor is in ministry with school staff. He is also in ministry to the school staff.

Regular and open communication is a key to successful staff ministry. The school shepherd enters their school worlds — the classroom, the playground, the gymna-

“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you” (1 PETER 5:1-2).

This text, included in “The Responsibilities of the Office of the Holy Ministry” (*LSB Agenda*, p. 177), is applicable to the school shepherd’s relationship with the Lutheran school staff. The school shepherd leads the flock of teachers, administrators and support staff to their Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. The school staff worships together, studies God’s Word together, prays together and serves together. The pastor will typically not personally lead all devotional gatherings, but his presence and his participation are affirm-

sium and other school settings. In addition to sharing in public ministry settings, there are opportunities for one-on-one conversations before or after the instruction and activities of the school day. The school-world conversations give access to the personal and family worlds. “How is the year going?” “How is your family?” “How can I pray for you?” “What can we do to support your ministry here?”

Some conversations are challenging. Moral failures must be addressed to ensure the individual’s personal relationship with their Lord and to protect the school ministry. Professional mistakes or inadequacies must be discussed to assure the quality of the school and the trust of the constituents. Often the school shepherd is a lead participant in those conversations. In those conversations it is important to be “real” — real pastoral, professional and accurate. The conversations should be face-to-face and never relegated to social media. Those conversations must always be conducted according to school and church policy and must be confidential. The school shepherd will want to be in contact with the district president and district education assistants who can provide expertise in following church and legal protocol.

Ministry goes beyond the school administration and teaching staff. Early in my own school administrative roles, the suggestion was shared, “If the school bus driver, janitor and school cook are happy, you will have a happy school.” While school harmony and effectiveness are not that simplistic, the suggestion is helpful. Every team member is important! While support staff are typically under the supervision and evaluation of the school administrator, the pastor serves a personal and advisory role. Every staff member should be celebrated and supported in the school vocation.

Informal social gatherings with school staff can be helpful in building relationships. A staff picnic, dinner at a local restaurant, dessert at the pastor’s home or other events give the staff the



“ Preach you the Word and plant it home
And never faint; the Harvest Lord
Who gave the sower seed to sow
Will watch and tend His planted
Word. ”

(LSB 586:6)

opportunity to know the pastor more informally. While it may not be unusual for the faculty to have a Friday evening “beverage” at a local establishment, it is important that the witness of the school and the professionalism of the staff never be compromised.

Real Applications

- ▶ How do staff members perceive you as the school shepherd: accessible or inaccessible, open or isolated, supportive, etc.?
- ▶ What formal connections and conversations take place in your ministry setting?
- ▶ What informal connections and conversations take place in your ministry setting?
- ▶ Team ministry is exciting! Team ministry is challenging! Team ministry in the Lutheran school is most effective when the school shepherd is real and present in Jesus’ name.



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



The Power of Relationships

The holidays are over, the decorations are likely put away and the desire to lose a few pounds is on the minds of many people. While the Christmas parties and family gatherings can make schedules busy and be somewhat overwhelming, most people appreciate the time to spend with friends and family. Even if you live far from loved ones or special friends, the time you spend with them helps you connect; it “fills your bucket.” These times with family and friends often begin where you had ended before; conversations seem to pick up right where they left off the last time you were together. Distance does not interrupt the love you have for family and friends. Connections to those individuals you live far from can still be strong. Relationships are held together with the glue of love, care and respect.

You know the importance of relationships in your life; so does Jesus. Jesus was all about relationships! Jesus looked to build relationships wherever He went. Jesus was even criticized for starting friendships with others whom were looked down on, such as the woman at the well (JOHN 4) or Zacchaeus (LUKE 19). It was easy for Jesus to begin conversation with others; He already knew their names and entire life-histories. Jesus didn't criticize; He shared genuine care and comfort to those He encountered. For many, a meeting with Jesus is what they longed for; they knew there was something special, something meaningful, about what He had to offer.

As an educator and Lutheran school leader, you may have unique stories about the power of relationships. Perhaps you have a family at your school that has had a member



attend for a number of generations. Or, perhaps you have a newly enrolled student all because of a friendship the family has with another family from your school. Or, you may have a family that requests a specific teacher because of positive experiences they had in the past while in her class. While positive relationships are always desired, work must be done to cultivate and maintain them.

Because of sin, the world will never be perfect. Families experience broken relationships, and friendships falter. However, the love of Jesus Christ doesn't go away. Jesus wants a relationship with each person; He stands ready to listen to prayer, to offer comfort and to forgive.

Even children desire strong relationships. Friendships are a foundational component of childhood. From a young age, children develop a sense of enjoyment when interacting with peers. The experiences children have with peers shape their interactions with others throughout their lifetimes. Healthy relationships allow children to build social skills, emotional competencies and healthy bonds with others that benefit their holistic development.

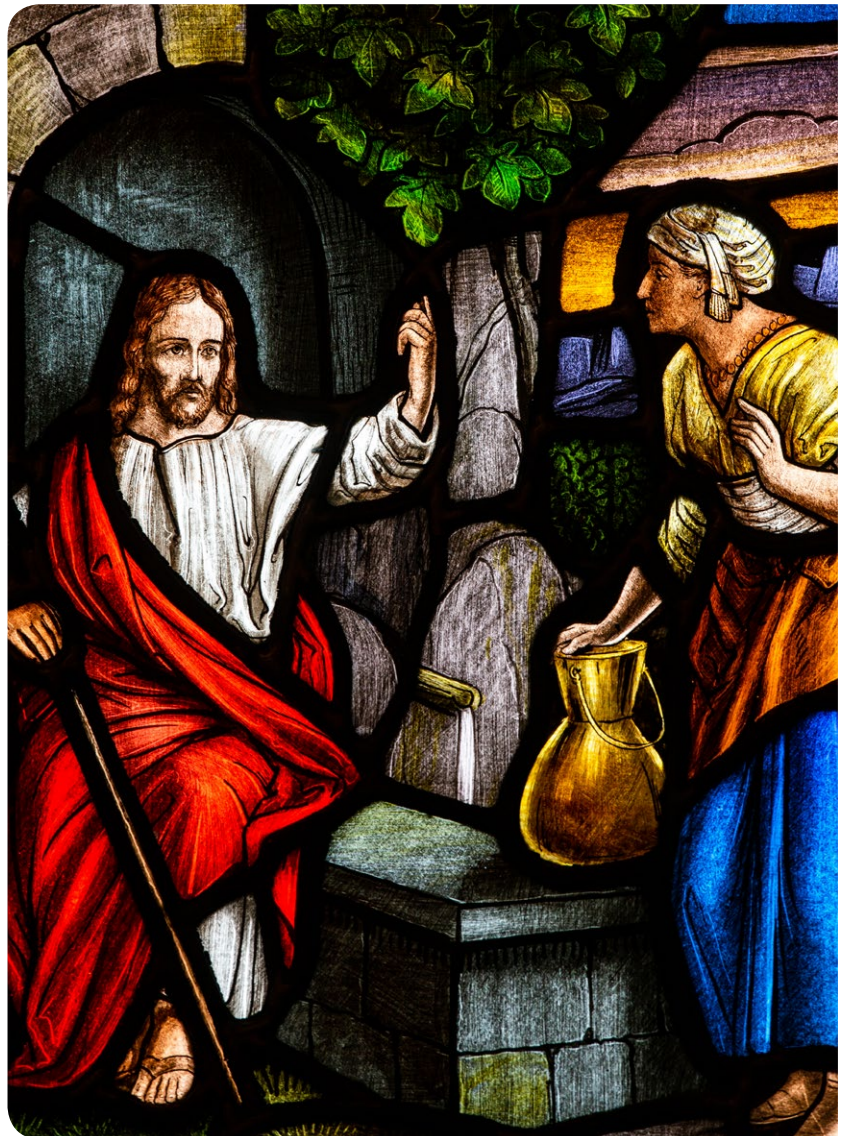
Healthy relationships allow enhanced interactions. Healthy relationships provide opportunities to get to know others in deeper ways that reach the heart. Lutheran school ministry is about relationship — relationships with

children and families that lead to stronger (and, sometimes brand new) relationships with Jesus Christ. Lutheran school educators and leaders have a unique opportunity to “wear love” in all they do. Modeling a Christ-like attitude, positive language and meaningful interactions with others paves the way for others to think “there is something special about that person.” Sharing Christ’s love doesn’t necessarily always have to include direct teaching of Bible stories or theology; it sometimes takes shape in the simple facial expressions shared, words of comfort and encouragement offered or generosity bestowed on another person.

Think for a moment about the interactions and relationships Jesus had with others. Sometimes He preached about God’s love and salvation. Sometimes He healed the sick. Other times He simply had a conversation with people. Jesus wasn’t afraid to point out faults, but He always shared grace when doing so.

It is important to build and maintain positive relationships with others — just as Jesus did. It would be interesting to read diaries of His disciples and learn the details of each encounter Jesus had with people or of the daily encounters the disciples had with Him. Not all people reciprocated positively to the offer of friendship with Jesus. Some criticized Jesus, many mocked Him and still others despised Him. Nevertheless, Jesus sought people out — He wanted them to know Him, who He really was and the ultimate gift He has to offer.

God is real. God is present. God is the one who offers salvation. As a Christian, you know the beautiful gift this is. Do not keep Jesus a secret; proclaim His goodness from the mountaintops and shout it from the tallest buildings. In your life, live so that others can see Jesus in you. Live so that others can know, and even ask about, the relationship you have with Jesus. Seek opportunities to share Jesus each day!



Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for making me and seeking me. You know me and have great plans for my life. Help me put my full trust in You. Guide me in my interactions with others so that by the words and actions I share, they may see the goodness, light and salvation of Jesus that shines through me. In Jesus’ name we pray. **Amen.**

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