



NOVEMBER 2020

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



SCHOOL SHEPHERDS – Champions of Schools

Mission outreach is essential to Lutheran schools. Lutheran early childhood centers and elementary and high schools are an integral part of a congregation's ministry to children and families. Every day tens of thousands of children, many without a church home, enter the doors of Lutheran schools across the country and around the world. Understanding the importance of a purpose and a shared vision for a church and school serving in a community is the foundation for sharing the Gospel message of hope.

This relationship between the church and school is explored and validated through the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) process. In March 2020, Grace Lutheran School in Pocatello, Idaho hosted an NLSA Validation Team in pursuit of accreditation for its preschool-through-12th-grade school. Jonathan Schultz, speaking on behalf of Grace Lutheran's NLSA Validation Team, emphasized the importance of relationships. He said, "It was obvious to our whole team that he [the senior pastor] exemplifies this daily and in doing so inspires the rest of the faculty and staff to



do the same. Working within this ministry seems to be a real joy.”

Meet the Rev. Jonathan Dinger



Pastor Dinger is senior pastor of Grace Lutheran Church and Schools, who is the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) 2020 School Shepherd. When asked about Grace’s schools, he affirmed the relationship he has with church and school leaders and shared what this means in the school community.

“I love Lutheran School distinctiveness — mission outposts, bridges of relevance, Gospel beacons. They place models of Christian love in classrooms, teachers sharing Jesus with students and families.”

A community parent observed, “The senior pastor at Grace Lutheran Church and Schools helped to launch Grace Lutheran High School where my son attends. He is a hard-working, dedicated professional who relates well with students and families.” Another parent of students at Grace shared, “Pastor Dinger worked with the members of the congregation and school families to build and share the dream of the high school. Pastor Dinger’s leadership continued with his service as Pastor and Headmaster during the new high school’s first two years.”

LCMS Northwest District Executive Director Jim Scriven affirmed Pastor Dinger’s leadership. “Pastor Dinger is everything we could hope for from a pastor regarding his engagement and involvement in school ministry. His passion for schools as a primary avenue for teaching the faith, in his congregation and out into the community, shines continuously.”

Ministries are strengthened when the leaders walk together. Pastor Dinger shared, “They [the faculty, staff and volunteers of Grace Lutheran Schools] welcome the unchurched, dechurched, even other faiths, teach them to read, compute, create and explore, but always to know Jesus and God’s grace. After the Means of Grace, schools are the greatest gift of the LCMS.”

The NLSA School Shepherd Award was created in 2015 to recognize and uphold faithful school shepherds who lead churches and schools with a shared vision for spreading the Gospel message of salvation through faith in Christ with the hope and promise of eternal life for everyone.

NLSA School Shepherd Honorees

- › 2016 **Rev. Kevin Jud**
- › 2017 **Rev. Peter Schmidt**
- › 2018 **Rev. Phillip Baerwolf**
- › 2019 **Rev. Joseph Cunningham**
- › 2020 **Rev. Jonathan Dinger**



Computer File



Supporting the Technology (and the Parents)

It's **one thing** to implement technology in the classroom or with remote learners working from a distance. It's another thing entirely to effectively support what it is that was put in place throughout the entirety of the school year. This may seem like an extremely simplistic and obvious statement; however, it is essential that we look at all that supporting the technology actually entails both in and out of the classroom.

In a normal year without a pandemic or other major event that interrupts the current in-person educational model prevalent throughout Lutheran education, it would be easy to say that you need to make the support of current technology a focus with students, teachers and parents alike. However, with schools finding themselves leaning ever more heavily on technology to supplant and enhance elements of the traditional school day, it quickly becomes apparent that support of technology looks greatly different now and into the future.

The idea of support for technology can be broken down into supporting students, teachers and parents, and it is important to look at each segment to be reminded of the key elements and best practices that will enable each to succeed in their

use of technology, especially during this time of increased remote learning.

Students

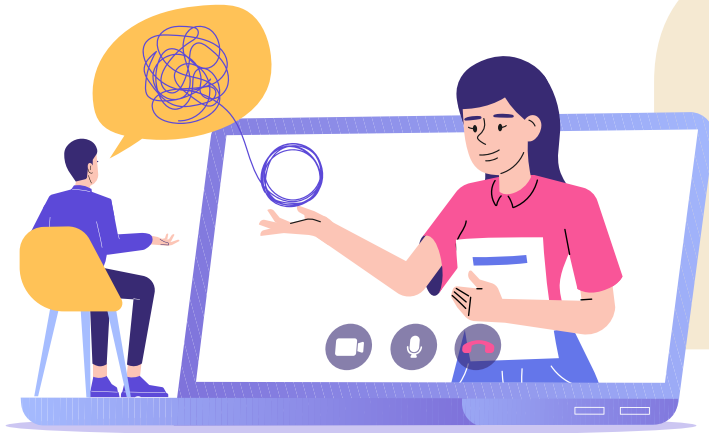
Supporting students' use of technology comes in a variety of forms from physically helping students work with the devices that they have in front of them to teaching them about the tools that they are expected to use both in and out of the classroom. Bearing this in mind, it is key to remember and focus on the following:

- › Stop subscribing to the concept that students are “digital natives” and that they do not need as much technology support as older generations.

The reality is that students are more comfortable with using technology in education and in their everyday lives, but they do not know how to effectively and appropriately use it any more than other users. Thus, it is essential to cover the basics of any new technology that is being implemented in the classroom and to not assume they know how to use it.

- › Develop a *written-down* system for students to ask for help when it comes to using technology both in the classroom and outside of it. Creating an understanding with students that





“If a technology or a process is complicated for parents, the technology is no longer helpful – it is a hindrance.”

no questions are too basic and that all levels of understanding will be supported goes a long way in creating an atmosphere of support for any issues they may have. Writing it down makes sure that everyone is on the same page, from the teacher to the students.

› Come up with a time for students to explore new ways of using any technologies that they utilize in the classroom. So often teachers simply introduce something for a specific task or project and never give students the ability to internalize it and find ways that it can be used to better demonstrate their learning from another area of their schooling. Allowing students to “play” gives them the opportunity to make connections and network their skills.

Teachers (“Staff”)

Whatever you call your people working with students and in your school building (i.e., teachers, staff, aides, leadership), it is important to remember that they need just as much technology support as students and parents. Simply because they are staff does not exempt them from having questions and needing support. Be sure to keep in mind the following:

› Find a way to make time for both specific professional development and unstructured internalization time if you are an administrator. Structured professional development will give the concrete skills needed to work with and understand the technology, while internalization time will allow teachers to think about how they can best implement that technology in their curricula and classrooms. Time is scarce and time is valuable. However, in order

to effectively implement technology in the classroom and any technology needed for remote learning, teachers and staff need to have the time.

› Make technology support available for all comfort levels. More importantly, don’t just schedule it — dedicate and communicate specific times when asking questions is on the agenda rather than just an if-you-have-questions time.

› Engage with staff and make them a part of the growth and development process when it comes to technology. Everyone who works in education is able to bring something different to the table when it comes to internalizing and implementing technology, so be sure to leverage everyone’s knowledge. Find times for staff to present on how they are using a specific technology for learning, enable staff to observe each other and have them develop technology learning plans for themselves.

Parents

In the past, supporting parents may have been as limited as sponsoring a technology training session at the beginning of the year for new parents or scheduling quarterly or monthly parent education events where technology or social media was a focus. It’s probably pretty obvious that this is not the case today. Instead, parents need a different type of support in the age of remote learning and increased school usage of technological tools, and it is important to focus on the following ideas and best practices:

› Keep it simple. Period. If a technology or a process is complicated for parents, the technology is no longer helpful — it is a hindrance. All technology

should disappear into the background and the reason for its use should prevail. If this is not the case, it needs to be made simpler — end of story.

- › Come up with the list of technology that your students or parents will use for the year and stick with it. Parents are creatures of habit as much as anyone else (and maybe more so!), and jumping back and forth between technologies, or constantly changing things, is not helpful and can actually be detrimental moving forward. Sticking with a specific list of tools that everyone will be using and needs to learn will go a long way in adoption and acceptance by parents. Early communication of this list will help as well — the earlier the better.
- › Come up with a professional learning plan for parents that can be implemented throughout the year, if time and resources permit. Whether it includes in-person learning events or virtual resources for parents throughout the year, come up with a schedule and plan for parent learning, and share it with parents. That way they know when they need to engage to learn more, and you have another touch point with parents and families throughout the year that is beneficial to them personally.

Beyond the direct support of technology with parents, it is important to focus on one other item when it comes to supporting parents in the time of remote learning: flexibility. If the last months have shown us anything, it is that we all need to be flexible not only in our own lives but also in working with others to appreciate the challenges that they may be facing. Simply being understanding and flexible when



supporting parents goes a long way in your continued interactions and relationship building. While this may be most readily apparent when it comes to dealing with communication or technology, it holds true for all elements of support of the family for anyone working in Lutheran education.

Remember, at the start of this year's *Computer File* articles I issued a challenge. When each month's article is published, I want to you to read through it, find something pertinent to you and your specific situation and then post about it on social media to start a constructive discussion with your peers. As educators we know well that learning only takes place after the internalization of topics and having our thoughts and ideas challenged (or being forced to defend them). Thus, it is essential that we reflect on, internalize, express and have constructive discourse on how the topic will impact our ministry both today and in the future.

Computer File VOL. 20, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Matthew Bergholt Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



SENT TO SERVE **MATTHEW 20:28**

FOCUS: Freed to Serve. Galatians 5:13

Joseph (Gen. 37–47)

Before You Teach

In his youth, Joseph demonstrated arrogance and superiority toward his brothers. Yet, he was chosen and shaped by God to rescue and lead — not only the Israelites, but also a large portion of the ancient world. Like Joseph, we have shortcomings. Yet, forgiven and loved, we are called by God to extend His grace to others. What follows is a condensed version of the Joseph narrative(s). Marvel at the unwrapping of God’s plan for His people ... US!

Welcome/Greeting

Greet each child upon arrival. Doing so positively shapes the child’s outlook for the day. **Good morning, child of God! I am so very happy you are here!**

Gathering

Gather children in your worship area. Sing. Pray. Introduce the biblical narrative. **The Bible tells us God is with us all the time and has a plan for each of us. Today we learn about God’s plan for Joseph, who had 11 brothers.**

Tell the Story

DIRECTIONS: Search the Internet for “images, Joseph and his brothers.” Print and use to tell this narrative. Then, place images for children to review individually or to retell the narrative to one another.



Joseph’s father loved him more than his other sons. Joseph’s brothers were very jealous. One day, Joseph told his brothers about a dream in which he and his brothers were tying bundles of grain in the field. Joseph’s bundle stood up, and his brothers’ bundles gathered around and bowed down to his bundle. His brothers hated him, saying “Are you going to rule over us?” Then Joseph had another dream in which the sun, moon and stars bowed down to him. When Joseph told his dreams to his family, his father scolded him, saying, “Shall I and your mother and brothers bow down to you?” One day Joseph’s father gave him a beautiful coat of many colors.

His brothers hated Joseph even more! Seeing Joseph coming, his brothers took the coat from him, threw Joseph into a pit and later sold him as a slave. Joseph was taken to the country of Egypt, but God was always with him. Years later, according to God's plan, Joseph became a leader in Egypt. At that time there was no rain. Food plants could not grow. People and animals were thirsty and starving. Hearing there was food to buy in Egypt, Joseph's brothers traveled there, more than once. Meeting Joseph, they did not know he was their brother. Eventually Joseph told them who he was. God had a plan for Joseph to serve God's people, rescuing them from starvation. God protected Joseph, guiding and freeing him to be God's helper.

God protects us, sending Jesus to rescue and free us from our sin, so we can be God's helper. God is always with us. We tell others the Good News about Jesus' love.

Pray

Children repeat each phrase after you.

**Father in heaven,
You're my strength and my strong shield.
By Your grace my sins are healed.
Thank You for unfailing love,
Sent to me from heav'n above. Amen.**

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

PRE-K & K: "The Lord is my strength and my shield" (Ps. 28:7).

GRADES 1 & 2: "The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped" (Ps. 28:7).



(Note: A shield protects. We can trust God to protect us and provide for our needs.)

Activities

Create: You will need: Red, white and blue construction paper; traceable patterns (9"-diameter circle, medium heart and medium cross). Make shields. A shield **protects**. God **protected** Joseph. God **protects** us, sending Jesus to rescue us from sin. Directions: Older children trace and cut shapes from construction paper (red hearts, white crosses, blue circles). Precut the shapes for younger children. All ages adhere a cross to a heart and onto the circle/shield. Display with Ps. 28:7.

DO: Joseph's brothers were mean to him. God wants us to be kind to each other. Together make a list of **kind** words, phrases and/or actions toward others (e.g., "May I please ...," "Thank you," "I forgive you," "Come, play with us," "How can I help?").

SING: "I'm With You" (LOSP, P. 32); "It's Good to Give Thanks" (LOSP, P. 61).

CAMP SERVE: Connect with local food banks. Address needs, inviting broad-based support and participation (school, congregation, community). Celebrate opportunities God places before you.

Sending

YOU WILL NEED: A shield. See "Activities: Create."

Gather children in your sending circle. Review the day. Invite children to pray as the shield is passed and received, or to silently pass it along. Dismiss, saying to each, **Jesus is with you.**

Live the Story

Reflect on God's guidance and direction in your life. Share your faith story!

Early Childhood Devotions

VOL. 25, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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



SENT TO SERVE Serving by Supporting



As the people of God, we know that we should help those who are less fortunate than we are.

We can do this in many ways. We can give money on a regular basis to organizations that offer services to those in need. We can collect items from around our houses and from within our neighborhoods to donate to an agency that provides services to the needy. We could join a society that supports a special need and volunteer regularly for that organization. We could also do special timely service projects by working locally or going overseas.

There are many ways in which we can give spiritual, physical, emotional and financial support to those who are experiencing unfortunate situations. As parents we want to instill the value of serving others in our children. Here are some guidelines, each inspired by a verse of Scripture, that can inspire us as we seek to be people who are “Sent to Serve” and to train up our children to be the same.

A Kind Approach — As we would attempt to support people in difficult situations, we can’t possibly know their entire story. However, starting with gentle words and genuine caring, we can serve them without rendering judgement. In so doing we follow the words of Jesus to support those who could be considered “the least of these” (MATT. 25:40).

A Timely Approach — Many times, support and service are needed immediately. A natural disaster takes place unexpectedly, a personal tragedy occurs or a long-term crisis hits a breaking point — and there is a need for supplies and monetary support. To be able to respond in the moment is critical. To give what is needed most is acting in accord with the words of Jesus to give someone “a cup of water” (MARK 9:41).

A Wise Approach — We need to be sure we are giving and supporting others for reasons that are not self-serving. There can be noticeable acclaim in our society for those who are generous. There are also those who offer support as anonymous donors. These are people who give to those in need in such a way as to “not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret” (MATT. 6:3-4)

Opportunities to serve others as the sent people of God are all around us! As we render service as adults, we model and teach the value of such service to the next generation. Children learn not just through instruction, but also by doing and by watching their parents.

May we all step forward, modeling for our children the use of the gifts and resources that God has blessed us with, to serve and support those who are less fortunate, through our kind actions, timely support and wise giving.

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY //

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

PROJECT TITLE: CHARTING OUR SUPPORT FOR OTHERS

PURPOSE

To engage family members in an activity that allows them to intentionally plan how they will support, care for and assist those in need.

OPENER

Ask the following questions in your family setting to get a conversation going.

- › What are some things you like to do for others? Why?
- › What are some things that need to be done around here? In our community or church?
- › Who are some people you know who might need some help?



FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY: Reproduce the chart below onto a tag-board or piece of newsprint so that all the members of the family can easily see and participate.

DIRECTIONS: Talk as a family about service projects you might want to do, concerns or situations you can pray for as a family and special financial support that you could offer in the six months ahead. Write them down in the appropriate place on the chart. When done, hang the chart for all to see in your home and then highlight them with a marker when they are accomplished.

CLOSING PRAYER



At the close of the family session, have an adult or older sibling say the following echo prayer, phrase by phrase, with the rest of the family repeating the words.

Dear Jesus, You are the servant of all. Thank You for dying on the cross, saving us from our sins and giving us eternal life. Help us in this life to serve others, support those in need and love others, as You have loved us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

BIBLICAL INSPIRATION:

In your family, have an adult or older child read the following verses from the Bible: Matt. 25:40, Mark 9:41, Matt. 6:3-4.

What do these verses say about helping others? How do they inspire you to serve others?

	Pray For: 	Give To: 	Go and Do: 
Daily			
Weekly			
Monthly			
Special Occasions			



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Inclusion Strategies: Circle of Friends

In our Fearfully and Wonderfully Made series this year, the idea of inclusion in our Lutheran school communities has been introduced and connected with Scripture and the importance of communication has been stressed.

True inclusion involves not only having students with disabilities physically present in our schools, but also creating an environment where these students belong and are valued in the same way as their peers. One important aspect of this is friendship. It is difficult for students with disabilities to feel they belong in an environment if they do not have friendships in the classroom and school. However, developing friendships is often not easy for many students. Having a specific strategy, such as creating a circle of friends for a student with a disability, is an effective way to build an inclusive setting.

When starting to build a circle of friends, make sure to involve the student's parents. Let them know about your plan, and what information you plan to share with the other students in the class. Some parents may not want other students to know specific information about their child's disability, so be respectful of their wishes before talking with your class. A great way to approach building a circle of friends is to have a conversation with all your students about the way God created each and every one of them in His image. Have students list the strengths of other classmates and how they all contribute to the school. You can also talk about the idea of friendship and how to be a good friend. This may sound elementary, but it serves as a great reminder for older students as well.



After that conversation, work with the student's parents to discuss the best strategy for the next step. Some parents may want to identify potential friends for their child's circle of friends privately, while others may be open to the teacher having a conversation with the class without the student present to ask for volunteers to be in "Johnny's" circle of friends. If parents help to identify specific people in the class who they feel might be good friends, ask those students if they would be willing to be included in the circle of friends.

Once there are a few students (no more than five or six) identified to be in the circle of friends, set up scheduled times during the week for the student and his circle of friends to meet. This could be during recess time or other time during the week when an adult can be with the group to supervise and get the group started as needed.



Friendships will not necessarily happen just because the students are physically together on a regular basis. Many times, it is helpful for there to be a specific social skill to practice or a certain activity the students can do together in an effort to learn about each other. This also helps the student with a disability practice interacting with his or her peers appropriately, and it benefits the other students as well!

The student with a disability may be the focus of the circle of friends, but it is also important to make sure she is not viewed as being less valuable than others in the circle. One great way to stress that all students are equally valuable and loved by God is to find ways for the developing friendships to be reciprocal. Ask the other students to identify areas they have challenges in, whether that is related to academics or not, and determine if there are ways “Johnny” could help with that challenge. Others in the group can offer to help other students with their challenges as well. For example, another student in the group may have trouble with multiplication facts, but “Johnny” has those memorized backward and forward. However, he needs help collecting his work and packing his backpack at the end of the day. Encourage these two students to use their gifts to help each other and provide specific times of the day when they can put this into practice. The goal is that, over time, this becomes natural, and all students begin to recognize gifts in others. With time and effort, the interactions between the students in the circle of friends extend to other non-scheduled times, and students in the group are encouraged to

invite “Johnny” to sit with them at lunch or play at recess. If challenges are observed in these interactions, they could be addressed and practiced during the specific circle of friends time as well.

God created each of us to be fearfully and wonderfully made; however, it is not always easy for students to see that and include others whom they view as different. When students are valued for the strengths they bring to the classroom and develop friendships, they have a greater sense of belonging and true inclusion occurs.



For more in-depth information on creating a circle of friends, the All Belong Center for Inclusive Education has published a helpful guide ([allbelong.org/product/circle-of-friends-manual](https://www.allbelong.org/product/circle-of-friends-manual)). Also, reach out to LSEM at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at [luthsped.org](https://www.luthsped.org) and let us know how we can support your ministry’s efforts at inclusion!

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made VOL. 4, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Kara Bratton Designer: Frank Kohn

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Nurturing Trust



“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (PROV. 3:5-6).

As we consider the faith skill of trust, it is worth remembering that the Gospel both invites and creates faith. This directive of Proverbs can make us believe it is our responsibility to trust, or to teach our children to trust. Trust is a gift from God that sustains us and points us toward Him for our help. Trust is essential to healthy development for our children. Using this verse, let’s examine the benefits of this faith skill.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart”

We characteristically see trust as a skill related to emotion. Children who trust their childcare provider, for example, are emotionally secure when separated from

parents. Trust is important for a feeling of calm, but it is also a fundamental skill for learning. Infants need to trust their parents to learn from them. Similarly, children need to trust teachers, youth leaders, coaches and pastors to learn from them. When humans trust another person, we are able to engage in joint attention where both brains are focused on the same subject. Joint attention is the seat of learning. When parents and infants first interact, they align their emotions to begin the process of joint attention. The infant is learning to trust with her heart and with her mind.

“Do not lean on your own understanding”

This aspect of trust is the hard part, but it is every bit essential. How does a child trust a teacher if he is trying to control the class’s attention, the teacher’s work or the assignments given? Trust would not be a valuable skill if it were always easy to attain. Learning to trust an authority figure means learning to do things we do not like, agree with or feel are necessary. The Fourth Commandment urges obedience, but it also teaches the benefit of doing so: wellness and long life.

We can teach our children to obey those in authority without demanding blind obedience that might put them at risk. However, trust comes before the discernment necessary for a child to determine the difference between an action that is wrong and an action that is not liked. Teach your child to show respect and to ask “why” rather than complain. The more a child understands the “why,” the better he will be to determine if this person warrants complete trust. For your part, take the time to get to know your child’s teachers, administrators and coaches. Support their decisions and help your child to grow as an individual. Show these people respect, so you model healthy trust for your child.

“In all your ways acknowledge him”

Trusting in fellow fallen humans is trickier than trusting in a perfect God. We know that God will never fail us nor break His promises; we know that other people will fail. Yet, it is essential to teach your child how to trust in terms of obedience, how to forgive in times of failure and how to discern if a person is not worthy of trust. This aspect of trust develops over time. It is sometimes learned when we fail the trust someone has in us. Learning to recognize our sins and weaknesses and to let our guilt point us to God's forgiveness is a perfect moment for learning how to trust other imperfect humans. Our trust is first in God. That trust leads us to ask for His guidance in dealing with others.

Part of modeling trust is establishing a strong relationship with your children, so they know they can come to you with uncomfortable information about someone in authority. When children have learned how to trust and be trusted, they will better know when to ask for help with someone who cannot be trusted.

“He will make straight your paths”

These words are a similar assurance to those found in the Fourth Commandment. Straight paths and long lives are not promises to remove struggles or challenges. Trusting in God does not mean that He will answer every prayer with a "yes!" Trust means we accept the "no" with a sense of comfort that God knows best; He wants what is good for us.

Reinforce to your children that trust is not only about respect and obedience, but also about acceptance and comfort. When we feel we must make things go our own way, we do not have comfort. Instead, we feed a constant sense of anxiety as we must always be planning the next step and manipulating our world. Trusting in God, and in those He puts in authority over us, will bring both comfort and emotional wellness.

Gratitude is a strong component of trust. Daily prayers of thanks for the people in our lives who teach us and keep us safe — even when we don't appreciate what they are asking us to do — will go a long way in bringing about the peace that we find in trust.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Parent Pages VOL. 20, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2020

Writer: Dr. Kim Marxhausen Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Professionally Speaking



Sent to Serve – With Strong Staff

It's the playoffs. Game 7. The series is tied. It's the bottom of the ninth. Man on first. Two out. The two-strike pitch is shot into the gap in left center. The runner from first rounds second and comes barreling into third with the crowd and the bench calling, "Send him! Send him!" And send him is what the third base coach does ... for the winning run. The roar of the crowd is deafening. The celebration of the players at home is a happy sight.

Send him. Send him.

Soon principals will be working with their boards on calls and contracts for next school year. We will find again that the pool of teachers is small. However, the task remains to ensure that teaching the faith will be accomplished with a staff of committed and dedicated teachers. We prayerfully go about the process of gaining a list of candidates and matching the talents of those on our list with the needs of the school. Two things must be considered as we work on staffing.

First, it's good to consider what makes a strong teacher. Being a team player has grown to be understood as integral to putting together a staff. Patrick Lencioni (founder and president of "The Table Group") codified an effective team player with the following descriptors: Humble, Hungry, Smart. Lencioni says that humble team players don't look for credit; they look for the good of the team. Hungry team players are driven to get things done and to work for the good of the team. Smart team



members constantly learn, ask questions, listen to those in the network and behave as team members.

It would be quite a teaching staff if it was filled with Lencioni's team players! Imagine a group of teachers that exhibit each of these characteristics:

Humble: Imagine a team of teachers who are practicing forbearance (St. Paul's word). How about a staff that is so confident in their abilities and faith life that it transfers to a faculty meeting of active listening to each member of the staff. A humble team might even mean that there isn't a scheduling grab for the earliest parent teacher conferences so a three-day weekend is possible. Humility is a valuable part of every collective team as it exhibits sacrifice of self for the good of others.

Hungry: Hungry staffs have goals in mind ... and those goals are directed by mission and planning. Hungry staffs use their humility to give and take so that the process moves forward. Hungry team members celebrate the efforts of each of their colleagues because the results

will be for the betterment of the school. Hungry team members don't show complacency.

Smart: Smart team members demonstrate a need to learn. They read. They listen to podcasts and webinars. They aren't satisfied with an average performance. Smart team members recognize a need and feed their hunger with skills, knowledge and wisdom.

Secondly, we in Lutheran school leadership need to consider our response to the smaller pool of teachers. It might be helpful to realize that the Church has dealt with this issue before. LCMS President Rev. Friedrich Wyneken made this appraisal in 1857 about teaching — and it could ring in our ears as being true today: “He who realizes under what difficult conditions this thankless office, humanly speaking, is performed in our country, must praise the Lord all the more that there still are men who in love to the Lord choose and faithfully carry out this office ... May God ... give us those people who with joy, love and faithfulness take on the holy office of a teacher with its exacting duties” [August C. Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 93].

Thankless? Teaching as a vocation is as tough as it has ever been. Our culture has a lack of respect for authority — any authority — and teachers generally experience low compensation. Couple this with too many teachers and church workers who lack enthusiasm for promoting teaching and administration, and we, too, could echo the message of Wyneken.

That being said, thanks and accolades can be a rich support for those in ministry — and maybe thanks and encouragement could help the problem. For those leading boards, it would be wise to consider a review not just of salary and benefits but also anniversary recognitions, professional days and support for continuing education.

In the scenario described in the first paragraph, “Send him!” was done with enthusiasm and the result was met with great joy. It might be time for each of us to step aside, get our biases out of the way, and let the Lord of the Church do His work so we can celebrate a resurgence of willing workers.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Professionally Speaking // NOVEMBER 2020

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Erica Schwan

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Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod // 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295 // 314-965-9000 // lcms.org

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Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



Freed and Chosen to Serve “THROUGH LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER” (GAL. 5:13).



November Theme: God chose people long ago to serve.

Bible Story: Joseph saves food in Egypt (GEN. 41:1-49; 42:1-47:28).

What it teaches us: God planned for Joseph to assist Pharaoh to save food during the famine — for Egypt and the known world at this time (Joseph’s family too). God chose His Son, Jesus, to save the world from sin and its consequences through His life, suffering, death and resurrection. God has a plan for us too — to love Him and help/serve others.

Prepare to teach

- › **Read** the story in the references and, if possible, a study Bible.
- › **Think and Pray:** Ask God to help as you share the story of Joseph with the children. Tell them, too, of Jesus, whose example of helping /sharing His love and forgiveness with others is there for us to emulate. Encourage the children to share and help/serve each other during snacks and meals and, before eating, to take time to pray, thanking God for the food He provides.

WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

You will also need:

- › **Little Ones Sing Praise** (LOSP), copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.
- › **Picture of Jesus** (find one doing an internet search)
- › **Pictures:** find pictures online of Joseph, Pharaoh, Joseph collecting food, Joseph sharing food and Joseph sharing food with his brothers.

Gather for Worship

Sing (use melody “Mulberry Bush”): **Boys and girls, come sit with me ... Boys and girls, come sit with me, right here on the floor.**

Invocation: Sing (using melody from above): **We gather here in God’s name...Father, Son and Spirit, too.**

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

Use pictures suggested above with tree cookies or glove puppet.

- › Show Joseph. **God chose Joseph a long time ago — to be Pharaoh’s helper; the Bible says so.**
- › Show Joseph with the Pharaoh. **God helped Joseph know what to do — save lots of food; the Bible says so.**

- › Show Joseph sharing food. **God helped Joseph know what to do — share all the food; the Bible says so.**
- › Show Joseph with his brothers. **God helped Joseph know what to do — share food with his brothers; the Bible says so.**
- › Show picture of Jesus. **God chose Jesus, His own Son, to be — everyone’s Savior; the Bible says so.**

What the Story Teaches: Joseph saved food for the people to eat when none would grow. Joseph was happy to give them the food he saved. Invite the children to follow Joseph’s example of sharing food (e.g., serve meals family style; encourage children to pass/share). During His life on earth, Jesus helped/served many people. He gave them food to eat. He made sick people well and sad people happy. He was hurt, died on a cross and came alive again for us. God helped Joseph share and God helps us share too.

Song to Sing: “The Lord Is Good to Me” (LOSP, P. 16).

Time to Pray

Thank You, God, for food to eat that’s good for us and tastes so sweet. Please help us to share with hungry people everywhere. Amen.

Closing/Benediction

(Use “Mulberry Bush” tune.) **Now it’s time to say goodbye ... Now it’s time to say goodbye. Remember God loves — and cares — for you.**



CURRICULAR MATERIALS //

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

S Science and Nutrition

- Put potting soil in the sensory table and use gardening tools.
- Serve different kinds of bread (e.g., wheat, corn, taco shells); remember to pray before eating, thanking God for food He provides.

T Technology

- Look for tools we use to plant (mini-shovels, rakes, watering cans, etc.) to use in the sensory table.

R Reading and Language Arts

- **Books:** *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Kraus (Scholastic, 1945); *The Little Red Hen* (e.g., edited by Diane Mudrow (Golden Books, 2001)).
- **Rhyme:** Muffin Man – if you don't know the rhyme, check online.

E Engineering

- Joseph's workers built structures to save food. Ask children what structures are built today. Find pictures of silos on the internet to share.

A Arts (art, music and physical education)

- **Art:** Make sun catchers: cut out pictures of foods (from magazines, newspapers, online, etc.). Invite children to choose and place favorites on sticky side of an 8.5-by-11-inch piece of clear contact; cover with a second piece with sticky sides together. Include a copy of the prayer from "Time to Pray."
- **Music and large motor:** Create actions to do while picking up faux/real food and putting it in baskets while singing, "Picking up Paws, Paws (change to various food items); put them in a basket."

CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

Encourage families to pray before eating, thanking God for food He provides. Include sample prayers. Also encourage them to pick up something extra to donate to a local food bank when food shopping with their child.



M Mathematics

- Identify and count faux food items in the housekeeping center; sort by color and count how many of each color.

S Social Studies

- God helped Joseph save food. Who saves food for us today? Farmers, farmers' markets, grocery stores; make a store using food items from the housekeeping center.



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | SENT TO SERVE

Sent to Serve Cooperatively



“As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ”

(2 COR. 8:23).

The Apostle Paul experienced ministry situations (Jerusalem Council and separation from Barnabas in Acts 15) where there were potential conflicts. Cooperation for the sake of the Gospel kept the focus on carrying out the mission. In 2 Cor. 8:23 Paul notes the cooperation with Titus, his “partner and fellow worker.”

Focus on the Good Shepherd: There is no cooperation in salvation!

“Decision theology” makes the unbiblical suggestion that we cooperate in our salvation. The Explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed (*Luther’s Small*

Catechism with Explanation © 1991 CPH) says, “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him” (P. 147). The explanation continues that the work of the Holy Spirit leads us to the truth of the Gospel and creates saving faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Good Shepherd gave His life for the undeserving sheep.

Lutheran schools proclaim clearly the condemnation of the law and the rescue through the atoning work of Jesus. The Spirit who leads us to faith and keeps us in the faith is also the Spirit who brings about the cooperation necessary for effectively sharing the Gospel in and through the Lutheran school.

School Shepherd as Cooperative Leader

The school shepherd is called to be the doctrinal supervisor and spiritual leader. The Rite of Installation (*Lutheran Service Book Agenda*, P. 179) includes the promise that “all your preaching and teaching and your administration of the Sacraments will be in conformity with the Holy Scriptures and these Confessions.” The promise also includes to “faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine.” Lutheran schools teach Lutheran doctrine in the classroom and in all contexts.

The spirit of cooperation in these tasks is emphasized in 1 Peter 5:2–4 (a text often read at the rite of installation): “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you ... not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”



“Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father’s throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims
are one, Our comforts and
our cares.”

(LSB 649:1–2)

Effective school shepherds carry out their ministry in a spirit of cooperation with school principal, school boards, teachers and others associated with the school ministry.

Cooperation in School Ministry

KEYS FOR COOPERATION IN SCHOOL MINISTRY INCLUDE:

Cooperation means humility. Each role and task in ministry is done in the name of Jesus. All seek to bring glory to and to grow His kingdom. It is a privilege to serve Him. Pastor, principal, teacher and others serve faithfully and humbly. Seeking to build one’s own kingdom rather than work in Jesus’ kingdom creates conflict.

Cooperation means definition. In multi-staff, team-ministry situations, position descriptions are important. The pastor carries out the duties of his office; the principal handles the administrative tasks of the school. While there is always fluidity in roles, position descriptions provide direction and accountability.

Cooperation means communication. The most important team in a school ministry setting is the pastor-principal team. It is important to set specific times for dialog: “Let’s meet every Tuesday afternoon at 3:30.” While emergencies sometimes change the plan, the set schedule makes the meeting more likely. Casual connections in the routine of the week are also important: “How’s your day going?” “How can I pray for you today?”

Cooperation means celebration. School shepherds affirm and celebrate the gifts of others. We have the same Spirit but different gifts. Our gifts are not in competition but are meant to support the ministry and complement the gifts of others.

Cooperation means intervention. Lutheran school ministry involves working with sinners [(“of whom I am the foremost” (1 TIM. 1:15)]. Miscommunication will take place. Conflicts will arise. When misunderstanding occurs, it is important to begin the dialog immediately. If the conflict has created significant strain on the relationships, the district office or other supportive agencies should be contacted to facilitate a process of reconciliation. It is always best to be proactive rather than to have tensions and mistrust build.



Sharing Cooperative Thoughts

- ◆ How is ministry cooperation evident in your school setting?
- ◆ What steps could be taken to strengthen team ministry in your school setting?



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



Thankful to Serve

“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (MATT. 20:28)



Wow! What a Scripture message — that Jesus came to Earth to serve, and He came to serve you! His death and resurrection are sacrificial and joy-filled events that God planned because of His great love for you. Indeed, Christ came to serve in a way that could never be replicated. Christ’s love for others is so deep that He served as a ransom.

You are a disciple of Christ. You have been given an honor and responsibility to serve others in a Lutheran school ministry setting. What does this really mean? How does one really serve in ministry, and what does it really look like?

For a few moments, consider the work of Jesus’ disciples. The disciples were individually chosen, called by Christ, to follow Him and assist in His work of sharing the faith. As the calling to be a disciple was revealed to each, what thoughts and feelings to you think they had? They likely didn’t receive a printed job description, nor did they receive a large salary for their work and dedication. The disciples accepted their roles because of their servant hearts. They knew that they had been given something special, something unique, something eternal. The work they would do for God would not always be glamorous or

easy; they would often be ridiculed and hungry. But, in accepting their calling, the disciples knew they would be working for an eternal purpose.

Lutheran schools and congregations are unique in the ministry they carry out. Whether rural or urban, early childhood or university, these Lutheran schools seek to serve a world that needs Jesus. Those who are served through the ministries of your congregations and your schools receive a great blessing that has eternal value. Unfortunately, sin is present in ministry settings and tries to steer those who serve away from their focus. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit is present and provides support to keep eyes focused on what is important: sharing the Gospel message of Christ’s love and salvation.

If you have been in Lutheran ministries for some period of time, you may be familiar with mission festivals, visits from missionaries who are serving overseas or reading materials that help bring the message of missionary work into the homes of families. Today, the mission field is right outside your front door, and, as a Lutheran school educator, you are serving in the mission field: your school building!



You are a servant of Christ, serving others through Lutheran school ministry. Many others are blessed because of your servanthood. Thank you!

Know that because Christ came to earth to serve, His has provided you with the tools you need to serve others too. He has prepared a pathway for you to serve and glorify Him through your work in education. When you serve the students in your classroom by educating them and introducing skills, you are serving Christ. When you serve families by listening to their needs and providing support and guidance, you are serving Christ. When you show genuine care to others in your community through congregational service projects, you are serving Christ.

As you carry out your role of servant, how do you link it together with the concept of being a leader? How do you show you are a servant-leader, as Christ modeled for His disciples? Remember that your words, actions, body language and facial expressions all speak loudly. Be mindful of the reactions you have, the words you share and the company you keep. Let others know you are a servant of Christ by the joy-filled life you live. Let others know you are a servant of Christ by the way you treat others.

Be thankful for the role you have in Lutheran education. Lutheran schools have many unique blessings and benefits that are not present in other organizations or school environments. Faith-filled foundations, rooted in the servanthood of Christ, allow for a strong platform from which your ministry work can spring. Seek to help servanthood take root in the lives of your students too.

Sometimes serving in Lutheran education ministries can be difficult. Long hours, physical labor and budgetary

challenges can make you second-guess your calling into ministry. Do not be anxious; do not worry about the work that has been set before you. God has promised to be present with you in your calling.

Who else do you know who provides acts of service as their occupation? Restaurant servers, auto mechanics, medical personnel or anyone in the service industry could be on your list. These people may also not have glamorous positions, but the work they do is significant and meaningful; their work provides service that is needed by others. The same holds true for you; you provide a service that others need — education. But, know that what you provide meets not only physical and earthly needs, but also spiritual.

This November, have a mindset of thanksgiving as you celebrate the service you provide others. You are a servant of Christ, serving others through Lutheran school ministry. Many others are blessed because of your servanthood. Thank you!

Dear Lord,

Thank You for calling me to be a servant. Thank You for sending me to serve in my school and congregation. Give me the endurance, energy and passion needed for the tasks You have in store for me. Send Your Holy Spirit upon me so that I may move forward in my acts of service toward others unselfishly and full of love. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Time Out for Directors VOL. 25, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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