



APRIL 2021

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

School Ministry



Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



So Many Blessings!

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (ROM. 8:28).

One year ago, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. Schools pivoted nearly overnight to work from home and provide remote learning for the students entrusted to their care. Families also adjusted to the new platform with schooling at home. This all contributed to the massive amount of change that occurred and the feeling that nothing would ever be the same again.

In a survey conducted last fall, schools responded to the impact of the pandemic.¹

- › More than 93 percent of Lutheran schools ended in-person classes last spring.
- › Less than 4 percent of schools opened classrooms before the end of the 2019–20 school year.
- › By contrast, 82 percent of schools resumed in the fall with fully in-person classes.
- › The remaining 18 percent offered remote learning or a hybrid.

Completing the 2019–20 school year remotely and opening in the fall of 2020 with face-to-face learning brought great challenges for schools across the

country. Principals, directors and teachers had to adjust the delivery of education while providing immense support for families facing job loss and the fear of becoming ill.

Developing practices to meet health guidelines in order to provide in-person classes for the 2020–21 school year challenged schools to create plans that could be adjusted and adapted as the impact of the pandemic continued throughout the year. Class sizes were reduced, social distancing was established in both classrooms and open areas and visitation by family and community members was restricted to ensure a safe environment in schools. Not surprisingly, this process has been exhausting for educators.

And yet through it all, schools have been able to offer in-person classes successfully this year. The blessing is that everyone has been working together. Families were thankful that in-person classes prevailed and worked closely with teachers. Congregation and community members volunteered to assist educators with the additional safety protocols. *“Even as 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).* Rejoicing in the Good News that Jesus was “Sent to Serve,” students, parents and teachers have been blessed, and in turn are “Sent to Serve” others in His name, carrying a message of hope for the future.

¹ LCMS Rosters, Statistics and Research Services conducted a survey of LCMS Schools in Sept. 2020. This information was provided by LCMS Research Services.



Computer File



Wrapping Up the Year, Remotely

WHAT A YEAR IT HAS BEEN. I would expect that if you took a moment to reflect on all that you have done over the last 12 months, it would be both enlightening and exhausting. You taught students inside and outside of a physical classroom, your lesson plans changed constantly, you learned numerous new skills and you probably communicated more with parents and students than ever before. For most teachers, the last year has brought more change than the previous five years combined. Like I said: both enlightening and exhausting.

So how do you wrap up a year like this? Last school year's endings were filled with recorded graduation

ceremonies, classroom parties through video conferences and an overall sense of disconnectedness. This year, the majority of Lutheran schools were able to open and remain open throughout the year, albeit with social distancing and occasional remote learning taking place. Even through all of these positive in-person interactions, for many this year still feels "remote" in a number of ways.

Keeping all of this in mind, there are numerous options to ensure that the wrapping up of the year is done with the students in mind while also ensuring that the special sense of community that exists in Lutheran education remains firmly in place. Here are some suggestions to help as you close out this "sort-of-remote" year.



Be Intentional

Whatever you do to end the school year, be intentional about why you are doing it. Reflect on the events of the last year before making decisions about moving forward. Ask questions. Be sure you have input from a variety of sources before coming up with a plan for the end of the year. Don't just do something to do something — have a specific intent that is well developed and thoughtful.

Don't Avoid the Pandemic

I know this sounds wrong, but what I mean is that you shouldn't shy away from including the impact and events of the last year in your message at the close of the school year. Lift up what was great. Allow people to grieve what was lost. Enable people to reflect upon and learn from all of the changes and learning that took place. You don't need to make it the focal point of the close of the year, but it needs to be part of the year-end messaging and communication to give people closure.

Use Technology to Foster Community

Just because you may not be fully remote anymore and have returned to in-person learning, don't simply disregard the use of technology to continue to bring your school community together. Many families may not be able to travel or gather for graduations or other end-of-year celebrations. Throughout the country, schools are still limiting who is able to attend events in person. Vaccines may not yet be available for everyone who would opt to take them. Keeping all of this in mind, use the skills and technology that you invested in over the last year to stream events and create experiences for those who are not able to attend your end-of-year events on campus. Leverage social media posts and conversations to continue the community and relationship-building well beyond the physical walls of your

building. Whatever the case, be sure to continue using the technology you have invested in to foster and build the community that makes Lutheran schools unique.

Take Stock of What You Have Learned

Zoom. Teams. Swivl. Google Meet. The list goes on and on of the skills you have learned over the course of the last year. Be sure to take the time to reflect on the knowledge and skills you have added that have benefited you professionally and also benefitted the learning process of your students. Think about how these skills will serve you in the future and how you can continue to adjust your teaching to better serve the needs of your students. Yes, you can rest after this long year, but don't forget to take some time and also keep learning and developing professionally.

Wrapping up a school year is always hard. It's hard on the teachers, the students and the parents alike. This year it is hard, too, but in new ways. Be sure to be intentional and think through how to make the end of the year special for everyone at your school, and to give glory to God for the many ways in which He has and continues to bless your Lutheran school ministry.

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 well know 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 ourselves reflect on concepts, internalize them, express our thoughts and have constructive discourse on how the topic will impact our ministry both today and in the future.



Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

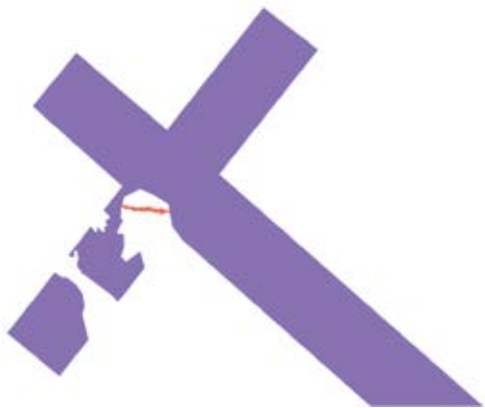


SENT TO SERVE **MATTHEW 20:28**

FOCUS: Freed to Serve. Galatians 5:13

JESUS THE SERVANT SAVIOR Crucifixion and Resurrection

(Matt. 27:33–28:11; Mark 15:22–16:19; Luke 23:27–24:12; John 19:16b–20:18)



Before You Teach

The vertical post of the cross of Christ reminds us that God, in Jesus, planted Himself in our world. The horizontal arm reminds us of God’s arms wrapping us in His forgiving love. The empty cross reminds us of Christ’s resurrection victory. From the foot of the cross, we are sent to serve. We stand — or kneel — at the foot of the cross, teaching this narrative, which is an honor, and a blessing.

Welcome/Greeting

Greet each child upon arrival, **Good morning child of God, today is a “Son-Shine” day!**

Gathering

YOU WILL NEED: A black cloth and a white cloth for your classroom altar. Cover your altar with a black cloth when sharing the narrative of the crucifixion; change to white when celebrating Jesus’ resurrection.

DO: Gather in your worship area. Sing. Pray. Introduce the biblical narrative.

Tell the Story

YOU WILL NEED: Chart paper or white board and appropriate markers (black, yellow or orange).

Standing before Pilate, Jesus was asked if He was King of the Jews. Jesus said “Yes.” Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.” Then Pilate sent Jesus to King Herod. King Herod and the soldiers were mean to Jesus. Jesus said nothing and was sent back to Pilate. Pilate said to the people, “I did not find this man guilty of your charges against Him. Neither did King Herod.”
Draw a black vertical line. But the people shouted, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” Add a black horizontal line, forming a cross. Jesus, who had done nothing wrong, was led away and crucified. While on the cross, Jesus’ love was displayed as He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Hours later Jesus died and was buried.

Extend the horizontal line, and from it add a second vertical line to form a doorway. **A giant stone covered the entryway.** Outline a yellow/orange circle over the doorway.

Three days later, women went to the tomb on Sunday morning and found the giant stone rolled away from the entrance. An angel of the Lord said to them, “Do not be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. Jesus is not here, for He has risen!” Add zig-zag rays to the circle. Fill in the circle with color to be a sun. **The angel told the women to go and tell Jesus’ disciples, “JESUS IS ALIVE!”**

Pray

Include the prayer in home communications.

**Dear Jesus,
On the cross You died for me.
Then You arose on day three.
From my sins You set me free.
Thank You, dearest Jesus! Amen.**

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

PRE-K & K: “He has risen; he is not here” (MARK 16:6).

GRADES 1 & 2: “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him” (MARK 16:6).

Activities

CREATE: “SON-shine.” *You will need:* Bright yellow construction paper; tag board sun patterns (a circle with flame-like rays around the perimeter); a reproducible image of the face of Jesus (Google “Reproducible Head of Jesus”). Size and print images of Jesus for children to glue onto the center of each sun. Precut suns for younger children. Older children trace and cut out their own. Assemble. Display with the words “Shine, Jesus, Shine.” **Jesus lives. He forgives our sins. Jesus’ love shines on us ALL THE TIME. We shine His love to others.**



DO: Teach, practice and use words for seeking and giving forgiveness: “**I’m Sorry for ...** (hurtful words or actions). **Please forgive me.**” And, “**I forgive you because Jesus forgives me.**”

SING: “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today” (LOSP, P. 96).

CAMP SERVE: Make “Son-Shine” (see “Create”) Easter cards imprinted with the words “May the Son shine in your life.” Add the verse “I am the light of the world” (JOHN 8:12). Distribute to shut-ins and others who need encouragement.

Sending

YOU WILL NEED: A “SON-shine” (see “Create”). Gather children in your “Sending Circle.” Invite children to pray as the “Son-shine” is passed and received, or to quietly pass it along. Dismiss saying, **Jesus’ love shines through you to others. GO! SHINE!**

Live the Story

Jesus forgave the people whose words and actions condemned Him to the cross ... US! The Lenten and Easter narratives teach grace — undeserved love. Living in God’s grace, we generously forgive others, and we teach children to do likewise. SHINE!

Early Childhood Devotions

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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

Sent to Sacrifice



As we celebrate the Easter season, we celebrate the sacrifice that Christ made on our behalf. Jesus gave up sitting at the right hand of the Father to come in human form to this earth and made Himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant. He humbled Himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross. Because of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and His victory over the grave, we have an example of sacrificial living and an inspiration to live lives of service and sacrifice that benefit others.

As parents, we certainly want the best for our children, which often requires sacrifice. Being a parent is demanding. We want to give all we can to our children and families, but that is not always possible. We know that going the extra mile is often a goal in our role as parents, but it is not always easy to do, for as parents we juggle so many things every day.

It is natural for us to want to give generously to our families. But, since we can't give them everything, we need to learn to make choices, to give some things up and to set aside other things which then reflect more balance in providing for our families. Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind as we seek balance in our lives as parents:

› **Know that you have options.** We need to realize as parents that we have a variety of choices as we plan for

the way we use resources within our family. God gives us the ability to make choices. We can make God-pleasing choices by seeking His will through personal prayer and devotions.

› **Know how you want to spend your time.** God gives us the gift of time, and we want to make the most of this gift He has given to us. Giving of our time and attention is a precious gift that we want to use wisely and sometimes be prepared to sacrifice for a greater good.

› **Be mindful of the bigger picture.** We need to consider the wider circle of those we have connections with so that they are served through the gifts that God has given to us. We need to remain mindful of our choices of time, talents and treasures help us provide for our immediate family, our extended family, our church, our neighbors and our community.

We read in Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Christ was the perfect example of a sacrificial life. We know that we can never fully live the kind of sacrificial life God’s law requires of us, but through the strength of Jesus our Savior, we pray that we can daily reflect the kind of sacrificial love that Jesus showed to us, in our role as parents and leaders in our homes.

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY //

Gather the family together in a comfortable setting, with no electronic distractions, preferably around a table (or other hard surface) to enjoy the family activity outlined below.

ACTIVITY TITLE: CHOOSING TO SACRIFICE

PURPOSE: To engage family members in an activity that outlines a plan for them to experience sacrificial activity which impacts their daily life.

OPENER:

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

- › What has been one of the best gifts you have received recently? Why do you think someone gave you that gift?
- › What has been one of the best gifts you have given to someone else? Why did you choose to give them that gift?
- › Which did you like the more: giving something or getting something? Why?

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY: CREATING A SACRIFICIAL PLAN THAT FAMILY MEMBERS WOULD BE WILLING TO FOLLOW.

DIRECTIONS:

1. As a family, take a look at the charts below. Please discuss the following questions as you fill out the charts.

- What items/possessions are you willing to give up?
- Who should receive each item? Why?
- What experiences/activities are you willing to give up?
- What would be the benefits for sacrificing these activities?
- Any other reasons you have for giving these things up?

Post this list in your home, in a place where family members can see it often, and be mindful of the target dates, reminding one another of the sacrifices you are all making. Talk to each other about them and pray about them often.

CLOSING PRAYER

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

Father in Heaven, we thank You for Your love, and for sending us Jesus, to be our sacrifice on the cross. Help us to make sacrifices, and to give of ourselves, for the good of others. Create in us, a spirit of service, which comes naturally, and reflects Your love, in helpful ways. In the name of Jesus our Savior, we pray. Amen.

Item/Possession to Give Up	Family Member(s)	Date	Recipient

Experience/Activity to Stop	Family Member(s)	Target Date



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Inclusion Strategies: Modifying Classroom Work



At this point, the team of educators and parents have outlined some individual goals for each student and have created a matrix of which objectives will be worked on in which settings. Modifications to the general education curriculum were briefly discussed in this context, but this type of adaptation should be explored in more depth as part of this process.

As a quick review, *accommodations* are considered to be tools or practices implemented in the classroom that do not change the learning objectives or outcomes for a student. Accommodations simply provide an alternate way for that student to learn the material or demonstrate learning of the same content. For example, having text read out loud, extending time to work on an assignment or having a student dictate answers to questions does

not change the content being learned. Therefore, these are considered accommodations. By contrast, *modifications* are when the learning outcome is being changed for a student, such as a student not being required to solve word problems on a math assignment or having a separate spelling list. This might be the case when a student has what is considered to be more significant disability and will not be able to master the same content as his classmates. This does not mean that it is not appropriate for the student to be in that classroom with her peers but that learning outcomes for those times may need to be modified to be appropriate. Remember to presume competence before making modifications to classroom instruction unless there is evidence that the student needs these adaptations from the outset.

Modifications generally revolve around four concepts: altering content, altering conceptual difficulty, altering the education goals and altering the instructional method. Altering content refers to a student learning content that is related to a grade-level standard, but at a more appropriate level. Teachers may find that reviewing standards from previous grade levels provides a link to the lesson being taught to the majority of the class, but the different standard would modify the content appropriately for a student. Altering the conceptual difficulty is a modification in which a concept is simplified in a way that is appropriate for a student's understanding. For example, if the class is reading a story or news piece, there could be different learning outcomes for different groups of students. The majority of the class may be

expected to write a two-to-three sentence summary, while a few students are expected to write a paragraph with introductory and concluding sentences. It could be expected that the student with modifications draws a picture that demonstrates understanding, albeit at a different level than his peers. Altering the educational goals entails modifying the learning expectations, or what the student is expected to do, with the same materials as her classmates. For example, if the science class is working in small groups on an experiment, the student with modifications could be responsible for measuring the amounts of different liquids to add while doing the experiment, without being responsible for the lab report. That student is working on a different individual goal while still participating in the classroom activity. The last type of modification is altering the instructional method. This means providing a student with a more appropriate form of instruction. For example, if students are asked to read a passage and answer comprehension questions, the student needing modifications could read the passage independently or have it read to him (an accommodation), but the questions are changed to be true/false or fill-in-the-blank rather than open-ended. A passage on the same topic, but written

at a lower level, could also be used with the questions modified in the same way.

Finally, we need to remember the idea of productive struggle. This is as relevant for students with disabilities as it is for other students. There is a lot of learning that takes place as students encounter a new challenge and have to persevere to find a solution. As teachers and parents, we often want to jump in and help, especially when we see a student who we know has challenges encounter a problem. We may then assume it is too difficult, so we feel the pull to lower our expectations or remove that task for the student. We need to give students with disabilities the same opportunities to encounter obstacles and use their problem-solving skills to find solutions on their own as we give to other students. Resist the urge to jump in and provide the solution when they do not seem to get to the answer right away. Their learning grows by solving problems, the same as it does for other students. As with other students, once the productive struggle turns into extreme frustration, anger or being upset, this might be the time to provide assistance and make notes for needed accommodations and modifications for similar activities.



For more specifics recommendation on modifications appropriate for curricular areas, check out *Inclusion in Action: Practical Strategies to Modify your Curriculum* by Nicole Eredics (Brookes Publishing, 2018), the modified lesson examples from the Inclusive Class website (livebinders.com/b/2522900) and additional inclusive resources (livebinders.com/b/116468). Also reach out to Lutheran Special Education Ministries at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at luthsped.org and let us know how we can help you include students with disabilities in your classroom and school.

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Writer: Dr. Kara Bratton Designer: Frank Kohn

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Refresh, Repair and Renew – Outdoors



Circumstances sent us indoors a little more than a year ago. We huddled as families and reduced our public exposure to combat a virus. We learned to do school remotely and to distance our human interaction. It is hard to know how many of the changes we have seen over the last year will be permanent. After staying in our homes for the past season, we might understand — just a little bit — how Noah and his family felt when they left the ark. I imagine they spent as much time as possible outside, feeling the sun on their faces and walking on dirt.

Making changes quickly and adapting to a new idea of "normal" drains our emotional reserves. When we feel depleted, our anxiety levels rise, which creates a ripple effect in our lives as we struggle to find balance. The past year has likely taken its toll on your family. It is

time to replenish our depleted reserves by spending time in God's creation. Time spent outdoors reminds us we have a loving God who provides us with every need and protects us from the evil in the world.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (JOHN 1:1-4).

Our Savior, Jesus, is the Maker of our world. Much of Jesus' work during His time on earth took place outdoors. Imagine the joy and peace from hearing Jesus speak and watching Him heal the sick. It is the same peace we feel when we remember His death on the cross and triumphant resurrection on the third day to save us from sin and bring us eternal life.



When we are outside, we tend to move around and breathe deeply, further adding to the benefits. The result is a recharged mental focus.

When we work and play outdoors, we bombard our sensory brains with information. This includes sights, sounds and smells, but also sensory input from our joints. Because our brains are busy processing this information, that action reduces anxiety. When we are outside, we tend to move around and breathe deeply, further adding to the benefits. The result is a recharged mental focus.

As you make family plans for spring and summer, look for ways to spend more time outdoors. Perhaps you can start by eating meals on the deck or finishing the day with a devotional time sitting on a blanket in a favorite corner of the yard

What about a family project? Can you work together to make that pond, fire pit, garden or treehouse a reality? The hours spent outside and together will be worth the sweat, and the results will pay back over the next few years as your family has another reason to gather together outside.

Perhaps a family event would pique your interest? Family Olympics, an obstacle course, a croquet tournament or a rousing game of backyard dodgeball are all fun ways to enjoy time together outdoors.

What can you do or lead in your neighborhood? A weekly bike parade would be fun to watch and offer a chance to check on neighbors. Bake some cookies to deliver to houses where you know people have been cooped up, or try some neighborhood caroling with favorite Vacation Bible School songs. There are many ways to share God's love in your neighborhood.

Check out what your local area has to offer for outdoor entertainment. Zoos are great fun, and so are nature centers that offer stimulating ways to tour a wooded area or a prairie. Nature parks often offer hikes and scavenger hunts to encourage your family to look for birds, plants and signs of animals. Dig into information about your state parks. You will likely find opportunities for hiking, fishing, horseback riding and more. Even if you stay local, it can be fun to visit all of the city parks. Pack a bag with balls and other outdoor play equipment so you can grab the bag and go.

If you are looking to extend your outdoor time into learning, help your children create a scrapbook with samples of leaves or pictures of things noted on hikes. Plant some flowers and take a photo every day to observe how they grow. Encourage your children to draw what they see outside. This activity will give them practice in looking for details. Choose from several animal and nature apps that allow your child to learn more about what they see in the yard, on a hike, or at the zoo or arboretum. The Audubon Bird Guide and iNaturalist are two great apps for developing an interest in natural science.

“Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth” (1 CHRON. 16:32-33).

When we spend time outside, enjoying our family and enjoying God's creation, we know refreshment in body and spirit. After a year of tucking ourselves away, it is time to run in the sun and feel God's grace shine on our arms and settle into our hearts.



Professionally Speaking



Sent to Serve ... and be served in Divine Service



COVID-19 is _____. There are plenty of descriptions that can be put into that blank, and none of them would be kind. COVID-19 has ruined businesses, caused major upheavals in ways of life and challenged the very society that we have enjoyed. Families have experienced symptoms of the illness ranging from a runny nose to death.

While we share in the sadness of how this pandemic has affected lives, we know the effect it has had on our schools too. Health protocols, schedules changes, professional development specifically on the virus and staff changes have all been experienced by Lutheran schools. The summer of 2020 will be one on which principals will look back and exclaim, "That's why I'm so drained! I never got a break!"

Principals have also taken on counselor duties as teachers express exhaustion from additional duties and parents and students show fear and anxiety.

At one point in this school year, a Listserv email strand shared ways in which administrators were dealing with the mental, physical and emotional exhaustion of their staff. Extra time, special treats, surprises and parent-led lunches were shared. All of the ideas expressed thanks and encouragement.

The strand was extensive, demonstrating the depth of the issue, so it was disappointing to notice that not once did anyone suggest a direct look to God and to lean on His gifts of Word and prayer. Not once. No pastor interceding. No time for faculty prayer.

It might be that those are automatic for a Lutheran school and not seen as unique for dealing with a crisis. However, over the years it becomes more apparent that what is not said is not said, and what is not talked about doesn't go into action.

Are our first reactions pray, praise and give thanks? Lord, have mercy.

So, to this point, let's consider how Lutheran schools model receiving God's gifts and how these gifts are shared in Divine Service. Is this too big of a jump? Doubtful. Lutheran worship is unique in its understanding and practice. If we want to be a strong witness of those that have gone before us, we will find joy and confidence in the liturgy.

Divine service is a history lesson put into action.

With our culture's desire to remove the bad of our history and even to rewrite history, maybe we, too, share with the culture of today a tendency to ignore our history and the realities of the past. But if we embrace history, recognize there is "nothing new under the sun" and enjoy the narratives that demonstrate God's continued grace to fallen man, maybe we would also grow in our love for Divine Service.

Think about it. Our liturgy starts with mission and identity. We begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Why? We remember our Baptism and whom our new lives are joined to. At the same time, we remember Jesus' Great Commission of going, teaching and baptizing. And above all things, we remember that, just as in our Baptism, in Divine Service God is going to do all the serving. It's not our work; it's His. Think of the richness that one sentence already brings! Identity in Christ. Precious in His eyes. Joined with the faithful.

Next, we walk the walk with the saints of old and ascend to Mt Zion. The entrance hymn, the Introit, helps us

connect with the Israelites as they walked the mount to the temple. They sang psalms, hymns that recalled God's goodness and His faithfulness. Then, we remember who we are and who is coming to us, and we join with the angels in Christmas glorias that were sung as Jesus came to be one of us.

We sit as students, eager to hear about God's promises and His Word fulfilled. We hear those Old Testament prophecies, Paul's teaching of the Gospel and Jesus' redemptive work. We listen to the preaching of the lessons and respond with the Church's common confession. We share a creed that unifies us to Scripture, to confessions and to the historical church.

Divine Service is the balm for our teachers' (and our own) exhausted souls and bodies. There we commune with the source of life and strength. There we share with the One who knows life eternal and has made it ready for us, His chosen people.

So why do we shy away from it? Why do we call it old fashioned and out of touch? Nothing could be further from the truth.

As COVID-19 continues to have its effect on everything having to do with our schools, be sure to make worship part of the plan for working through these tough times. Prioritize Bible study. Prioritize prayer — for others and self. "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (PS. 121:1-2).



Professionally Speaking // APRIL 2021

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Erica Schwan

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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).



APRIL THEME

Bible Story: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection
(MATT. 27:33–28:11; MARK 15:22–16:8; LUKE 23:33–24:12;
JOHN 19:16B–20:18).

Focus: God, the Father, chose His Son to serve as the Savior who would free all people from sin, eternal death and the power of evil.

What it teaches us: Jesus willingly served, suffered, died and came alive again for all of us. In response we willingly give thanks and praise.

Prepare to teach

- › **Read** the story in each of the references and, if possible, a study Bible.
- › **Think:** This is the primary focus of Scripture. In the OT, man sins and God promises to send a Savior. In the NT, Jesus, the Savior, comes and does everything God promised. Why? Check out Heb. 12:2.
- › **Pray:** Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us so much. You suffered and died to take away our sins. We're glad You came alive again. Amen.

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 on internet) Jesus' enemies, cross, grave, risen Jesus. Reduce sizes to 2 inches; glue in circle shapes; color; cut out; laminate; cut out; make tree cookies or glove puppets. Use pieces of adhesive Velcro on the back.

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.** Sing “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” (*LOSP*, p. 42).

Bible Story

Show the pictures on the tree cookies/glove as you share the story:

Show Jesus. **God sent Jesus from heaven above — to show everyone His great-big-love.**

Show mean people. **Some-people were mean and told big lies; they said Jesus had to die.**

Show cross. **Jesus-was-nailed-to-a-cross up high. It was sad, the day He died.**

Show grave. **Jesus’ friends took-Him-down, and, laid Him in a grave — sort of like a little cave.**

Show risen Jesus. **Three days later, LOOK AND SEE! Jesus-came-alive for you and for me.**

Chant: **Jesus is alive** three times, getting louder, then shout **Hooray!**

What the Story Teaches: Jesus loves us so much, He was happy to be hurt, die and come alive again for all people.

Song to Sing: (tune: Farmer in the Dell) **Jesus is alive. Jesus is alive. Look with me and you will see, Jesus is alive.** [from Teachers’ Guide for “Celebrate, Jesus Is Alive” by Pam Nummela (P. 21) in the *Together with Jesus* curriculum (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990)]

Time to Pray

Dear Jesus, Thank You for being hurt and dying for us. We’re SO glad You came alive again. 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

- > **Science:** The cross was made from wood. Wood comes from trees: feel bark; look at different kind of trees (e.g., big trees, small trees, trees with needles, leaves). Look around the room for items made of wood.
- > **Snacks:** Add cheese crosses to dinner rolls.

T Technology

- > Examine tools used in woodworking (e.g., hammers, screws/screwdrivers, saws to cut wood).

R Reading and Language Arts

- > **Books:** *The Berenstain Bears & the Easter Story* by Mike and Jan Berenstain (Zonderkidz, 2012); *Bigger! Bigger!* by Leslie Patricelli (Candlewick, 2018); and *The Tool Box* by Anne and Harlow Rockwell (Bloomsbury Children's, 2006).
- > **Action Poem:** "How Much Does Jesus Love Me?" (*Fingers Tell the Story* copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo., P. 26). **Jesus loved us so much He stretched out His arms out on a cross.**
- > **Nursery Rhyme:** Hot Cross Buns

E Engineering

- > In the Bible story, workers made crosses from wood. What can we make from wood? Stack, sort, etc. Have a variety of wooden building materials (e.g., wooden blocks, tree cookies).

A Arts (art, music and physical education)

- > **Art:** Create "Happy Easter" crosses. Invite children to decorate a cross pattern using a variety of items (e.g., Bingo Dabbers, large crayons).
- > **Music:** "Do You Know Who Died for Me" (*LOSP*, P. 93); v. 2 "came alive for me" and v. 3 "helps me serve? Jesus does."
- > **Large Motor:** Make an outline of a cross on the floor using jump ropes or colored adhesive tape. Invite the children to hold and wave scarves as they dance, walk, run and jump around the cross singing happy Easter songs.

M Mathematics

- > Count items made of wood: in the room, on playground, on a walk, etc.

S Social Studies

- > Talk about the feelings exhibited in the story (e.g., sadness when Jesus died, Jesus felt pain when suffering, happiness of Easter).



CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

Encourage parents to begin Easter traditions that center around the biblical story of Easter [e.g., finding Easter eggs (shaped like little caves). Jesus wasn't in the grave; He is alive!]

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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Writer: Judy Williams Designer: Lisa Moeller

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School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | SENT TO SERVE

Sent to Serve Creatively



“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him” (COL. 1:16).

The Creating and Creative Good Shepherd

While the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed highlights the creating work of the Father, the creating role of the Son and Spirit is also celebrated in Scripture. Along with John 1:1–3, this Colossians text teaches of the Creating Christ. The subsequent text emphasizes His re-creating as He came “to reconcile ... all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (COL. 1:20). The creation that was affected by sin was redeemed and restored in Christ.

Lutheran schools worship and teach of the all-powerful God who created all things and the redeeming God who entered creation to bring new life to all who believe in Him. Creative Lutheran schools celebrate and share the creating and re-creating of Jesus.

The Creative School Shepherd

The school shepherd is himself a unique creation of God (PS. 139:13–16). “Wonderfully made,” he is created to serve the Creator. Daily he also is reminded through his own physical and emotional pains, the process of aging and other dynamics that his created being is affected by the fall. Sin and Satan rob and misdirect creative beings and creative gifts. Praying with King David (PS. 51:10) for God’s re-creating work in Christ, the school shepherd is cleansed and chosen to serve. He is called and sent to serve creatively.

Many school shepherds will likely humbly respond, “But I’m not very creative.” They may see the creative artistic expression of fellow staff members. They may compare their musical abilities to the church organist or school music director. They may note the literary gifts of a fellow pastor or ministry peer.

Rather than compare himself to others and to feel inadequate or less gifted, the school shepherd can celebrate God’s creative work and the Spirit’s creative presence in his serving. The school shepherd asks, “How has God gifted me, and how can I use those gifts to His glory and to bless the school ministry that I serve?” The school shepherd may also be affirmed by the observations and comments of others, “I really appreciate your ability to ... !”

Creative Lutheran Schools

Many blessed to be students in Lutheran schools or families connected to Lutheran school ministry already perceive their school to be creative. Historically, many Lutheran schools have had excellent music programs. Many children take their musical gifts from elementary classrooms to high school, college and local church choirs. Many Lutheran schools have teachers whose artistic abilities are demonstrated in classroom art projects or hallway bulletin boards. Lutheran school teachers creatively accompany worship on the organ or keyboard.

The school shepherd has the privilege of leading the Lutheran school to celebrate that it is sent to serve creatively.

- › Give thanks to God for the creative gifts that are already present. Affirm the gifts of staff, children and volunteers who are already serving creatively.
- › Be an advocate for creative programs and creative students. Creative expressions (music, art, etc.) are sometimes the first to be deleted when budget adjustments are made.
- › Highlight and use the creative gifts in the worship of the church. Children’s art might be included on worship bulletins. School music groups may share choral and instrumental selections praising God.
- › Bring the creative gifts to the community. Invite the community to school choir concerts, dramatic

“Creator Spirit, by whose aid The world’s foundations first were laid, Come visit ev’ry humble mind; Come, pour Your joys on humankind; From sin and sorrow set us free; May we Your living temples be.” (LSB 500:1)

presentations, art fairs and other events. Share how God has blessed the school with gifts that they are privileged to share with others.

- › Invite children and staff to enhance the beauty of the church and school grounds to emphasize the beauty of God’s creation.
- › Engage in creative activities: attend concerts, visit an art museum, rent a movie, read new and varied literary works.
- › Market the creativity of the school to church and community families (e.g., “Our school is known for a great music program”).
- › Prayerfully read and mediate on God’s Word that the Spirit might create God’s glorifying work in and through you.



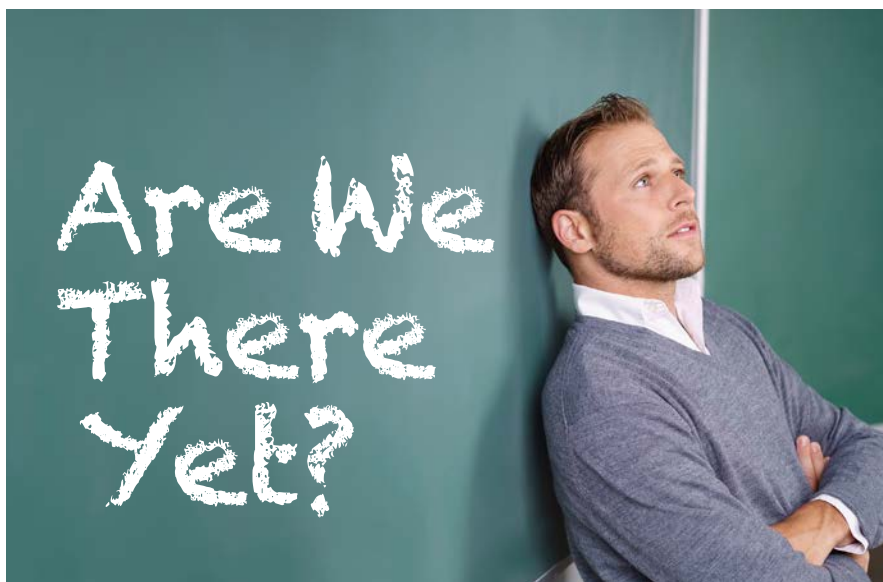
Sharing our Creative Thoughts

- ◆ How has God gifted you for creative serving?
- ◆ In what ways are your school and church perceived to be creative?
- ◆ What creative gifts could the school bring to church worship and to service to the congregation?
- ◆ How can God’s creation and creating gifts be shared with your community?



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



“Is it Friday yet?”

“When is the next holiday break?”

“It feels like each day is Monday.”

Oh my! The phrases teachers share throughout the day when they see each other! Often simply meant to be friendly or to share comic-relief, these references to time away from students, time away from the classroom or countdowns to the weekend are common. Perhaps you hear these comments regularly and reply with another comedic response, but, honestly, how often do you really think about making it through to the end?

This school year has certainly been a unique challenge, and it's still not over yet! Have you had a breakdown and cried? Have you had a stress headache? Have you argued with a colleague over something quite trivial? Have you been frustrated with a family for a less-than-frequent use of the resources and lessons you've been

sharing? Do not worry. God knows your frustrations, sadness and worries. Because you are sent to serve, you are equipped in a special way. God gives you the Holy Spirit to make it through. God helps you when you need it.

If I could just survive this after-school staff meeting and make it to the end of the day, I can go home and take a nap ... God, give me the strength to just get through this! What teacher hasn't prayed a prayer like that? You might even congratulate yourself for

remembering to pray about it and for relying on God's strength and not your own. In the midst of it all, be careful not to settle for less than what God wants to give you; He wants the best for you!

You've likely read how Jesus shared, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you ... Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (JOHN 16:23-24). No, this doesn't mean that God will give you a beach house, lots of money or perfect health. But God will certainly grant you what He knows you need — what is best for you — what is in His timing. Having faith means fully relying on God and putting full trust in Him. Even when prayers are not answered in the way you desire, they are answered in God's perfect and unique way.

Confessing God's Word to Him in prayer is a powerful tool to help to ask for things that are part of His will without getting sidetracked or stuck with your own desires. “Confess” means “to tell or make known.”¹ When



you bring your thoughts and words into line with the truths that the Lord has spoken, you are sharing your prayers with power!

When you confess God's Word, what may feel like *begging* will stop. You'll no longer plead with God, "*Please, please, please give me the energy to get through today,*" because you'll be proclaiming His promises to Him in a new prayer, such as, "*Lord, You tell us in Your word that when we ask You in faith, it blesses us and it brings You glory! You want us to ask! Father, I want to produce the good fruit that comes from following You and walking in Your ways. I'm asking now in faith for You to fill me with love and energy each day that I enter this classroom so that I can bring glory to Your name and fulfill Your call on my life*" (PRAYER BASED ON JOHN 14:13-14).

When you confess God's Word, you will no longer feel like God has stopped working in a situation. You can tell Him with joy and happiness, "*Lord, I am confident that since You began a good work in me, You will work to complete it. Thank You, God, for not giving up on me and continuing to help me to become more like You*" (PRAYER BASED ON PHIL. 1:4-6).

When you confess God's Word, it will become impossible to stay discouraged and focus on getting through the next few days or hours. Instead, you can pray, "*God, this seems awfully hard right now, but I know that it's actually a light trouble, and it's working for me a far greater and eternal weight of glory. I know I need to stop*

focusing on the temporary things that I see and fix my mind on the eternal things that are not seen. Thank you for giving me the power to do this!" (PRAYER BASED ON 2 COR. 4:16-18).

There's nothing in the Bible about just enduring through a day that God has blessed you with. You are sent to serve. In serving the Lord, He walks alongside you and provides the support you need at any time. Ask the Lord to bring your heart's desires into line with His, and confess His Word in prayer. Put your faith in Him and He will show you how to have fullness of joy each and every day. A joy-filled life full of grace, mercy and salvation is what Christ died to give you. Why would you settle for anything less?

The school year is nearing the end, but don't focus on that. Focus on the gifts God has given you in the previous months, the blessings He has bestowed on you today and the good and gracious gifts He has planned for you in the future. Pray the prayers shared above and reflect on how you are sent to serve — sent to serve in ministry of Lutheran education!

"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (JOHN 15:10-11).

¹"Confess," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, last modified March 27, 2021, accessed March 29, 2021, [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/confess](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/confess).

Time Out for Directors

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