

OCTOBER 2019

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing



Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Where Schools Flourish, All Flourishes

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 THESS. 5:16–18).

Martin Luther, reformer of the Christian church, was a leading advocate for the education of children. During a time when schooling was often limited to the sons of the wealthy, Luther argued for compulsory education for all children. His primary purpose: education is necessary so that Christians can read and understand Scripture for themselves.

Not only was Luther’s passion for education impactful in 1524, but also it transferred to the original founding fathers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). In 1847, schools were a priority in our Synod’s first constitution. In this document, the founding church fathers stated, “In order for the congregation to become a member of Synod, a provision for the Christian schooling of the children is to be made.” With this solid foundation, the LCMS began with 12 congregations and 14 schools.

Today, over 6,000 congregations and 1,950 Lutheran schools exist to share the Word of God, daily carrying out Luther’s directive. Throughout the years, Lutheran schools have experienced challenges in providing a Christ-centered, religiously integrated education of the whole child for all, and yet, they can and do accomplish this goal with a committed church and school working together to serve the children and families entrusted to their care. St. Peter Lutheran Church and School is a place that does just this.

Meet Pastor Joseph Cunningham of St. Peter in North Judson, Ind., our *2019 National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) School Shepherd!* When asked about his role in the



school, Pastor Cunningham replied, “This is our mission! I love St. Peter Church and School because God is using it as a vibrant witness of the Gospel and His love for this community.” Pastor Cunningham leads and serves alongside a dedicated principal, Rhonda Reimers. As these leaders work together with a devoted faculty and staff, it is evident that this school community supports a shared vision and embraces ministry in rural Indiana.

“Where schools flourish, all flourishes,” espoused Martin Luther. Pastor Cunningham and his dedicated and caring staff understand this well. “Developing a meaningful infrastructure of services and educational opportunities designed to combat poor physical and mental health issues is critical to the overall survival of a rural community. St. Peter is a vital connection to all these initiatives and provides a spiritual connection to these community challenges.” The powerful presence of St. Peter Lutheran Church and School is a blessing to the North Judson community.

God richly blesses Lutheran congregations and schools. He gives us His Son, Jesus, and shares the riches of His grace with us. We, in turn, share the Good News of forgiveness, life and salvation in Jesus. Rejoice always!



Computer File



What is Next in Technology: Student Resources

Reflect on these two questions related to this month's topic before you read the article to start thinking about how the topic has been and continues impacting you, your classroom or your school.

Question #1: What led to this topic's relevance in education? Why was it assigned value in the classroom or implemented in the way it was?

Question #2: How are you using or implementing this topic in your classroom or school at present? If you are not directly interacting with the topic at hand, how is it impacting you in other ways?

Student resources related to various forms of technology and their associated use in the classroom are one of the main topics that seem to always come up when looking at "technology in the classroom," as well it should. Resources are what drive the content knowledge in a classroom setting, and over the past years both the content itself and the manner of delivery have changed as a result of rapid changes in technology.

Think back for a moment to your formative years in education. Unless you are a late Millennial or member of Generation Z, your student resources came in the form of paper or books, cassette and VHS tapes and other forms of physical media. If you needed to do research, you physically went to the library and hunted through the stacks to find what you needed. Or you checked with a librarian and were given the keys to the kingdom to search through the reels



of microfilm and sheets of microfiche. Videos and tapes were something you checked out as well from a physical location with a return date after which you could not review it without checking it out again. The same was the case in the classroom and in schools. Student resources were a finite asset that lived physically within the walls of individual classrooms or school libraries and could only be accessed by one student at a time unless you were reading side-by-side with a friend.

And then came the internet.

Jump forward three short decades from the time described above, and the world of student resources looks drastically different. You would be hard-pressed to find print resources in the classroom unless they were textbooks or reading books in an elementary setting. Dictionaries, encyclopedias, content- and topic-specific books — they are all gone, replaced by websites and programs specific to the needs of a curriculum. The same is true of VHS and DVDs, cassette tapes and overhead projectors, all replaced by projectors, online streaming media and digitized resources of every

shape and size. Workbooks are now edited and submitted electronically through learning management systems and shared file services such as Google Docs and Office 365. The acceptance of the internet into schools and classrooms changed both the content and the manner of delivery so that everything is now accessible by everyone, all the time, from anywhere.

All of this being said, where are student resources going in the classrooms of tomorrow? The four points below look at both the content itself and the manner of delivery for student resources as classrooms and schools move forward.

- 1 Student resources, of any type, will continue to become even more accessible to everyone at any time from anywhere. Programs requiring physical copies or limited resources based on device type (computer or device-specific instead of online) will generally be phased out. Today's students already expect to be able to access any of the information that they need from anywhere using any device, so it is only a short matter of time until all resources for learning follow suit.
- 2 Along the same lines as above, working collaboratively from anywhere will become even more of an expectation than it is today. Classroom work and learning no longer take place only within the four walls of the school or classroom — and it is essential that schools realize this when looking to invest in systems and resources for schools and teachers alike. The students and teachers of tomorrow will expect to be able to do their work and accomplish their learning at any time from any place.
- 3 Gone are the days of paying for resources. Yes, textbook manufacturers will continue to publish updated textbooks and their

associated documents, but there is already a shift in many locations to Open Educational Resources (OER) or other information available without cost. Teachers have always adjusted and modified their instruction based on the resources which were available to them. With the depth of knowledge and resources available to all online, this will only continue to expand as schools move away from “the textbook” and look for better and more timely resources for their students.

- 4 Looking a little further down the road into the future, there is a movement to develop programs and systems where resources are customized for each learner.

Now, some may critique the four points above by saying that they are too general by not including specific programs or systems that are recommended for use. I assure you this is intentional. It seems that every week there is another story about another service or program being shuttered by its parent company with the users being left scrambling to find a replacement. The educational landscape is no different, so it is important to focus on the big picture and be prepared for change to impact both the content and delivery systems when it comes to student resources.

In the end, it is essential to remember that one of the foundational pieces of the current educational model, that of student resources, has changed, is changing and will continue to change as a result of technology in the classroom. When making plans and decisions for the future, be sure to be prepared for change and to keep looking for what is coming next whenever possible.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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Writer: Matthew Bergholt Designer: Erica Schwan

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Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

JOYFULLY LUTHERAN 1 THESS. 5:16-24

FOCUS: Jesus. Others. You.



The Book of Esther



Before You Teach

The biblical narrative of Esther is unique in that it does not mention the name of God, let alone Jesus. But the essence of Christ's love — selfless sacrifice to rescue others — is deeply embedded in the narrative. Trusting in God's mercy and grace, Esther risks her own life to liberate God's people from tyranny. It's a big story for little people, but it demonstrates that God's plan is for each of us to discover and use our individual gifts and blessings for the well-being of others. We joyfully serve others while glorifying God's name.

Greeting

Dedicate time every day to greet each child upon entry into the classroom. **Good Morning, Child of God....** Statistically, the first five seconds of a child's arrival are critical for establishing a positive attitude for the day.

Gathering

YOU WILL NEED: a designated worship area with a cross and/or an image of Jesus, a battery-operated candle, a Bible, the songbook *Little Ones Sing Praise*.

Do: Light the altar candle. Signal children to gather in your worship area.

Sing: Sing the "Gathering Song" (*LOSP*, p. 8).

Tell the Story

YOU WILL NEED: a precut heart, crown and cross. Show the heart (**love**), crown (**king**) or cross (**Jesus**) as indicated in bold print.

A girl named Esther lived with her cousin Mordecai. Mordecai **lovingly** raising Esther as his very own child. They were secretly Jews, and people of God. Mordecai warned Esther to tell no one, not even the **king**, their secret. Esther told no one! One day the **king** chose Esther to be his queen. He **loved** her very much.

The **king** had also chosen a man named Haman to be the boss of others. The **king** commanded all of his servants to bow down to Haman. But Mordecai refused because he **loved** and honored God above all others. Some of the servants told Mordecai, "You must obey the **king's** command or be killed!" Mordecai wouldn't listen, so they told Haman. Haman became very angry, and planned to harm Mordecai and all of God's people. Hearing this, Mordecai tore his clothes, crying out with



a loud voice and weeping with God's people. Esther was very sad and afraid. She knew her life was in danger, especially if she went to see the **king** without being called to him. Mordecai told Esther, "Perhaps you are here for this purpose."

Trusting God's plan for her, Esther went to the **king**. **Loving** Esther, the **king** held his golden scepter out to her. She begged the **king**, "Spare my life and the lives of my people!"

Hearing her words, the **king** sent messengers throughout the land with his order not to harm God's people. The lives of Esther, Mordecai and all of God's people were saved! There was joy throughout the land! With **love**, God had sent Esther to rescue His people. With **love**, God sent **Jesus** to rescue us from our sin. We are God's messengers! Let us tell others the Good News about **Jesus'** saving **love**.

PRAY TOGETHER

Guide children to repeat each phrase after you.

Father God You rescued me; from my sin You set me free.
Savior Jesus died for me; forgiv'n, loved I'll always be.
Thank You for so lovingly, saving me to live with Thee.
Amen.

Remember the Story

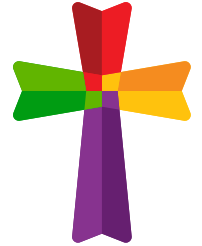
BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: "[God] delivers and rescues" (DAN. 6:27).

Gr. 1 & 2: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom" (2 TIM. 4:18).

ACTIVITIES

Create: On 8-inch-by-10-inch white paper, pre-draw a black cross of 1-inch width from top to bottom and side-to-side. Reproduce for each child. Children can use markers of various colors to decorate each of the four blank sections: straight lines in one section, and wavy lines, curved lines and curly lines in each of the three remaining sections. Display drawings with the words from Dan. 6:27.



Do: Esther trusted God to help and protect her. List and discuss children's fears. Place a precut paper cross over the list, saying: **We can trust Jesus to be with us and help us ALL THE TIME!**

Sing: "I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus" (LOSP, p. 24).

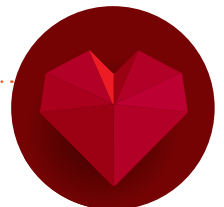
Sending

YOU WILL NEED: A beanbag or cross to pass.

Gather children in a "sending circle" just prior to dismissal. Pray, inviting children to add prayer thoughts as the beanbag/cross is passed and received by each in turn, or to quietly pass it along. Dismiss, saying to each child upon exiting: **Jesus is with you all the time.**

Live the Story

Esther believed God to be trustworthy, knowing of God's unwavering love for her and all people. Children learn to trust when adults around them are consistent in words and actions, demonstrating unwavering love and forgiving care for them. Let us be worthy of children's trust.



Early Childhood Devotions

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Lisa Moeller

NOTE: You will need the songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

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Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

Joy ... in the Midst of Change



It has been said that the only people who like change are wet babies and vending machine owners.

Whether or not we like change, it is inevitable. It will happen whether we are prepared for it or in denial. At times, change may be predictable — such as advancement in grade levels for students or promotions related to work. Other times, change can sneak up on us and leave us completely bewildered.

Change is a given in the physical world around us as we see growth in plants and animals, and as the seasons change every 90 days or so. There is a lot of change that occurs in the social world around us, as well as with the economy. Change is able to cross cultures and even the

limits of time. There is often change in relationships, as sometimes we find them improving and other times they seem to be eroding. Most of all, people change — maybe not always for the better, but we do change.

The one place that we don't see change is with our Lord. We read in Heb. 13:8, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." We also read in Mal. 3:6, "I the LORD do not change." As God's people, we can confess this truth, recognize it as a truth for others — but maybe not always apply it to our own life. Why?

One of the reasons we may not like change is that we feel like we are losing control. Ah, control ... as much as we say we aren't controlling, most of us like to know what change is coming and to be on top of it when it arrives in our lives. Controlling often seems to occur when we trust only in ourselves and what we can do to make things happen the way we want them to happen.

This month in Lutheran Schools, many of our students will study one of the biggest changes the world has known in the last 500 years — the Reformation. Our Lutheran Schools will be instructing our students on how Martin Luther was a bold messenger of change as he publicly stated things that were wrong with the church of Rome, standing firm on the message of truth found in the Bible.

Change didn't come easily for Luther and the other reformers. Change can be hard. We all react in differing ways as change confronts us. Where do we turn when change shows up unexpectedly or in an overwhelming manner?

JOYFULLY UPLIFTING FAMILY ACTIVITY //

Gather the family together in a comfortable space, with no electronic distractions, and enjoy the family activity outlined below.

Well, we have many gifts in the people in our lives — immediate family, extended family, neighbors, friends, fellow church members, public servants and others to support us. But most of all, we have a God who promises that He will never leave us or forsake us (**HEB. 13:5**). We have a Savior who loves us the same, day in and day out.

Jesus is our Friend, one we can come to when changes occur all around us. He gives us a peace that passes understanding, that calms our hearts and minds.

PROJECT TITLE: TIME FOR A CHANGE



PURPOSE

To engage in an activity that allows family members to voice their ideas for change regarding personal possessions and the way their home is arranged.

PROCESS

- 1 Have someone obtain a clipboard with a piece of paper and pencil or pen.
- 2 Appoint a person as the scribe or recorder and given him the clipboard and pencil.
- 3 Travel around the home, making notes in each room of suggested changes (within reason) that could be done to improve things for your family. Write every suggestion down (editing will come later).

- 4 As you enter the bedrooms, have a big plastic bag that the occupant of the room can deposit items into that later can be taken to a nearby thrift store. Please consider nice, still usable items for donation and not just discards.
- 5 After the home tour has concluded, sit down again as a family, prioritize the suggestions and set a tentative completion date next to each of the changes. If need be, by consensus, eliminate inappropriate items.
- 6 Once the finished list has been decided, post the paper in a prominent place in the home, so that all family members can see it often. As a family, tackle these changes as you have time and resources to do so.

PRAYER

At the close of the family session, have an adult or older sibling read the following prayer with other members of the family repeating the words, phrase by phrase.

Dear Jesus. We give thanks that You don't change. Help us to stay calm when things around us change. Help us to trust in You always. Guide us in our daily lives, and help us to make needed changes in our home, as well as in in our walk with You. Amen.



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Writer: Dr. Steven Christopher Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Special Education Throughout the School Year: October



The school year is now underway. Hopefully, you and your students have successfully made the transition to a new year and are starting to settle into a routine. As this happens during the beginning of the year, you learn more about your students, and instruction transitions from reviewing material from the prior year to introducing new content. This is also the time that you may start noticing some students struggling, or students that came to you with diagnosed difficulties needing more support. As a classroom teacher, it can be difficult to know how to best accommodate these students in their learning while also continuing to have high expectations.

Before we get further into this discussion, let's make sure the difference is clear between providing accom-

modations for students and modifying content. Accommodations do not alter what the student is expected to learn, but they alter the way information is presented by the teacher or the way learning is expressed by the student. These could include reading text out loud to a student, or giving a student extra time to complete tests and assignments. The goal of providing accommodations is to reduce the effects of a student's disability or areas of struggle and provide access to classroom learning. Modifications, on the other hand, alter the content being learned, such as having a student skip the word problems or essay questions on an assignment. Modifications change *what* the student is learning, and accommodations change *how* the student is learning.

Teachers often become concerned with "watering down" the content by providing accommodations, but if you keep in mind that accommodations should not alter the content a student is exposed to, it is easier to understand that accommodations are another way of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. There is no special permission needed to see if certain accommodations will help a student you see struggling at this point in the year, but we do recommend you keep track of what is being done. This could be as simple as having an accommodation checklist and highlighting or checking off what is being implemented with the date you started. If an accommodation is discontinued because it wasn't successful or the student no longer needs it, add the end date to the checklist and make a quick note about why it's no longer in place. This will help with communication to



parents about what strategies you've tried, and it will also help other teachers the student has or will have in the future.

In choosing accommodations, more is not always better! We want to find the right balance of strategically choosing accommodations to help students be successful while still providing a learning environment with high expectations for everyone. Start by thinking about what instructional and assessment tasks are difficult for the student to do independently. Are there supports that have already been put into place or were in place in the past to help with these tasks? What were the results of these? If previous accommodations were successful but then discontinued, that would be a good starting point to see if the same supports are helpful again. If not, think about why those tasks might be difficult for the student and ask him or her at an appropriate time. Often, students can tell you why a certain task is difficult or may have ideas about what would help. Once some ideas are generated, put a couple, but not too many at a time, in place and evaluate their effectiveness after a couple of weeks or a month. Communicate with parents about these additional supports you're providing and involve them in conversation about how things are going as well.

All students are capable of learning, but the way they learn and show that learning will be different — not right or wrong, just different. Keep in mind Psalm 139:14, "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." God did not intend for every person to be the same or even to learn the same. He gave each of us unique gifts and challenges, and we need to remember that fact each day with our students. It's not always easy to do, but we can find strategies and supports to help each unique child and to remind each that God created him or her with a purpose. How wonderful it is that we have the rest of the school year to explore with our students what that purpose is and how they can reach it!



At Lutheran Special Education Ministries, we know there is no one-size-fits-all solution for the challenges faced by teachers and students, but we are committed to working with you to find answers to your questions and to support students in their learning. Please reach out to us at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at luthsped.org and let us know how we can support you in your ministry!

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Kara Bratton Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



When Should You Stop Reading Aloud to Your Child?

The answer to the question posed in the title: **never!** Parents who read to their young children often fall away from this family activity when their children can read on their own, especially as new levels of busyness crowd into the family schedule. In terms of development, late elementary and middle school children still need the kind of family time enjoyed by reading together. All of the reasons for reading to your child that are valid for young children remain true as children grow older. Moreover, maturing brains crave the new benefits of this practice.

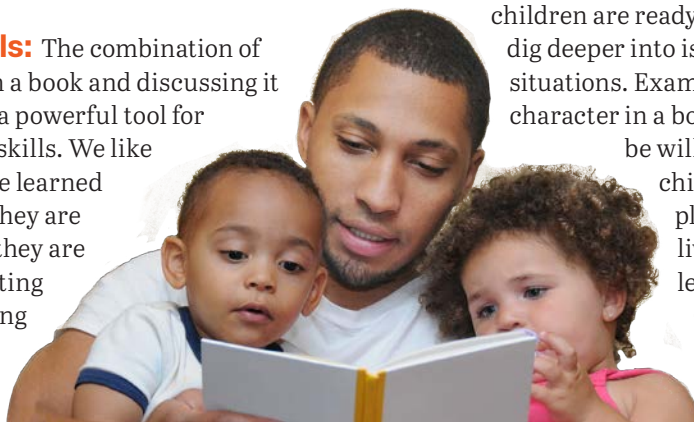
Reading skills: One of the most significant benefits of read-aloud time for children is that it develops reading skills by developing language skills. Older children, who are likely fluent readers, continue to develop vocabulary and comprehension skills which are essential not only for other learning but also for testing. You could be improving your child's future SAT or ACT score!

Critical thinking skills: The combination of learning something new in a book and discussing it with a trusted someone is a powerful tool for teaching critical thinking skills. We like to think that such skills are learned at school, but the truth is they are performed at school after they are practiced at home. Interacting with your child while solving a problem such as how

to build a treehouse or how to bake a cake or while discussing issues like violence in video games are all opportunities to practice thinking skills. When you read aloud with your child, you can achieve the same effect by discussing the situations that arise as the story unfolds. In terms of developing thinking skills, reading serves as a virtual reality.

Compassion: Because children are spending more time with screens, they are consequently spending less time interacting with others. Reading with your child and discussing character interactions will help to develop essential thinking skills that ultimately support social skills and emotional development. In this process, their brains are learning possible ways to handle situations as they "meet" new people in the stories you are reading. These discussions go a long way in taming anxiety.

Family Values: The books you choose to read give your child subtle lessons in family values. Older children are ready to discuss these things and dig deeper into issues of how to handle difficult situations. Examining the decisions made by a character in a book will tell your child you will be willing to discuss decisions your child will be making at school, at play and at home in their own lives. Reading a book together lets you teach your child how a Christian family is different



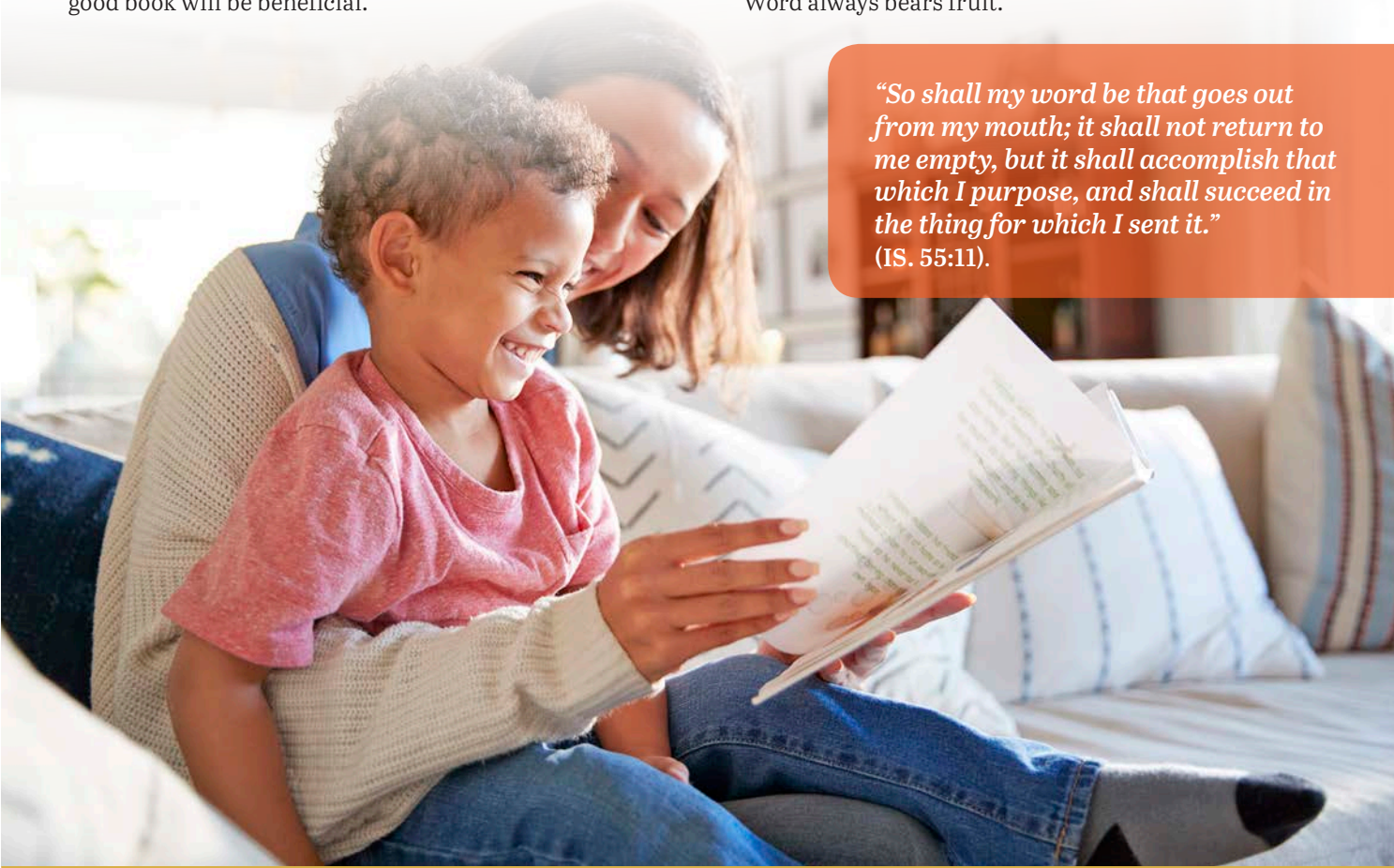
from the world. These discussions offer another way to teach the faith.

The best place to start to find reading material is to look at the books you enjoyed during your childhood. Don't worry about the stories being out-of-date because the core issues of the characters are likely the same for your child today. Check with your child's teachers for recommendations of authors. If your child enjoys a particular book in class, you can extend that enjoyment by reading another book by the same author. If your school has a media specialist, this person can tell you about popular books available in the school library.

Reading aloud to an older child will be different than reading to younger children. You may read less and discuss more. Perhaps you will take turns reading with your child, or maybe you will listen to an audiobook while driving to and from school. Any time you can snatch from the day to spend with your child and a good book will be beneficial.

Of course, I can't mention reading with your child without talking about some of the best reading material available for good discussion and faith building. Martin Luther designed the Small Catechism for just such a purpose. Updated versions add new discussion questions to the familiar text. I strongly encourage you to add Scripture to your shared reading time. For instance, a Psalm a day, perhaps read at dinner time, will help to grow a love for Scripture in addition to the Spirit's work in faith development. Check with Concordia Publishing House for other devotional resources for use with the growing minds and growing faith of children.

Reading with your child, especially reading Scripture, will benefit you as a parent also. You will learn right along with your child, but even more importantly, you will learn about your child. Reading and the discussions that follow will help you to be a better parent as you learn what your child is thinking, planning or perhaps worrying over. And of course, time spent in God's Word always bears fruit.



*“So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”
(IS. 55:11).*

Parent Pages

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Kim Marxhausen Designer: Frank Kohn

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Professionally Speaking



SCRIPTURE: 1 Thess. 5:16–24

Pray Without Ceasing

Isn't it entertaining to watch a 2-year-old boy watch and mimic everything his daddy does? It can be quite hilarious to see a toddler walk out of the bedroom wearing her daddy's shoes. Hearing new words, good and bad, voiced by a young child can be exciting ... and sometimes embarrassing. Be it walking his walk, watching closely as morning shaving occurs or being an onlooker of daddy embracing mommy, those experiences remind us of the great impact of daddy in a toddler's life.

Memories of father/child experiences have many lasting effects in a person's life. Fishing, working on cars, going to baseball games together — these all are experiences that form a lifetime of memories.

But even greater are the effects of teaching character, morality and virtue that come through a father in a child's life. Research supports that fathers provide a sense of protection and safety. Dads tend to be a little less gentle and bit more encouraging of risks than moms. Fathers provide a different outlook on discipline, consequences and dealing with life. (For a deeper look at the research, consider reading Kyle D. Pruett's *Fatherneed: Why Father Care is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child*, copyright © 2001 Harmony.)

As a Lutheran educator, anecdotal support for dads is strong. The reality is the task of parenting requires more than one parent and the divine plan is for parenting to include Mommy and Daddy. Without this plan in effect, everyone suffers: children, adults, community, the Church.

How does this “Daddy stuff” find its way into this month's *Professionally Speaking*? First, understanding an earthly daddy provides some background for a broader and thankful understanding of our Father in



heaven. Secondly, as Lutheran schools look to impact our world with strong Christian citizens, we need to find ways to encourage the model of family that God intended — for faith formation and for strong communities.



When Paul wrote his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, he told them to “pray without ceasing” (5:17). The thought of moment-by-moment prayer with a sort of constant murmuring seems daunting. With jobs to do and people to visit, an interpretation of uninterrupted praying would appear ridiculous. However, this short verse from Paul is more of a reflection and response to a father/son relationship. Just as little eyes are always studying Daddy, so the Christian best lives out life with a heart always turned to “Our Father in Heaven” (MATT. 6:9). Praying in this manner means going to God right away, no matter what is happening or who we are thinking about or whatever our needs happen to be. Luther says in the meaning of the introduction to the Lord’s Prayer, “With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father” (*Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*, The Lord’s Prayer, copyright © 1986 CPH). Look at those descriptors: tenderly, boldness, confidence, dear!

In our teaching, in our curriculum, in our programs, we need to share who our Father is. Omniscient, omnipresent, eternal are big descriptors of big concepts of our infinite God. In a world where reality and truth are thought to be only what each individual perceives, the true reality and truth of God Himself provide the answers to each person’s purpose, identity and actions. Knowing the God who is powerful enough to handle the greatest problem (death) and supply the answer (the Resurrection of Jesus) gives peace to heart and mind. Knowing the truth and reality of an ever-present God [“I am with you always” (MATT. 28:20)] gives security in the midst of the fears of this world. An eternal God has the perspective that makes mere man’s finite perspective give up control to Someone greater and wiser. We need not apologize for such truths! The attributes of God should find themselves in our teaching and in our policies and procedures.

In our teaching, in our curriculum, and in our programs, we need to share God’s design for family. We can’t shirk away from this truth with the reality of divorced parents, unwed parents, foster parents and other examples of parents in our school community. Jesus did not present Himself simply to families that had a mom and dad and two children. Rather, we see Him at a well with a divorcee and adulteress, worshiped by a prostitute and hanging out with people who wanted to be validated in their life and actions. His truth was paramount, because He knew He was/is the one thing needed and how His truth would provide peace, purpose and security.

As you lead your school, consider how parent support groups encourage resources and activities that support God’s design for family. Also, within the staffing process, consider how the staff is inspired and equipped to model a healthy God-pleasing family.

Professionally Speaking // OCTOBER 2019

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



“Rejoice always ...” (1 THESS. 5:16–24)

Bible Story: Esther (BOOK OF ESTHER)

Focus: God helped Esther to be brave and save her family. God’s people responded joyfully, thanking God for saving them.

What it teaches us: We joyfully thank God for helping Esther save her people and for saving us through the work of His Son, Jesus, our Savior.

Prepare to teach:

- › **Read** the story of Esther and, if possible, the notes in a study Bible.
- › **Think:** Although “God” is not mentioned in the entire book, there are many references to God at work as He helped/empowered Mordecai and Esther to save and keep a remnant of His people during the Babylonian captivity. God’s people responded with a festival (called “Purim”) praising and thanking God for saving them. “There was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday” (ESTHER 8:17).

Esther saved God’s people — an Old Testament example pointing to Jesus, God’s Son and our Savior from sin, death and the power of Satan.

› Pray:

Dear God, Thank You for helping Esther to be brave. Thank You for helping Jesus to be brave and save us. Please help us to trust in God and His plan for us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.



WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

You will also need

- > *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House
- > Picture of Jesus (find one doing an internet search)
- > Directions to make a “pirate” hat (find one doing an internet search)
- > Gold construction paper, scissors and tape: make two crowns and a gold, folded “pirate” hat. *Note: it has three corners and is the shape of Haman’s hat.*

Gather for Worship

Invite the children to the worship area. Sing (tune: “Are You Sleeping?”),

Come and sit down (repeat) **on the floor** (repeat).

We will learn of Jesus (repeat), **sing and pray** (repeat).

Invocation: Use the same melody and sing: **We begin now** (repeat) **in God’s name** (repeat) — **Father, Son and Spirit** (repeat). **Amen** (repeat).

Opening Song

Show picture of Jesus. **We know Jesus loves each of us. Let’s sing a “Jesus loves me” song:** Sing, “Jesus Loves the Little Ones” (*LOSP*, p. 42).

Bible Story

Let’s listen to the story of Esther. God helped her to be brave.

Sing the story using the tune of “Mulberry Bush” while wearing the hats.

Esther and Xerxes (zerk-sees) **king and queen, king and queen, king and queen. Esther and Xerxes were king and queen; they lived so long ago.**



Haman wanted to hurt God’s people, hurt God’s people, hurt God’s people. Haman wanted to hurt God’s people very long ago.

Esther told Xerxes Haman’s plan, Haman’s plan, Haman’s plan. Esther told Xerxes Haman’s plan very long ago.

Xerxes made him stop right now, stop right now, stop right now. Xerxes made Haman stop right now very long ago.

God’s people sang and thanked the Lord, thanked the Lord, thanked the Lord. God’s people sang and thanked the Lord for making Esther brave.

What the Story Teaches: God helped Esther to be brave and tell King Xerxes of Haman’s evil plan. God’s people were happy and thanked God.

We are happy God loves us and sent Jesus to save us.

Time to Pray

Dear God, I’m glad You loved Esther and helped her to be brave.

I’m glad You love me; I’m so thankful You sent Jesus to save us. Amen.

Closing/Benediction

Sing (same melody): **Time to go now** (repeat) **Time to play** (or rest or ...) (repeat). **God is always with you** (repeat). **Loves you too** (repeat).



CURRICULAR MATERIALS //

IDEA STARTERS for integrating the Bible story and theme into STREAMS (curriculum)

S Science and Nutrition

> **Science:** tongues: Esther told King Xerxes of Haman's plan; people use tongues to talk to God and thank Him.



> **Nutrition:** make and serve Hamantaschen: three-cornered pastries made from crescent rolls and baked with a jam or jelly filling.

T Technology

> **Take pictures** of the children as they happily play throughout the day. Attach pictures to the parent letter or send them electronically.

R Reading and Language Arts

> **Read** *My First Shapes* by DK, copyright © 2017 DK Children; *Shapes (Rookie Toddler)* by Scholastic, copyright © 2013 Children's Press.

> **Read** *Old Hat, New Hat* by Stan and Jan Berenstain, copyright © 1997 Random House Books for Young Readers.

> **Variation of Poem/Song:** **My hat, it has three corners, three corners has my hat. My hat, it has three corners. Now what do you think of that?**

E Engineering

> **Use colored tape** to make a triangle shape on the floor. Invite the children to fill the shape with blocks, Duplos, etc.

A Arts (art, music and physical education)

> **Toddlers:** provide a variety of gold/yellow items (e.g., paper, feathers, pompoms, cloth) and glue items on cardboard to make a collage.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

During Jesus' time we shared the story of Esther. God helped Esther to be brave and help others. God can help us and our children to make good choices too.

> **Sing songs** from Worship Time and "If You're Happy and You Know It."

> **Dance around** and sing, using musical instruments.

M Mathematics

> **Look** at various triangle-shaped items; count corners; sort by size/color.

S Social Studies

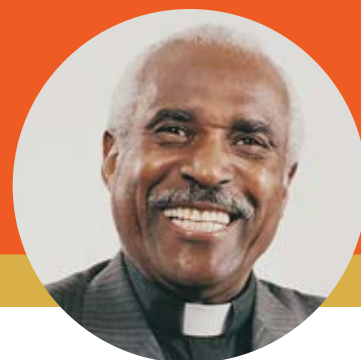
> **Set out hats** from various occupations in the dress-up area; include hats from the Bible story. Share ways people help each other.





School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

Faith:fully

The theme “JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN” shapes the “Chapel Talks” and National Lutheran Schools Week resources for the 2019–20 school year in the school ministries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The theme also engages the school shepherd as he joyfully leads the local Lutheran school ministry. Each month the school shepherd is invited to more FULLY explore his vital role. After a September theme of RESPECT:FULLY, this October resource builds on the “Faith Alone” Reformation emphasis.



FAITH:FULLY

The Faith FULL Good Shepherd

“Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house ... Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son” (HEB. 3:1-2, 6).

Jesus was faithful. He was faithful to every detail of the Father’s plan for the salvation of the world. Jesus was faithful as a son to His parents, even seeking the welfare of His mother in His last hours on the cross.

Jesus is faithful. Jesus is faithful in keeping His promises to us. Since He promised to return for us on the Last Day, we can be certain that He will keep that promise. Since Jesus promises to hear our prayers and to be with us always, again we can be certain that He will keep His Word.

Faith FULL School Shepherds

“And [Jesus] said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?’” (MATT. 8:26). The disciples had seen Jesus’ power often. Yet, when they were hurled about on the

sea, they cried out in desperation. Faithful Jesus calmed the sea and rescued them. Peter had stated that he would never forsake his Master, yet he denied Jesus when questioned by servant girls in the courtyard of the high priest.

We have made our promise of faithfulness to Jesus in our baptism and confirmation. Yet, it can often be said of us, “O, you of little faith.” Faith FULL shepherds come to Jesus confessing that they are often “of little faith.”

Through the forgiveness of Jesus and the faith that is a gift through the Holy Spirit, school shepherds are forgiven and respond by being faith FULL.

Shepherds are faith FULL to their ordination vow declaring their faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions. The ordination and installation vows also include a faithful response to the question, “Do you promise that you will instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine?” Ministry in a Lutheran school setting calls for a faithful response to that question in the daily interaction with children.

A faithful response to the vow is made possible only through the Holy Spirit who strengthens us with the Word. The personal and regular study of the Word fortifies our response.

Faithfulness is more than a professional requirement and verbal response. A school shepherd lives faithfully with his wife and children. The shepherd is faithful in carrying out the school ministry duties assigned and other pastoral tasks in the church and school.

The shepherd responds faithfully so that the words of Jesus are heard: “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master’” (MATT. 25:21). Shepherds serve faithfully not to seek greater earthly prestige or to build earthly kingdoms. We receive the “much” of an eternity with Jesus.

Shepherding Faith FULL School Ministry

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (ROM. 10:17).

The school shepherd leads the school to ask the questions: “Why are we here?” and “What is the primary message that we share with children and families?” The school shepherd preaches and teaches the Word of God which leads students, staff and families to Faithful Jesus. The Word of God is shared in Sunday and chapel worship. The Word of God is taught daily in every classroom. The Word of God guides every activity in the Lutheran school.

Guided by the Word, the school shepherd equips and encourages the school staff to be faithful in their calling and to the tasks assigned to them. School families are asked to be faithful in partnering with the school in nurturing children to be faithful followers of Jesus.

“ Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!”

(LSB 809:3 and refrain)

Dialoguing Faith FULLY

- > What opportunities are given for shepherd and staff to gather faithfully around the Word?
- > Where do you see a faithful response to God’s Word in your ministry setting?
- > How are children equipped and encouraged to be faithful beyond their confirmation or school graduation?



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



The Challenge Is Real!

How will enrollment look? Will we meet the budget? Will Mrs. Smith stay healthy enough to teach through the entire school year? What will happen to Jennifer's attendance in school after her parents get a divorce? How will we ever raise enough money to pay for the new playground equipment? These questions are real, and they are challenging for many who have the responsibility in school leadership to answer them.

While serving in ministry is exciting — a calling that has great responsibilities — it is also challenging. No one ever said leading or teaching in a Lutheran, Christian school would be easy. However, there are resources available and many people throughout the network of Lutheran schools who care deeply about not only the success of schools, but also leaders and educators.

A unique aspect of serving in the ministry of Lutheran education is the importance of relationships. Ponder for a few moments the plethora of relationships that are featured throughout the Scriptures. Genesis shares the story of Noah and his family as they endured many uncertainties and hardships yet continued their focus on God's promise. The story of Joseph and his brothers is also found in Genesis. Here, relationships were certainly challenged as Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery; yet, Joseph showed his love for them many years later when they sought food during a great famine. The New Testament shows extraordinary examples of relationships that faced challenges yet overcame them for a great purpose. Joseph was so ashamed that Mary was pregnant that he wanted to quietly divorce her; thankfully, God's plan prevailed and resulted in a Savior, Jesus! Other great examples the New Testament shares are stories of the disciples and how they trusted



Jesus and answered His calling to follow Him and make “fishers of men” (e.g., **MATT. 4:19**). Yes, God certainly equips those who are called into serving in ministry — ministry that points to saving grace and salvation!

Lutheran schools are not factories. They do not produce widgets or have a sole purpose of providing income for sponsoring congregations. Lutheran schools exist to proclaim the story of Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection for the purpose of offering salvation to all people. Lutheran schools exist to JOY-fully minister to children, families and communities. Despite challenges (and there are many), God provides in unique and meaningful ways!

As you encounter challenges, seek ways to learn from them and solve them with the best mindset possible. Rather than thinking of what can't be done, focus on what can be done and the best possible way to do it. Always approach challenges and problematic situations with prayer. With God's listening ear always available,

you have a marvelous Partner in ministry! Ask others you work with to join you in prayer, and never lose sight of the amazing things God can do. Will your prayers always be answered in the ways you prefer? No. However, the answers God provides to your prayers are those that He has already planned in advance.

Again, remember to utilize the resources that are available to you. One of the great aspects of serving in Lutheran school ministry is the network of people and supporting organizations that are in existence to assist. The list of resources available is great and could never be fully highlighted in this writing. You do have a great start, however, because you are reading this article! Regularly take advantage of the publications available from LCMS School Ministry. Print out the articles you have found to be beneficial and save them in a special file. Electronic versions are always available online at luthed.org. Make this website one of your regular sites to visit, not only for the information available, but for professional development resources as well!

As mentioned earlier, relationships are a key component of effective ministry. Jesus spent time with people as part of His ministry on earth. He ate with tax collectors and spent time talking with adulterers. Jesus knew that connecting with people could prove to be quite effective! The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a network of congregations, schools and ministry-focused organizations that exist to share the Gospel message of Jesus. Because of this common goal, there is JOY-filled unity and collaboration to support one another. Many LCMS districts provide educational leaders and consultants to assist ministry leaders in their work. Do you have a question about licensing or accreditation? Are you curious about curriculum and how to integrate the faith throughout the day in all of your classrooms? Do you need someone to lean on when challenges arise and who can help you think about solutions? The network of leaders throughout the LCMS districts stands ready to provide you with information and support whenever possible. Use these resources! As you take part in resources that are available, you will likely begin to make lasting ministry connections that lead you to other readily available resources that you were previously unaware of.

A JOY-filled prayer:

Dear Lord, As the school year is underway and those in our ministry become familiar with routines, give me the JOY needed to overcome challenges. Help me to think of challenges that are set before me as opportunities – opportunities to learn and think differently. Give me the passion to continue moving forward, and set others in my path to support and encourage me when I need it most. In Your loving name, Amen.

Remember that you are not alone. Other Lutheran school leaders and teachers follow the same path as you each day as they carry out the Gospel message. While communities may be different, the message of Jesus does not change. Consider it a professional goal to connect and network with other Lutheran school administrators and/or teachers in your area. Yes, you may have to travel a bit depending on the area of the country in which you live, but this investment can pay off tremendously. If you are a veteran leader and/or teacher, reach out to someone you know is new and could benefit from your expertise. As you get to know a fellow ministry-worker, you will have the opportunity to learn from someone, grow professionally with someone and support someone who may have the same challenges (and opportunities) as you do.

Ministry takes time. The investment of time that you pour into your facility, students, faculty and staff will not always be bright and cheery, but as you focus on the words of 1 Thessalonians, remember to “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, [and] give thanks in all circumstances” (vv. 16–18)! Christ has promised to hold your hand as you lead. You may not always feel His presence, but know it is there. As the famous “Footprints in the Sand” poem shares, in those most challenging times, when you thought you were alone, it was then that God was the nearest.

Time Out for Directors

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Drew Gerdes Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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