

This image displays a dense, repeating pattern of white line-art icons on a solid black background. The icons represent a wide range of educational fields: science (telescope, microscope, rocket, planet Saturn, atom symbol), mathematics (calculator, ruler, compass, protractor, pie chart), arts (paint palette, musical notes, violin, graduation cap), humanities (globe, open book, classical building, tie), and general education (lightbulb, brain, puzzle pieces, test tube). The pattern is uniform and covers the entire area.

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FEBRUARY 2020

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Leading a Lutheran School



MEET **MICHAEL SCHIEMANN**, principal of Forest Hills Lutheran Christian School in Cornelius, Ore. Recently, he shared the events of a day that he experienced leading a Lutheran school: “Friday was set for me as a day to prepare for our school’s second largest fundraiser that was happening on Saturday. We had things left to do, and so it was a bit of a priority to get those things done. It was also a big day because I was working with (and training) our new incoming development director. The other priority for the day was leading preschool tours. ... However, the night before, we detected a gas leak on campus. Sure enough, we had an underground pipe crack. Our facilities director was not in on Friday, and so that fell to the principal. I had to call about 10 companies before I found one that would help with our pipe issue. ... On top of this, I’m coordinating a Private School Fair and I had a school call and request that I find a new location and change the date. ... Then, I had a school board member ask to meet with me because he wants to rewrite our school’s hiring policy ...

“And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

(NEH. 8:10)

and it was the day we were having an all-school assembly to kick off our school’s auction.”

Principal Schiemann’s experience is not unusual. Day-in and day-out the rigors of school leadership cause many to question their vocation. Startling statistics show the crisis that schools, public and private, face today regarding their leadership. More than one in six principals leave their school each year. The problem is even more severe in high-poverty schools, where one in five principals leave their schools each year. Not surprisingly, this kind of disruption in school leadership leads to an increase in teacher turnover, negatively affecting student achievement. Today the shrinking pool of qualified, competent and Christian leaders has created a crisis for many Lutheran schools as well. It is essential that the recruitment and training of current and future leaders remain a priority.



To address this critical issue, the School Leadership Development Project (SLED) was created. SLED is a year-long professional development experience consisting of two on-site events led by leaders in Lutheran education. It is designed specifically for aspiring teacher leaders and administrators who are new in their leadership positions. Its sole purpose is to identify, encourage and prepare early childhood, elementary and secondary school leaders to serve in leadership roles, ensuring that the next generation of children hear the beautiful Gospel message of God's promise of eternal life through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are prepared for a life of Christian citizenship.

Lutheran schools are blessed with leaders like Principal Schiemann. Is God nudging you to consider the role of principal in a Lutheran school? Nominations are open for the SLED cohort beginning in June 2020. The future of Lutheran schools depends on competent, committed,

compassionate
Christian leaders.

Please prayerfully consider the opportunity to serve as a leader in a place where the Gospel message is proclaimed and the next generation of Lutheran education continued.

Amid the mayhem on that Friday, Principal Schiemann reflected about his experience serving in a Lutheran school: "I wanted to share this with you because there will be days like this when you're an administrator, but thankfully, it's not every day. When these days come, I reflect on the words of Neh. 8:10: The Joy of the Lord is my STRENGTH. God worked through me that Friday and gave me His strength. God works through you as well! Sure, decisions need to be made, but as they are, we can reflect on who God is and why we do what we do. We are called to ministry — to serve His families and His people. He will take our five loaves and two fish and turn them into a miracle."

➤ Reference - blog.nassp.org/2019/06/05/understanding-and-addressing-principal-turnover/

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Author: Dr. Rebecca Schmidt, Director of LCMS School Ministry Designer: Erica Schwan

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Computer File



What is Next in Technology: **STEM/STEAM/STREAM**

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

Question #1: What led to STEM'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 STEM 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?

Let's start this month off with some definitions and also unravel the acronym soup we are looking at for February!

"STEM" Definition: STEM education is an interdisciplinary approach to learning where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world lessons as students apply science, technology, engineering and mathematics in contexts that make connections between school, community, work and the global enterprise enabling the development of STEM literacy and with it the ability to compete in the new economy. (Tsupros, N., Kohler, R., & Hallinen, J., 2009)

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics

STREAM: Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics



Now that we are all working from the same definition and acronyms, we can better look at where this movement in education is going both today and in the future. While the concepts of STEM were around long before the acronym, it was not until the early 2000s that the term was first used by the National Science Foundation when they were starting to look at releasing a curriculum that combined elements of the separate science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines.

From a simple beginning, STEM and its added-letter versions have become quite the buzzwords in education today. Schools of every shape and size are implementing programs that look to bring elements of these separate

classes together and blend the manner in which they are taught and learned. But there is more to the STEM/STEAM/STREAM movement within schools today. If you were to look at ten schools' programs, in all likelihood each would look completely different. That is the state of "STEM" in schools today, where everyone is attempting to incorporate the idea in their own specific way to make it work for them. And that is OK if they are making it work in their situation!

Before we look at where the STEM/STEAM/STREAM idea is going and explore what is next for this technology-based movement, we need to take a quick look at how the "other letters" play a role in expanding the basic definition of STEM. By adding "Arts" and "Reading" (or Religion), schools are broadening the way they are integrating their individual curricula and finding new ways that they can and should be taught together. Instead of having each subject taught in an isolated way, the simple and yet intentional integration of other subject areas with the "technical" areas (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) is helping schools develop a more wholistic approach to teaching.

So where is STEM going next? The expansion of the STEM model to include STEAM, STREAM and others is a good bellwether of the future of STEM. When all subject areas are combined together and taught with the strengths of each being enhanced by the strengths of the others, students will not only be more well-rounded in their education, but will also be able to learn deeper cognitive skills by seeing the connections

between subject areas. Interestingly enough, this movement to teach subjects together echoes models of education that have been used throughout history.

As education moves into the future, the "T" of STEM, technology, will unify the other curricular areas, but will also fade more into the background. Right now, technology is serving as the tool to connect the other subjects through shared online documents, research repositories, virtual and augmented reality, and other methods of enhancing and connecting existing curricula. "Technology" is still being taught at many levels as a separate and individual subject, but in the future it will be integrated into the other subjects and taught as a tool alongside the content of the major subject area. There will always be a need for specific high-level or intensive "technology" courses, but the majority of the other skills will be able to be integrated throughout the rest of a student's learning.

"What is next" in STEM will certainly play a part in the larger changes happening in education today. Whether or not schools embrace the idea that technology can serve to bring all of the other subject together is yet to be seen. However, in many schools this is already happening, all because of a little idea known as STEM.

Tsupros, N., Kohler, R., & Hallinen, J. (2009). STEM education: A project to identify the missing components. Intermediate Unit 1: Center for STEM Education and Leonard Gelfand Center for Service Learning and Outreach, Carnegie Mellon University, Pennsylvania.



Computer File

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Writer: Matthew Bergholt Designer: Erica Schwan

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN 1 THESS. 5:16–24

FOCUS: Jesus. Others. You.



Healing of the Lame Man

(ACTS 3:1–16)



Before You Teach

Others are the focus of February. Valentines and gifts and hearts are more about others than about ourselves. The apostles in this story are prime examples of Christian sharing. We learn from them to share the “one thing ... necessary” (LUKE 10:42): the loving power of Jesus. This is our opportunity to help children see that discipleship is about more than cards and candy and parties.

Greeting

Greet each child immediately upon entry, **Good morning/afternoon! Jesus loves you, child of God.**

Gathering

Light your altar candle and signal children to gather in your worship area.

Sing: “God Loves You” (LOSP, p. 100).

Say: Today we are celebrating the power of Jesus’ love and our love for Him. We cannot keep Jesus’ love to ourselves. We share with others the joy we have in His everlasting love.

Tell the Story

YOU WILL NEED: Heart Puzzle; a paper cross.

DIRECTIONS: Draw simple figures of the lame man, Peter and John on a pre-cut tag-board heart. Cut the heart into puzzle pieces. Add magnetic strips to each for use on a magnetic board or double-sided tape for use on tag board or chart paper.

Piece-by-piece, gradually assemble the puzzle as the story unfolds.

A man, born lame and very poor, was carried by friends and laid at the temple gate every day. He begged for alms — food or money given to the poor — from people entering the gate. Peter and John, disciples of Jesus, were going to the temple to pray. Noticing Peter and John entering the temple gate, the lame man begged to receive alms from them. Seeing the lame man, Peter said, “Look at us!” Looking, the lame man expected

money or food from them. But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but I will give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” Peter took the man by the right hand, raising him up. Immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Then the man leaped up, stood and began to walk, praising God as he entered the temple with them. All the people who saw the man walking knew him as the lame man who had sat begging at the temple gate. Amazed, they wondered what had happened to him. The lame man clung to Peter and John as people ran toward them. Peter said to the people, “Why do you stare at us as though by our own power or goodness we have made this man walk? Love and faith that come from Jesus have healed this man for all of you to see.”

Cover the heart puzzle with the cross.

The lame man did nothing to deserve to be healed. His healing was a gift of love, given in the name of Jesus. Jesus heals us from our sin — a gift of love — which we have done nothing to earn or deserve. For this gift of undeserved love (grace) we say, “Thank You, Jesus!”

Pray: *Guide children to repeat each phrase of the prayer after you.*

Dear Jesus, Thank You for Your healing love, sent to me from heav’n above. Your saving grace has freely giv’n, a life with You, now, and in heaven. Amen.

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Teach children that grace is love that is not deserved or earned.

Pre-K & K: “For by grace you have been saved through faith” (EPH. 2:8A).

Grades 1 & 2: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (EPH. 2:8).

ACTIVITIES

Create: Heart Art. Enlist volunteer help to cut hearts of different sizes from varied materials (e.g. wrapping paper, magazine pages, construction paper and finely textured sand paper). Guide children to create heart

collages, gluing hearts randomly on paper. Display with the words, “Jesus Loves Me!”

Do: Pinkie Handshake. Show children how to gently hook their pinkie finger with a friend’s. As they do so, guide them to say to each other: “**Jesus loves you! I do too!**” Children then repeat with a different friend.

Sing: “Making Melody in My Heart” (LOSP, p. 63).

Sending

YOU WILL NEED: A heart to pass.

Gather in your “Sending Circle.” Pray together, guiding children to pass the heart and to offer a brief prayer as it is received or to pass it quietly along. As children exit, give each a *Pinkie Handshake*, saying, “**Jesus loves you! I do too!**”



Live the Story

Children have truth detectors. We must daily strive to be who we say we are and to do what we say we do as followers of Jesus. When we falter, we must acknowledge our shortcomings and seek their forgiveness. Let us teach and speak the language, “**I love you because Jesus loves me. I forgive you because Jesus forgives me.**”



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 Knowing That We Are Loved

Whom do you love? What do you love? There are perhaps many different answers to those questions.

Some of the answers to the first question may come easily: I love my spouse, I love my children, I love Jesus. We kind of know the right answers to this question as it centers on relationships, and as parents we have learned how people are priorities in our lives. We may *know* this — but do we always *show* love and act in loving ways to these people, or do we just make assumptions that they know we love them, despite how we speak and act toward them?

We might not be as comfortable admitting our honest answers to the second question: I love golf, I love reading, I love my car, I love my house, I love chocolate (OK, that one may come easily). We know that we shouldn't love things more than we love our family and the friends around us, but, sometimes, it is easier to love a thing than it is a person.

As the people of God, we know that we shouldn't love anything more than God. Jesus tells us that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with our heart, our soul, and our mind — and that the second most important commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves (MATT. 22:36–40). “Neighbor” is not limited to someone who resides next door, but encompasses all people we connect with in our daily lives, including family!

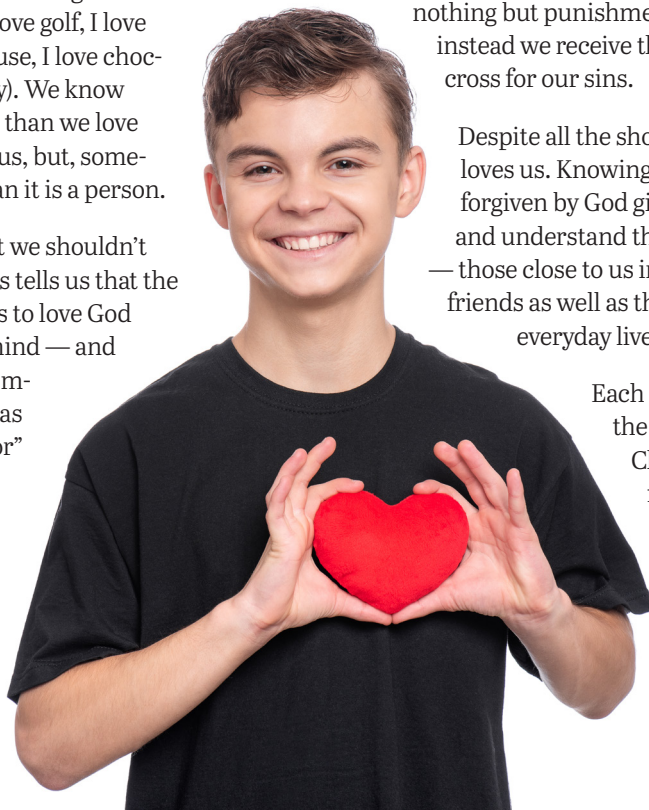
Surprisingly, love is something that is hard to generate and difficult to show toward others. We may often have feelings

of uncertainty about love between ourselves and others around us, even within our family. Love is something that we all need to receive and express, but we don't always give and receive it in balanced ways due to the shortcomings and flaws in our lives. We aren't perfect and we can't perfectly love. But God is, and God does!

God loves us. It is His nature to love. He is love. He showed this love in sending His Son, Jesus, to this earth to love people just as they were and to be an example of how to love in everyday settings. Jesus gave us the ultimate display of love in that while we were yet sinners, He died for us. Jesus laid down His life for us in love. We deserve nothing but punishment for our imperfections, but instead we receive the gift of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins.

Despite all the shortcomings in our lives, God loves us. Knowing we are loved and have been forgiven by God gives us joy! As we experience and understand this joy, we share it with others — those close to us in our family and our circle of friends as well as those we connect with in our everyday lives.

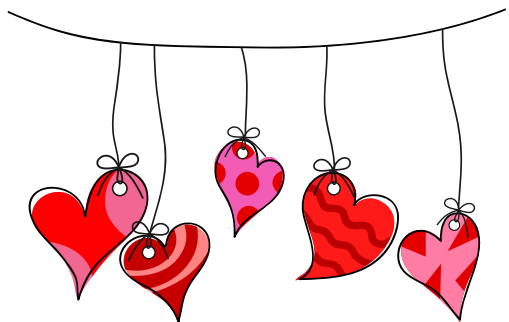
Each day our Lutheran schools have the freedom to share the love of Christ with students, among faculty and staff and with parents and families. It happens in classrooms, at recess, in the hallways, on the parking lot — every day and everywhere we can sense and share the love of God. What a joy!



JOYFULLY UPLIFTING FAMILY ACTIVITY //

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

ACTIVITY TITLE: FAMILY LOVE MOBILE

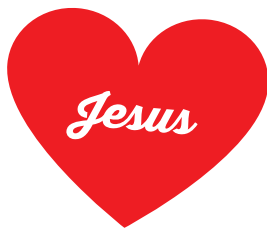


PURPOSE

To engage family members in an activity that allows them to reflect on how they feel love and show love toward others in their lives.

PROCESS

- 1 Have someone obtain a number of older wire coat hangers or wooden kabob skewers, several pieces of string or wire and pieces of cardstock or other kind of heavy paper.
- 2 Cut these pieces of paper or cardstock into hearts of various sizes.
- 3 Have available colored pens, pencils, markers and crayons for use by family members.
- 4 Have other forms of decorating supplies also available, such as fabric, foam shapes, glitter and so on.
- 5 Sit as a family and share who you love and who loves you, and how this love is expressed to others.
- 6 Write these answers on the hearts that were cut out, and then color and decorate them as desired. Make one big heart, and write “Jesus” on one side and “Christ” on the other.



- 7 When everyone is done writing and decorating these hearts, begin to construct a “Love Mobile” with a long piece of hanger wire or wood as the center beam. Then hang the various hearts and other pieces of hanger wire or wood in such a way that it all is in balance.
- 8 Finally, take the heart with the word “Jesus” on it and hang it in the very center, symbolizing that Christ is the center and focus of all the love we feel and share in our lives.
- 9 When the “Love Mobile” is deemed finished, find an appropriate place to hang it in your home, where all will see it and be reminded of the love you have in your family centered in Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Have family members all stand beneath the “Love Mobile” and have an adult or older sibling read the following prayer, segment by segment, with the rest of the family repeating the words.

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us. Thank You for sending Jesus to love us and to show that love when He died for us. Help us to celebrate the love of Jesus every day, and to love others as You have loved us. In the name of Jesus. Amen.





Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Special Education Throughout the School Year: February



By the time February comes, many teachers and students are feeling the effects of the cold weather (unless you're fortunate enough to teach in a school in a warmer climate) and the long stretch of the calendar without a break from school. As teachers, it's easy to become frustrated with students who may seem to lose motivation during this time of the year and who are not engaged with learning. Some students struggle with focusing and staying on task no matter what time of year it is, but talking about some strategies now may be a good way to beat the doldrums of winter!

It may seem like teaching would be significantly easier if all students could sit still, listen and absorb information for an entire class period while you put notes and examples on the board and highlight important information. The reality is that students with attention difficulties cannot do this, and, often, being forced to sit still and told

to "pay attention" will make these difficulties even worse. The simple-sounding solution you've probably heard many times is to incorporate more movement into the classroom, but other than allowing students freedom to stand or walk in the back of the room when needed, this can seem like a challenging task.

Movement helps with learning by increasing oxygen flow to the brain, but for students with attention difficulties, it also plays a major role in helping them retain information and work through cognitive tasks. Moving helps these students stay alert and able to learn more information than they can by sitting still. It may seem counterintuitive that by moving around more students can learn more; however, it is the case especially for students who have excessive energy and have trouble sitting still. This does not mean that your classroom has to become a place of chaos with students moving wherever and whenever they please. However you choose to facilitate opportunities for more movement, make sure there is a plan for bringing students back to their desks or workstations with a cue you've taught them.

One simple strategy is to incorporate a quick three-to-five-minute walk for all students before beginning work on a test or a quiz. Since these tasks generally require students to focus for longer periods of time, this quick walk gets their brains ready to engage and focus for that time. Students with more significant attention difficulties may need another quick walking break during the test. When reviewing for a test or reviewing information previously taught, work quick movement into student responses. For example, if you quickly review information



with true/false questions, have students jump in place for five seconds if they think the answer is true or do toe touches if they think the answer is false. This can work if you set questions up as multiple choice as well. Doing this for a few minutes rather than students sitting at their desks answering the same questions will help their brains focus.

Another strategy to add movement to lesson review also adds in music. Have all students stand up and walk around the room while music plays. Then, similar to musical chairs, when the music stops they pair up with the person closest to them and discuss the question the teacher asks. Students move again while the music plays to repeat the process for a different question. Limiting this to three to five questions to review key points of a lesson is another quick way to review information and get students up and moving! Questions could also be asked by the teacher with multiple choice answers where students move to one corner of the room if they choose choice A, another corner for B and so on. Students who choose the same corner could then discuss for a few seconds why they believe that answer is correct. Each group can share their thoughts with the class before the teacher gives the correct answer and asks a new question.

Even for activities that typically involve sitting and working on problems individually at desks, there are ways to add movement. You can write different problems or questions from the book or worksheet on individual post it notes or other writing surfaces and place them in different parts of the room. Students still need to com-

plete all the problems, but they pick a spot in the room and work on the problem posted at that spot first, writing the answer on their paper, and then move on to a new spot with a different problem until all the questions are completed. If students tend to crowd around one spot, you can also set the guideline that only a certain number of students can be at one question at a time so they move on to another station and then come back.

These strategies for adding some movement into your classroom do not have to alter the content of what you are teaching, but they may give you some different ideas to try, especially for students who have trouble sitting still and focusing. It is important to create these opportunities to help students focus and be successful with what you are trying to teach.



For more ideas to help students with attention difficulties or other learning challenges, 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 VOL. 3, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2020

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



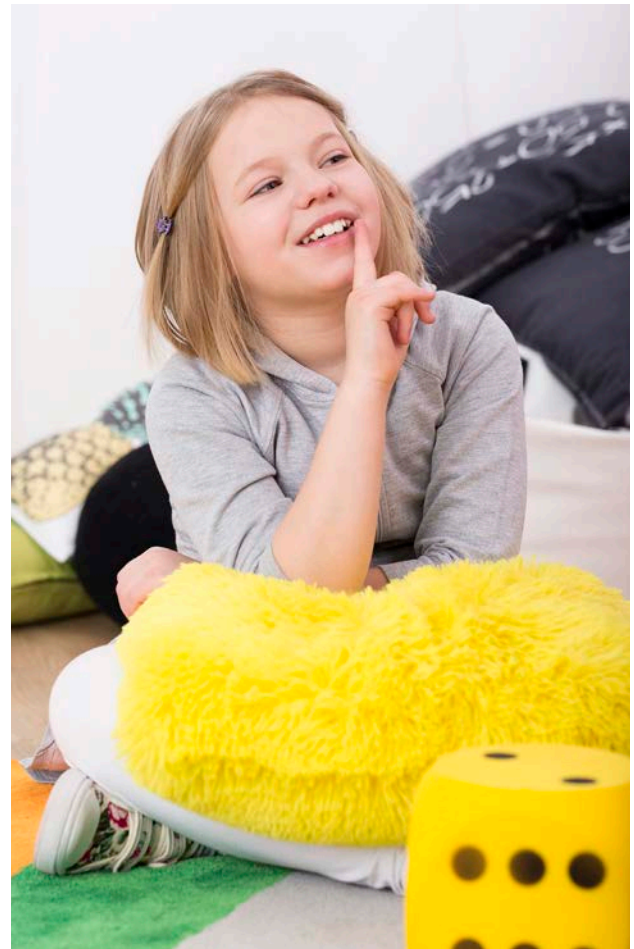
Accepting Children with **AUTISM**

The Lutheran elementary school I attended was full of stairs. We had a set that went straight up without a landing. When we thought teachers were not looking, we loved to climb up on the railing and slide down. As we trudged up and down, we rarely, if ever, thought about how these stairs represented a barrier for people in wheelchairs.

Now our churches and schools operate under legislation that requires accommodations for disabilities. This legislation is a blessing not only for those who need ramps or automatic door openers but also for those of us who have never had to consider barriers. When we learn, worship and live in areas with diversity, we are richer for the experience. For children and adults, when we accommodate a need for a fellow student, we learn empathy and coping skills.

While wheelchairs, walkers, hearing aids and white canes can make a disability recognizable to the observer, there are other challenges that we might not be able to so easily distinguish. Children with autism often have specific needs that can be met to enable them to participate in learning and worship just as ramps and elevators assist those with mobility challenges. Because our brains work differently than a child with autism, we might not understand the behavior of these children, but we can learn how to welcome them into our church or school.

First of all, we should recognize that when an autistic child reacts by crying, by screaming or with repetitive



motions known as stimming, it is not due to a lack of discipline or a weakness of character. These events happen because the child's brain processes information differently. It is not because the child's parents have been lax in teaching social or emotional skills. Our first step should be to support the child by supporting the parents. Get to know the parents and any other children they may have. If siblings are comfortable with you, then watching them while parents tend

to the child with autism might be your best avenue of support.

The next step to supporting parents of children with autism is to encourage these families to attend church and school functions. Because of their child's behavior, these parents might not feel welcome. They need to know that if their child has an episode, others will be supportive. If you are on a planning committee for an event, ask the parents what accommodations might help. Many children with autism simply need a quiet place to calm down and decompress when social interaction becomes more than what their brains can process.

Accept invitations to the homes of families with a child with autism. Such children are more comfortable in a familiar environment and do better when playing with a smaller number of children. Get to know the family and learn about the unique assets of their child. Children with autism are not so much disabled as they are different. Their brains can be very good at things that escape the abilities of more typical children. Help your children to celebrate the assets of a child with autism.

If your child has a friend who uses a wheelchair, it is likely that the two of them will play differently than two friends without mobility challenges, but will still enjoy each other. The same can be true for playing with

a child who has autism. These children may withdraw from others or might be awkward in how they ask to play. But, just like an elevator helps some students get to the next floor, patient teaching can help a child with autism become comfortable with social skills.

Encourage your children to interact with children with autism they meet at their church or school. Explain what might be different and help your children to understand that talking with this child, including him in recess play, working with her in small groups and sitting with him at lunch are essential ways they can learn how to be a friend. Playing with a child who processes sensory information differently may not look like typical play, but it can be fun too. With patience and persistence, your child might discover a fascinating and loyal friend. Let your child know that it is OK to correct a friend gently. Make sure your child knows that jokes work better than teasing as a child with autism might not know when teasing is an act of friendship.

God gives each of us unique gifts with which we can serve Him. Children with autism are no exception. Many of these children will grow up to be authors, artists, musicians and scientists, among other things. Even children who may not achieve these accomplishments are still children of God: loved, valued and forgiven by the blood of Jesus. In this crucial way, we are the same.



Parent Pages

VOL. 19, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2020

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

Test Everything

“Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good” (1 THESS. 5:20–21).

“**D**o not despise ... but test.” Paul encourages the church in Thessalonica to not dismiss the teaching of non-clergy and elders but rather to listen and test the teaching to determine whether it was beautiful words supporting the Gospel or something contrary to it.

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul reminds him that “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (3:16–17).

Test. Teach. Reprove. Correct. Train.

And so we go about the business of a Lutheran school: sharing Christ through worship, prayer and curriculum — a curriculum derived from various types and sources. The challenge of the Lutheran school is often talked about as coming from those things that are outside of the walls of our schools: cultural norms, unsupportive laws, financial duress. But just as great a challenge are those that come from within. As administrators and school leaders continue to strive to make excellent places of learning, we face the challenges of using resources and adapting new ideas and strategies. As education today often follows the culture of the day, following trends, fads and novelty, we do well to determine whether these resources and strategies are good and profitable or are something to abstain from.

As an example, critical thinking is a major element of today’s teacher training. Encouraging new teachers to



promote and challenge their students to think critically seems to be the most important part of their undergraduate training. No doubt to think for oneself — to critically think through a problem or a theory — is very important. The elements of critical thinking include analyzing, communicating and creating. Asking insightful questions that will gain information is important. Expressing opinions in thoughtful words — spoken and written — brings understanding. Maintaining and even growing a toddler’s curiosity and imagination throughout all of life sustains a youthful interaction with the world.

Consider these same skills as needs for the Christian interacting in the world. Insightful questions? Even this type of learning is heard throughout the New Testament. “What must I do to be saved?” (ACTS 16:30) “Who then can be saved?” (MATT. 19:25) “Who do you say that I am?” (MATT. 16:15) Each of these questions led to

major teaching, storytelling, reactions and responses. These questions led to lively learning.

Expressing opinions in oral and written ways is needed for private and public defense of the faith. How often we hear people struggle to share their faith largely because they have never taken the time to personally articulate it! It's important for Christians to stand firm and speak the truth in love rather than cower away and avoid an argument.

Curiosity to dive into big issues and how being in Christ provides answers to life's problems is good and also provides peace and security. Curiosity seeks more information. Curiosity is bred from love.

But here comes the caution of theoretical critical thinking. Critical thinking also encourages open-mindedness. This is not an open-mindedness that lacks curiosity, wonder and reflection. For the critical thinking purists, open-mindedness asks that assumptions and judgements are put aside. No bias is allowed. Inclusion is the goal. Objectivity demands freedom from preconceived notions.

Critical thinking in its purest theoretical sense is humanistic and encourages much of what challenges the morality of the day. Critical thinking in its purest sense does not accept biblical principles of life. Critical thinking does not allow in any way for the grounding influences of Scripture and Christ.

Terminology is important to understand. As Christians, we understand inclusion in the reality that Christ died for all. He loves His creation. He loves the masterpiece of His creation: man. We in Lutheran schools also understand inclusion as a best practice for those with special needs. But inclusion as it is understood in the world of critical thinking? Inclusion means accepting, tolerance, lack of abhorrence for



sinful behaviors and lifestyles. Not accepting such behaviors and lifestyles is an obstacle to understanding man and the world.

Bias is another veiled word in the world of developing critical thinkers. To be a critical thinker, one is encouraged to empty oneself of any preconceived notion. This emptying allows for the process to fill the empty space with new ideas, creative concepts and other revelations. Bias is quickly moved to discrimination — again, discriminatory toward principles we know to be true through Christ and His Word.

What's the lesson for this month's *Professionally Speaking*? It's wise for us to have sound principles in place as we determine the countless components of our Lutheran school. But mostly, we need to have more than a surface understanding of educational issues of the day.

"Test everything" is a reminder for our walk with Christ. It also is a good reminder as we interact with the world in which Christ has placed us.

Professionally Speaking // FEBRUARY 2020

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



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

Bible Story: Peter and John heal the lame man (ACTS 3:1–10).

Focus: The healed lame man responded joyfully, praising and thanking God.

What it teaches us: We, too, joyfully praise and thank God for Jesus, our Savior, who loves and heals us both physically and spiritually.

Prepare to teach

➤ **Read** the story from various translations and, if possible, a study Bible.

➤ **Think:** If Peter and John had given the man some money to help take care of his physical needs, he

would have been happy. But, through the power of Jesus, he was filled with joy knowing he was healed physically and, best of all, spiritually. Happiness comes and goes; we can be happy, then sad. True joy (i.e., believing Jesus is God’s Son and our Savior) is lasting. Through faith, we are moved to respond to God’s goodness with praise and thanksgiving (ACTS 3:10).

➤ **Pray:** Dear Jesus, You are the Great Healer — physical and spiritual. We know through the miracles You performed that You heal physically and, through Your suffering, death and resurrection, heal spiritually. We give You praise and thanks. 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)
- › **Two pictures of the Bible story:** one showing Peter and John talking with the man and the second showing the man running and praising God.

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). **A-men** (repeat).

Opening Song

Show picture of Jesus. **Jesus loves each of us. We learn about Jesus’ love in the Bible** (show Bible). Sing, “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” (*LOSP*, p. 42).

Bible Story

Show the picture of Peter and John with the lame man. Chant:

Peter and John went to pray, pray, pray
At the temple one day, day, day.
They saw a man who was sad, sad, sad;
He couldn’t walk and felt so bad, bad, bad.
He asked the men, “Please, please, please —
Give me money for bread and cheese.”

Replace the first picture with second, showing the lame man praising God.

Peter smiled, then said, “No-o-o; but, here’s what I’ll do.
I know Jesus wants to help you.”
He took the man by his hand, hand, hand
And helped him up to stand, stand, stand.
The man jumped up, ran around and around —
Praised and thanked God with a happy sound.

What the Story Teaches: Jesus, through the words of Peter, made the lame man walk, run and jump, praise and thank God.



Time to Pray

Sing the prayer, using the melody “Are You Sleeping?”
Thank You, Jesus (repeat). **For Your care** (repeat) ...
helping the lame man (repeat). **Praise and thanks** (repeat). Second verse “**Thank You, Jesus ... for Your love ... We know You died to save us** (repeat) ... **Praise and thanks. Amen.**

Closing/Benediction

Sing (same melody): **Time to go now** (repeat). **Time to play** (or whatever activity you do next) (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:** God gives us bodies (e.g., hands, fingers, arms and legs). Get active and use them in many different ways.
- **Nutrition:** serve finger foods (e.g., pieces of pita bread, cheese and fresh fruit cut into small pieces). Take time to pray before eating.

T Technology

- **Stories online:** Once in a while, invite a guest to read a book. Use justbooksreadaloud.com. This is also a website to share with parents.

R Reading and Language Arts

- **Read:** board books: *The Foot Book* by Dr. Seuss (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1996) and *Hand, Hand, Fingers, Thumb* by Al Perkins (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1998); *My Hands* by Alike (HarperCollins, 2000); *Clap Hands* and *Tickle Tickle* by Helen Oxenbury (Little Simon, 1999).
- **Action Poem:** (point to) **Our head, our shoulders, our knees, our toes** (repeat 3 times). **Let's clap our hands together** (clap hands — high, low).

E Engineering

- **Make noise:** Think of different happy sounds we can make with our bodies (e.g., stomping, clapping, shouting).

A Arts (art, music and physical education)

- **Art:** finger paint — use textures: mix sand, sequins and so on.
- **Sing:** songs from Worship Time (above) and “I Have the Joy” (*LOSP*, p. 62)
- **Dance around and sing:** “Hokey Pokey” (omit using a circle or using left/right).



M Math

- **Use hands to sort** (e.g., shoes, mittens) and put items in pairs; use hands to act out the rhyme, “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe.”

S Social Studies

- **Shoes:** People living where Jesus lived wore sandals; we wear shoes. Identify and sort footwear (e.g., tie shoes, Velcro, rain boots, snow boots, swim fins).

CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

Sing a praise song with your child. Use the tune “Mulberry Bush.”

We wave our hands to praise the Lord ...
We jump up high to praise the Lord ...

Make up additional verses.



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

Grace:fully

Lutheran schools are grace full in many expressions. A school dance team or cheerleading squad demonstrates grace on the gym floor. A well-choreographed spring play presents grace on a stage. Office staff and faculty are grace full: gracious and grace-speaking to students, parents and guests. Lutheran schools share and live God's grace in Christ Jesus. Through Jesus, all that Lutheran schools do is done ...

GRACE:FULLY

The Grace FULL Good Shepherd

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (2 THESS. 3:18). Greetings of grace and benedictions of grace can be found throughout the epistles of Paul. Paul had personally experienced the grace of God. Paul was converted from a persecutor of Christians to a missionary sharing God's grace with Gentiles. In Christ, God was grace FULL to Paul.

Martin Luther was a guilt-ridden monk until God's grace was revealed to him: "[All] are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (ROM. 3:24). Through those words, Christ was grace FULL to Luther. Luther proclaimed that grace to the church and to the world.

The Good Shepherd is grace FULL. He confronts the self-righteous, declaring that nothing within us or about us (our heritage, works, etc.) can make us righteous before God. We are empty! Only the sacrifice of Jesus pays for our sins. All He has done for us is ours only by faith. We receive what He has done for us. Spiritually, we lack nothing. His grace fills us, fully.



Grace FULL School Shepherds

By faith God's grace is received by the school shepherd. The shepherd is blessed to be God's child by His grace. The shepherd is privileged to be in Lutheran school ministry by God's grace. The school shepherd doesn't deserve to be in the roles in which he serves. Any influence that he might have is only through God, as He in His grace works in him and through him.

Lutheran school ministry is often draining. There are relationships to maintain, policies to develop and administer, budgets to develop and meet, boards to lead and personnel to manage and encourage. The school shepherd can begin to be effective in those roles only as he receives and celebrates God's grace in Christ. The devotional life of the shepherd is crucial. The shepherd returns often to the gracious promises of Baptism and the grace feast of the Lord's Table.

The school shepherd also lives in grace. Often, we fail in our various roles. We make decisions that may not be the best for the ministry. We may say or do something that is offensive to a ministry constituent. We may fail in an area of responsibility. When our life feels empty — only full of failure — we are blessed to receive again the fullness of God's grace.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (2 THESS. 3:18) is the message of the school shepherd as he leads worship in school chapel or Sunday services. The words of Paul are the school shepherd's message to little children greeted individually in the hallway or collectively in the classroom, to school staff gathered for daily devotions and to boards and committees working together to develop and guide the school ministry.

In Christ, the school shepherd is grace FULL.

Shepherding Lutheran Schools To Be Grace FULL

To be grace full is the theology and heritage of the Lutheran school. However, Lutheran schools are not negligent in sharing the Law of God. The Law prepares us to receive and rejoice in the Grace of God. The school shepherd, ministry leaders (boards and staff) and partners (teachers, volunteers, etc.) might evaluate the grace level of the school ministry:

- › Is worship and Bible study at the heart of the school ministry?
- › Is the biblical grace foundation of the school clearly stated in school promotional materials?
- › Do school handbooks and policy manuals emphasize the grace response to conflict and interpersonal relationships?
- › Are conversations between teacher and children, teacher and parent, principal/pastor and staff and so on grace directed and filled?
- › Are the blessings of the Means of Grace clearly taught in all grade levels?

“Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;

His grace has brought me safe thus far, His grace will lead me home.”

(LSB 744:3)

Lutheran schools might celebrate being grace filled by:

- › Posting and memorizing Scripture passages of grace.
- › Studying Martin Luther and the Reformation heritage.
- › Singing and memorizing hymns of grace.
- › Sharing the grace stories in the lives of children, teachers and families.

Dialoguing Grace FULLY

- › Is your Lutheran school grace FULL?
- › Where have you heard grace conversations or seen grace actions?
- › How might God's grace be more clearly shared and lived in your school setting?



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



In Service and Love

Have you always known you would be a teacher? If not, when did you realize that you had the gift of teaching or that God was preparing you for a role in education? When did you realize that you had a gift of serving as a leader? Perhaps you were preparing for a leadership role, or maybe it dropped in your lap for a variety of reasons. No matter what path you traveled to arrive in your current role, know that God has a plan and that His plan is always good! God needs you to serve in education — Lutheran, Christian education — at this time in your life. Celebrate this opportunity!

The role of teacher is not always easy. Sure, many people have a perception that early childhood educators get to color, paint, play, rest and enjoy snacks and laughter all throughout the day. Yes, these highlights do happen; however, it's not always glitz and glamour. Sick children, difficult parent conversations and classroom management difficulties are also part of the equation. And, if you are a school leader, you have added responsibilities of staffing, budgetary oversight and perhaps curriculum development or licensing requirements.

When times in your life and career become difficult, reflect on the lives of Jesus' disciples. In your personal study and reading of the Scriptures, spend time looking back to how Jesus called these servants into ministry. Matthew gave up a financially good job as tax collector to follow Jesus. Peter, James and John gave up their fishing careers to follow Jesus. Each disciple heard God's calling and followed Jesus. Their days were not easy, or necessarily always predictable, yet they trusted in Jesus and had faith they would be well-cared for — and they were!

The same should be true for you today too! God has called you into a unique ministry to serve and love others. Even in times of difficulty, you are still being called to serve and love those around you. While Satan may try to make you feel inadequate, tired or eager to give up, counter those feelings with the reassurance that God provides in Scripture. First Thessalonians 5:16–18 shares the message to “rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances.” When you remember God’s “got your back,” your ability to love and serve is multiplied many times over. Joshua 1:9 also provides affirmation in that there is no need to be afraid: “be strong and courageous” in all you do.



Remember ... God provides, especially for those He has called into ministry!

Have you heard of the phrase “servant leadership”? If so, take a moment to jot down a few notes of what you know about the characteristics of a servant leader. If you are not familiar with the concept, spend some time reflecting on what you think it may mean or search online for some insight. Jesus is the ultimate “servant leader.” Through His service to mankind, He leads the way to salvation. Through His service on earth, He leads others to know of God’s love and power. The same holds true for you — through your acts of love and service, you have the opportunity and ability to lead others to God’s gift of salvation, which is possible only because of what Christ has already done. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only way one can experience God’s gift of eternal salvation.

As you continue your school year in service and love, consider the following ways you can show and share God’s love in your everyday interactions:

Faith-filled Conversations

As you interact with students, colleagues and parents, weave faith-filled components into your conversations. Reference the gift of salvation, God’s love for the individual and how blessed you are because of what Christ has done for you. Making personal reference to your own faith can strengthen your own faith while fertilizing faith in someone else.

Intentional Interactions

Educators and leaders are busy people. As you physically engage in your work, reference your intentions as they point to Christ. Think in a positive mindset of “get to” rather than “have to.” For example, you “get to” open doors and greet families as they enter your facility, and you “get to” have a conversation with a parent after school. Think of these interactions as opportunities to serve and share love — both yours and Christ’s!

A Gentle Ear

Sometimes part of ministry is being a good listener. Jesus likely often listened to those who came to see Him. Perhaps people told Him about their need for healing or their personal problems or maybe asked Him questions about who He really was. Jesus was a listener, and likely a good one! Seek out opportunities to listen to others. What can you learn by listening carefully? Sometimes others don’t need you to act or fix anything — they simply need a safe place to vent or share. Yes, even the simple act of listening is a way to serve and show love to others.

A Kind Acknowledgement

As a leader, you have daily interactions and supervisory roles with colleagues. How do you show them your servant heart? It is easy for leaders to become critical of others, and teachers can easily be critical of their leader. Even the disciples questioned Jesus at times (Matthew 19 is one example; so many children wanted to see Jesus, but the disciples tried to hinder their visit). Be sure to acknowledge the work your colleagues do — colleagues in your educational program, but also your congregational workers (pastor, choir director, secretary, etc.). These kind words of appreciation can go a long way in building relationships and uniting aspects of your overall ministry.

The work you do each day is meaningful and purposeful. The lives you touch each day are precious in His sight. The time you spend in ministry is time that is ultimately for God. You are Jesus’ disciple on earth today. Thank you for the work you do, educating and leading those in your ministry setting. Remember, God is with you every moment of the day, so with boldness you can always rejoice, always pray (and know your prayers are heard) and always give thanks!

Time Out for Directors

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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