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FEBRUARY 2022

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



COURAGEOUS LEADERS in Lutheran Schools



“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

EPH. 4:11-13



Hats off to all who are serving in Lutheran schools!

As the pandemic wears on, our principals and teachers continue with courageous leadership to educate the children and families entrusted to their care. What began in March 2020 as a temporary order to “shelter in place” to address an unknown virus has now stretched into a marathon with multiple variants that continue to impact school communities. Faithfully, our principals and teachers continue to serve tirelessly to ensure the safety of every child attending a Lutheran school with the hope for solutions that will bring an end to the challenges of conducting school daily under the weight of the pandemic. In the midst of changing guidance and new COVID infections, our school faculties persevere to provide a Christ-centered education of excellence for the children and families they serve. It is exhausting work.

Principal
Frank Parris
of Central
Lutheran
School,
Newhall, Iowa,
talks about
the damage
the school
received from
a windstorm
in 2020.

Day in and day out, the rigors of school leadership lead many to question their vocations. Startling statistics tell the crisis that schools, public and private, face today regarding school leadership. According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, more than one in six principals leave their school each year. The problem is even more severe in high-poverty schools, where one in five principals leave their schools.¹ Not surprisingly, this kind of disruption in school leadership leads to an increase in teacher turnover, creating a negative effect on student achievement. Today the shrinking pool of qualified, competent and Christian leaders has created a crisis for many Lutheran schools as well. It is essential that the recruitment and training of current and future leaders remains a priority.

The need for school leaders today is urgent. Supporting current school leaders and identifying and training new leaders are high priorities. Could God be nudging you to consider the role of principal in a Lutheran school? To address this critical issue, the **School Leadership Development Project (SLED)** was created. SLED is a year-long professional development experience consisting of two on-site events led by leaders in Lutheran education. It is designed specifically for aspiring teacher leaders and for administrators who are new to their leadership positions. Its purpose is

to identify, encourage and prepare early childhood, elementary and secondary school educators to serve in leadership roles to ensure that the next generation of children hear the beautiful Gospel message of God's promise of eternal life while preparing for a life of Christian citizenship.

Nominations for SLED 22 from your principal are now being accepted by your district education executive for the cohort beginning in June 2022. More information about the SLED program can be found at luthed.org/school-leadership-development-sled. Ask your principal today about the possibility of your participation in SLED. Your courageous leadership makes you an excellent candidate.

The future of Lutheran schools depends on competent, committed, compassionate Christian leaders. Please, prayerfully consider this opportunity to prepare for a leadership role where the Gospel message is proclaimed for the next generation of students in a Lutheran school.

Footnotes

¹ Kathryn Bradley and Stephanie Levin, "Understanding and Addressing Principal Turnover," The School of Thought Blog, June 5, 2019, accessed January 12, 2022, blog.nassp.org/2019/06/05/understanding-and-addressing-principal-turnover.



From left, Michelle King, principal of Immanuel Lutheran School, Gaylord, Minn., Gretchen Dolan, administrator of St. John's Lutheran School, Corcoran, Minn., Lauren Eickemeyer and Michael Griedl, both teachers at Salem Lutheran School, Tomball, Texas, chat together during the SLED 19 Event II on June 15, 2021, in St. Louis.



Community & Enrollment

This is the **sixth** of a **nine-article series** developed from the work of Dr. Kristen Newell in “How is parental sense of community at LCMS elementary schools different between schools of growing, stable, or declining enrollment?”



Need Fulfillment and Building Community



During the time of the Book of Acts and the apostles, the Church experienced great growth. Breen (2010) wrote, “Even though the early churches were mercilessly persecuted, the *compelling life of their community* ... drew many into a relationship with God” (p. 204, emphasis added).¹ The writer of Acts says believers “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Additionally, an integral piece of the Christian community was their care for each other. The desire to meet each other’s needs was so great they would sell their

property and give to those in need (Acts 2:45). In this way, the Christian Church modeled one component of *community* as defined by McMillan and Chavis (1986): integration and fulfillment of needs. McMillan and Chavis call need fulfillment a “primary function of a strong community” and say strong communities “fit people together so that people meet others’ needs while they meet their own” (p.13).² In a school, the needs to be met are more than teaching children. The broader needs of parents, families and teachers also need to be addressed by the community.

How can schools, teachers and administrators meet the needs of parents and families while they are also primarily responsible for academic, emotional, spiritual and social

growth of their students? What are the needs schools should try to fulfill? How can needs be met, especially with COVID mitigations still in place? It is easy to get lost in the questions and feel that meeting needs is an impossible task. However, Lutheran schools are Christian communities where faith can grow and flourish. The community is strengthened by following the example of the early Christians and observing the broader needs of its people.

Let’s answer some of those questions. First, it is important to recognize the “who.” *Who* is responsible for

meeting all of these needs? The answer is the *community*. That means it is not the job of the principal, the classroom teacher or the administrative assistant to be all things for all people, as it sometimes feels they must be. Only Christ can meet all needs, but we, as the Body of Christ, each do our part to be His hands and feet here on earth (Phil. 4:19; 1 Cor. 12:27). The school can help set up systems, staff members can model what it looks like and all community members can encourage and support the process of meeting the needs of each other.

Second, let's examine what needs should be prioritized. Am I suggesting we should provide basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter? Does the school community have to facilitate transportation, technology hardware/software or sports equipment? What about more abstract needs such as marital counseling, guidance on raising children or legal counsel? The answer to these questions is "maybe." Each community will have unique needs. A school placed within a low-income, inner-city neighborhood may have families with needs such as food and clothing. A school that draws students from a broad geographical area may have families with transportation needs. A school with young parents may have greater need for parental support/training or marital counseling. Learning the needs of your community can be a first step. After looking at unique needs of your context, it is helpful to note people with shared values "find that they have similar needs, priorities, and goals" (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, p.13). Therefore, it is also important to examine the values held by the school community and the individuals within the community to help prioritize need-fulfillment activities.

Third, let's look at some concrete ideas of how to meet these varied needs. Different needs require different tools and processes for fulfillment. A used clothing sale could be organized for schools with low-income families. School communities may develop a practice of providing meals at the birth of a baby, during the hospitalization of a family member or when there is a loss of a job. The school may support the need for transportation by facilitating a car pool bulletin board of some type. Creating a school business directory may be a way to support the businesses and careers of school parents while also providing a way for people to find professionals they know and trust (because they belong to the fabulous school

community they know and trust) when they need a lawyer, doctor, plumber or dog groomer. The practical ideas are as numerous as the needs, but the process should be to first understand your community, then to identify needs and lastly to brainstorm solutions for meeting those needs.

Additionally, it should be noted the school may meet needs without the members having to *do* anything. McMillan and Chavis (1986) said having the status of membership (simply belonging to the school) can in itself be rewarding. Also, being around people who are competent is desirable and attractive. Finally, success of a community is reinforcing to its members. One principal in my dissertation study³ specifically mentioned that a school with a healthy, positive culture is often its own reinforcement.

Margaret Mead, an American cultural anthropologist, is credited with saying a fractured femur that has healed is the best evidence of civilization (community).⁴ She explained that without community a creature with a broken femur would die, either by being hunted down or by the inability to find food and water. A broken femur is not recoverable without the aid of others. Therefore, evidence of a healed femur shows someone helped the injured person. Helping is an integral part of community. Schools should not abandon mission and purpose to chase after all the needs of their people, but school communities should be places where members know they will be supported in their time of need and they will take their turn to support others.

Footnotes

¹ Mike Breen, *Covenant and kingdom: The DNA of the Bible* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3DM, 2010), 204.

² David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis, "Sense of community: A definition and theory," *Journal of Community Psychology* 14, no. 1 (January 1986): 6–23.

³ Kristen Newell, "How is parental sense of community at LCMS elementary schools different between schools of growing, stable, or declining enrollment?" (Ed.D. diss., Concordia University Wisconsin, 2021). ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 28492466.

⁴ Remy Blumenfeld, "How a 15,000-year-old human bone could help you through the coronacrisis," *Forbes* (March 21, 2020), accessed September 3, 2021, forbes.com/sites/remyblumenfeld/2020/03/21/how-a-15000-year-old-human-bone-could-help-you-through-the-coronavirus/?sh=3616fb1137e9.

Community & Enrollment

VOL. 1, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2022

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Kristen Newell Designer: Frank Kohn

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Computer File



Creating Art

“**T**he LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft’ (EX. 31:1-5).

This is regarded by some as the first mention of art in the Bible. Of course, God creating the heavens and the earth right out of the gate also fits the “artistic creativity” definition, in my opinion! Still, this verse does say a lot about artistic creativity. First, God values artistic design. He is THE Creator, and He values that creativity. Secondly, He gives us the creative ability and intelligence to create art in this world to His glory!

Creating art traditionally isn’t thought of as involving technology. When I think of art, I picture the art classrooms in my high school or college. I don’t usually think about art and technology! But, as we’ll see, technology has a lot to

offer the world of art! This is true for students as well as all of us as teachers.

Use technology to view and research art!

This simple use of technology is possibly the most powerful! The internet allows all of our students to view art collections around the world for free! You can visit the Louvre (collections.louvre.fr/en/), the Museum of Modern Art (moma.org/collection/) and the National Gallery of Art (nga.gov/collection.html). That just for starters! Google has curated many arts experiences, collections, museums and applications in its Arts and Culture site (artsandculture.google.com/). A simple journey over to YouTube (youtube.com/) will further the investigation of art collections. Continued YouTube searching reveals many interviews with artists, demonstrations of art techniques and guided tours of galleries and collections. This will expand your view as an art teacher as well. If you are looking for lesson plans based on works of art, check out The Met (metmuseum.org/learn/educators/lesson-plans).

Use technology to share art!

Displaying art is a wonderful way to share our God-given creativity with others. Of course, there are ways to do this locally, like with hallway displays or even an art fair. Technology lets our students take that sharing to a much wider audience. Potentially, you could reach a global audience! Here are a few ways to share art digitally:

Google Sites (sites.google.com/new?tgif=c) are easy to start, easy to use and easy to maintain. All that is needed is a picture of an art project loaded to Google Drive. Then, it's one step to add it to a Google Site. A teacher-made Google Site could be shared with parents and extended family. Each student could be given a page on the site for art!

Google Classroom (classroom.google.com/) is perfectly set up for students to submit work already! Just take it a step further for students to turn in pictures of their art. Google Classroom also has the ability for parents to easily see what's happening, once they are invited. While it's not as flexible for adding multiple projects over time, the structure is ready for submission. Again, only a picture loaded to Google Drive would be needed.

Flipgrid/QR code (info.flipgrid.com/) (qr-code-generator.com/) Flipgrid has recently added a screen-recording feature. This allows a student to narrate while recording a tab on their computer. The feature also allows students to appear in front of anything being shared on their screen. Students could take a picture of some created art, load it to Google Drive and then record a video explaining some aspects of the creation. To move further, the video could then be downloaded into Google Drive, and a link for the video could be turned into a QR code. This QR code could be displayed at school next to the art. That way, the student could explain the inspiration behind the art to anyone who scans the QR code!

Use technology to archive art!

Imagine what it would be like for a student to graduate from a Lutheran school with a collection of dozens and dozens of art projects from kindergarten through graduation! I'm guessing the parents would be appreciative and quite a bit overwhelmed! What do we do with all of these projects? What about storing everything digitally?

Google Sites (sites.google.com/new?tgif=c) is definitely useful for sharing created art. Couldn't this also be used to archive a large number of individual student projects? This, in itself, would be overwhelming for a

classroom teacher. However, what about teaching parents to do this? The projects could be sent home with a tutorial video on how to do it. What if you are an art teacher? Does it create a challenge to keep samples of projects for all your art lessons over the year? You also could take a picture of several student projects throughout the years and use them to demonstrate some outcomes to each year's students.

Use technology to create art!

So far, everything covered has been related to created art that is physical. Technology has opened new avenues for creativity. Consider the historical significance of music being recorded and broadcast across the country! With technology, all forms of art are able to be created and then, of course, shared! Let's consider some possibilities:

Creating Music - Perhaps this isn't the first art form considered for creation, but there are many options! Many Apple phones come with GarageBand built in. Here are a couple examples that work on Chromebooks:

- **BandLab** (bandlab.com/?lang=en) allows students to create original multi-track music. You can even plug instruments or microphones in to record performed music. BandLab is free, especially for teachers! Check it out!
- **Chrome Music Lab** (musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/) has a very user-friendly interface, and also has some unique and even strange options. The ease of use would allow younger students to enjoy it as well.

Creating Digital Images - With phones being with families everywhere, kids are at ease around photography. The phone explosion does open the door for teaching how to take excellent pictures! That, in itself, is art! Pushing a little further, however, gets your students to enter the world of photo editing. Then, some amazing artistic touches emerge! Here are some favorites:

- **Lunapic** (3.lunapic.com/editor/); **Fotor** (fotor.com/); **Pixlr** (pixlr.com/x/); **Canva** (canva.com/photo-editor/app/). Each of these allows images to be edited. Each also has its unique features. My pick would be Lunapic. It has the most options for free. Admittedly, it doesn't feature all of the fine tuning that Fotor or Pixlr does, but for the sheer amount of options, it's amazing! Canva does much more than just edit photos. It offers the ability to create many projects such as posters, signs, videos, presentations, logos and fliers.

Creating Digital Drawings/ Paintings

- Over the last year or two, the price difference between touchscreens and non-touchscreens has been getting smaller and smaller. In our recent Chromebook replacement, we opted to purchase all touchscreens (with some thanks to the Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS) program). That greatly enhances the ability to create art on a Chromebook. Here are some of the best apps out there:

Sketchpad (sketch.io/sketchpad/) has all of the features you would need to draw, paint, design and more! The free version is very full-featured.

Sketchbook (play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.adsk.sketchbook&hl=en_US&gl=US) is even better than Sketchpad if you are able to get Android apps on your devices!

Chrome Canvas (canvas.apps.chrome/) is very simple and straightforward. This would be great for younger students, because no one will get lost in a flood of features.

Kids Paint (play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ng_labs.kidspaint&hl=en_US&gl=US) is really designed to be used on phones. Again, it has more simple features, which may work better for younger students!

Google Keep (keep.google.com/) isn't the first thing I would think of when considering digital art creation. However, there is a surprising amount of options for creating a drawing. The added benefit here is that Google stuff works very seamlessly with Google Drive and other Google stuff!

ABCya Paint (abcya.com/games/abcya_paint) was always the first activity for my kindergarten students when they were on their Chromebooks for the first time. It's easy to use, even if you don't have touchscreens. The paid version is quite an upgrade, but the free version is still a lot of fun!



Virtual Reality has some options for art as well! Some involve rather expensive headsets (like an Oculus headset). That is true of **Tilt Brush** (tiltbrush.com/), which gets people to paint in virtual reality! As we mentioned before, **Google Arts and Culture** (artsandculture.google.com/) has quite an extensive collection, which does allow some virtual reality exploration ... on inexpensive headsets with phones!

Hopefully, you can try one or more of these ideas for creating art! Just have fun with it! If you show an adventurous spirit, your students will follow! Here is this month's **video overview**: drive.google.com/file/d/1uWQk8NyBIpEMpinbxNSUus_dtIDAIfHC/view?usp=sharing.

Here is this month's **Edge Tech**! These are some of the newest approaches in educational technology, and may require an adventurous spirit! This month's **Edge Tech** is Toy Theater (toytheater.com/category/art/) (Video: youtu.be/kkAWTzYizgA). This isn't that **new**, but it does have some rather unique art approaches! It's a ton of fun! See what you think!

Finally, if you would like to explore educational technology on a more personal level with other Lutheran school educators, I encourage you to consider TEC21. I'm in my fourth year of being a TEC21 Facilitator. We have stations across the country, including online opportunities and even STEM workshops! Get more information here: tec21connect.com.

Computer File

VOL. 21, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2022

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mr. Corey Nelson Designer: Erica Schwan

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PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

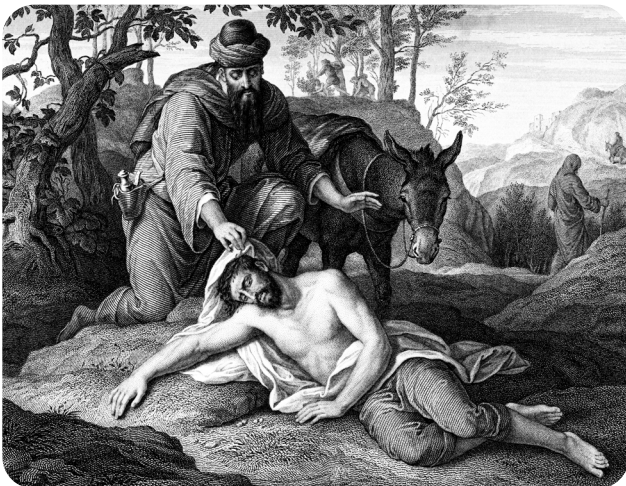
IN ALL THINGS **JOHN 1:3**

FOCUS: Jesus in All (Col. 1:15–20)



The Parable of the Good Samaritan

(Luke 10:25–37)



Before You Teach

Being a good neighbor can be risky business. Jews and Samaritans not only did not live next to each other, but also they disliked and avoided each other. But the Samaritan in this story crosses all the conventional lines of neighborliness to help the wounded man. Jesus would show us in this parable what He teaches explicitly in another place: “as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (MATT. 25:40). We see Jesus in our neighbor’s need, and no one is excluded when we ask, “Who is my neighbor?”

Greeting

Greet each child upon arrival. Arrange for volunteer assistance, if needed, for classroom management during this time.

Gathering

Signal children to gather in your worship area. Together make the sign of the cross, and say, **We begin our day together with Jesus.** Introduce the biblical narrative.

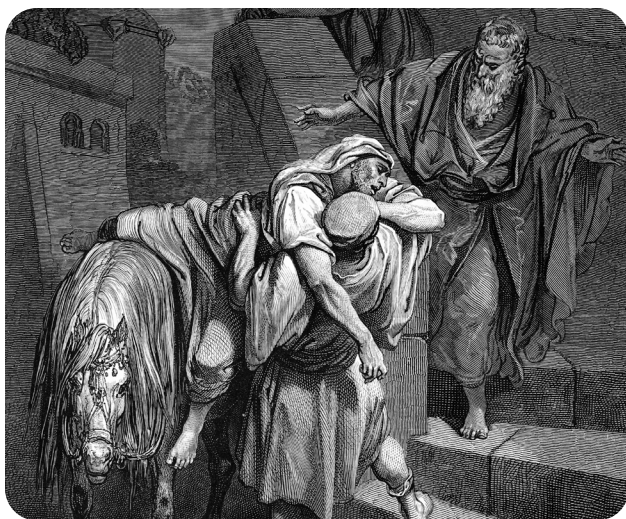
Tell the Story

You will need: Adhesive bandages, one per child. Use permanent marker to draw a cross on each bandage.

A lawyer asked, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus answered with a parable:

A man was traveling on a road to the city of Jericho. **Children walk in place.** On his way, he was robbed, badly hurt and left on the road. A priest, going down that same road and seeing the badly hurt man, walked by on the other side of the road without stopping to help. **Walk in place.** Later, a Levite, a man who worked in a temple church, came to that same place. Seeing the badly hurt man, he walked by without stopping to help. **Walk in place.** A Samaritan, who most people did not like, was traveling down that same road. **Walk in place.** Seeing the badly hurt man, the Samaritan felt sorry for him. Stopping (**stop walking**), the Samaritan cleaned and bandaged the man’s hurts. Then, the Samaritan took the hurt man to an inn (**walk in place**). There, the Samaritan cared for the man’s hurts. The next day, the Samaritan gave money to the innkeeper, saying, “Take care of this man. If more money is needed for his care, I will pay you back when I return.”

Jesus then asked the lawyer, “Which of these three men, do you think was a neighbor to the hurt man?” The lawyer said,



“The one who helped him, showing kindness.” Jesus said to the lawyer, “Go, and do the same.” **Distribute adhesive bandages, and say** Wear this to remind you that Jesus wants you and me to help and care for others.

Praying Together

Conclude prayer time, singing verse three of “We Pray for Each Other” (LOSP, P. 15).

Dear Jesus,
Thank You for Your love and care,
Help me Your love to always share. Amen.

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “[Jesus said] ‘Love one another as I have loved you’” (JOHN 15:12).

Grades 1 & 2: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (LUKE 10:27).

Activities

CREATE: HEART ART. Red and pink construction paper, paper doilies, heart stickers, crayons or markers, glue.

DO: Print the words of John 15:12 across the bottom of pink construction paper. Precut large hearts from red

construction paper for younger children, one per child. Reproduce heart outline on red construction paper for older children to cut out. Children decorate the hearts.

DO: “What would you do/say?” Provide “helping” scenarios to which children can respond (e.g., someone needs a crayon, wants to join a game, needs a place in line).

SING: “We Love” (LOSP, P. 54).

CAMP SERVE: Unexpected Acts of Kindness. “Tip-toe” to surprise a custodian, secretary, bus driver and other service providers (paid and volunteer) with unexpected acts of kindness.

Sending

You will need: A heart to pass.

Gather in your “Sending Circle.” Review the day. Children pray as the heart is passed and received or quietly pass the heart along. Dismiss, saying to each, “**Jesus loves YOU!**”

Living the Story

Jesus said, “Love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus loves us with a perfect love, setting a high standard for love of others. Though not perfect, our goal must be to love each child as Jesus does. This does not mean that we ignore inappropriate behaviors. Rather, we address misbehavior in a positive manner, clearly explaining the inappropriateness of the child’s action while applying consequences that teach, rather than punish. We model the language, “I forgive you because Jesus forgives me. I love you because Jesus loves me.”



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Early Childhood Devotions

VOL. 26, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2022

Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Erica Schwan

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

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IMAGES: GETTY IMAGES

Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



IN ALL THINGS Love



If you've ever been married, you likely recall that you and your spouse spoke vows to each other as a part of the ceremony. They may have been vows that you wrote individually and then recited from memory to each other. The officiant may have had you speak the vows in repeat-after-me format which may have been in traditional words and formal language or perhaps more personal vows in a more contemporary format.

Whatever the style of the vows, these were promises to each other. These words were a loving pledge of commitment as well as words that would be legally binding. Sometimes they are spoken in a lighthearted manner to ease the seriousness of the moment. Other times, in a moment of solemnity, they may have even choked up the participants and witnesses due to the profound sincerity of the promise.

Everyone who gets married has every intention of keeping the promises made on that wedding day. But, then comes

sickness or ill health and it causes stress; people get poorer or sometimes they get richer and it puts a strain on the relationship. There are going to be good times, but if the bad times outweigh the good times, that's not always helpful in keeping a marriage together. We all know someone who has had a marriage that ended in divorce. It's never easy. It is always painful. It is always hard. There are regrets. The ending is usually sad.

We know that we all make mistakes and have shortcomings. Sometimes our mistakes are not small or short — they are big. Forgiveness works in keeping relationships together, but even after a lot of hard work and guidance, sometimes we are unable to reconcile. We are unable to love and nurture in a relationship as we had promised.

During this month of February, when others are celebrating love and romance, it can be tough if you've had love go awry with a spouse. In spite of our relationship struggles, we can take comfort in knowing that our Lord Jesus keeps His promises to us, as He supports us and forgives us when we fall short. Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us. He won't walk away when the going gets tough. In fact, Christ walked the tough road for us to the cross of Calvary to take away our pain and to restore our relationship with the Heavenly Father. Being loved unconditionally by Jesus offers us comfort and assures us that the promises we break are forgiven, that when we cause pain He brings love and that when things look bleak He offers hope for the future.

Whatever our negative experiences have been in being loved or not being loved, our loving Savior Jesus will always love us and walk with us every day, until He welcomes us to heaven into His loving arms.

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: LOVE IN MOTION MOBILES

PURPOSE

To engage family members in an activity that allows them to have fun together, be creative and express their love for each other.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- › Wire coat hangers or long, wooden kebab skewers
- › A variety of colored markers, colored pencils and crayons
- › Several colored pieces of construction paper (red, white, pink)
- › Pliers, wire cutters
- › Scissors
- › Hole punch
- › Glue stick or white glue
- › String and/or yarn of various colors

PROCESS

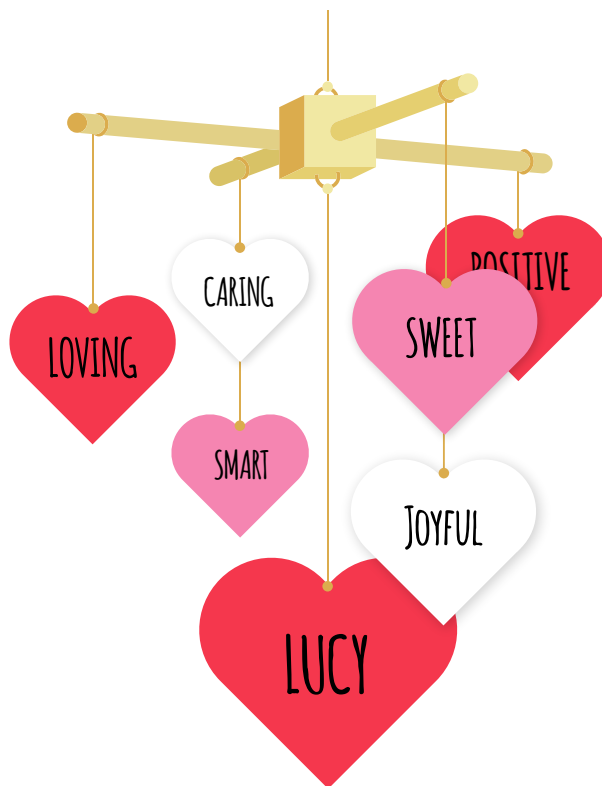
Follow the steps below.

- 1 Cut out a heart, 8 inches in size, and write your name on it, or have an adult write the name of a child if needed. This is the central piece of the mobile for each person.
- 2 Cut out several other hearts of various sizes and give them to all members of the family so that each person has at least four or five hearts for each person in the room.
- 3 Begin with the youngest person in the family, and have each family member write something loved about this person on one of the hearts and then hand it to the person, speaking out loud what is written on the heart. (You can use more than one heart per person if you'd like, and write even more reasons as to why you love them on the colored hearts.)
- 4 Do this for each person in the family until everyone has a nice stack of hearts in front of them.

- 5 Have each person begin to construct a mobile using pieces of kebab skewers or coat hangers, cut into manageable sizes, and using string or yarn to hang their hearts in such a way that everything is in balance. Adults or older children will most likely need to help the younger ones construct their mobile.
- 6 When they are all complete, have everyone stand and hold their mobile. Have an adult or older child read the following echo prayer, phrase by phrase, with everyone repeating the words.

Dear Father in Heaven, thank You for Jesus. Thank You that He loved us, so much to die for us. Help us to love others every day, and to always remember how much You love us. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Now, pick a place in the home where you want to hang these mobiles to remind you of the love that everyone in the family has for each other.





Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



MAXIMIZING INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES FOR Learning Leaps



How much instructional time would you estimate is being spent on material students already know? Graham Nuthall, in his book *The Hidden Lives of Learners* (NZCER Press, 2007), has found that it is 40%! His research was conducted before the pandemic disrupted school and learning for many students, but it is an alarming percentage! If we want to address unfinished learning and look for learning opportunities this year, we need to look at how to best use instructional time in classrooms and make sure instructional practices that have been shown to work are being used. Even pre-pandemic, spending 40% of instructional time on content students already know is a lot, but this year and in the years to come, it is even more critical that this time is spent on creating learning leaps and addressing unfinished learning.

One way to further accelerate learning is to maximize instructional time and instructional minutes. Take a moment and think about your current class structure and routine. Is there a lot of time spent on administrative details, like taking attendance, which

may be necessary but do not impact learning? Are there typically a few minutes at the end of each class or activity in which students grow restless waiting for what is next or talking with their peers, especially those who may finish an assignment or activity early? Research by Dr. Terry Scott (louisville.edu/education/keep/files/terry-scott-presentation) also confirms how much time is spent with teachers not being actively involved with student learning and performing other tasks. At the elementary level, this is 6 minutes per hour. This may not seem like a great deal of time, but it amounts to 2 days of non-teaching/engagement time over the course of a month, and 18 days over the course of a year! Those numbers are the same for middle school, but they change dramatically for high school. At the high school level, 16.8 minutes out of every hour is spent not teaching or not being actively involved in student learning. This amounts to 5.6 days a month and 2.4 months over the school year! This is not meant to criticize teachers for the other tasks they are required to do, but it is an opportunity to think about how to best make use of that time.



At various levels, many teachers incorporate

morning work to engage students as the day gets started and some of those needed administrative or other tasks are completed. This is great, provided the work is meaningful and related to their learning instead of being busywork. There may be some additional ways to change up this morning work, or work assigned at the beginning of class, to incorporate more effective instructional practices. Rather than students working independently at these times, students could be assigned a buddy and use a think-pair-share approach to a conversation prompt to work on social-emotional skills. In math class, a number of challenge problems could be posted that draw on recently learned skills that must be applied differently in order to solve. Give students the option of picking the problem(s) to attempt, but also allow them to choose to work with a partner or small group. Another option is to provide students with a short reading passage that could be content specific based on the class being taught. Allow students to read and discuss the passage with a partner. A fun idea for this time is to have students create questions to “stump the teacher” related to content learned from the current lesson or unit. Students write

down questions to pose, but they also need to write down the answer. The teacher can pick a few questions to answer as the class transitions to the lesson for the day or choose a few students to ask their questions at the end of the class if there are a few minutes left. These ideas build off the common practice of morning work, but also incorporate effective practices such as collaboration and reflection and differ from traditional worksheet-based assignments to start the day or class. Allowing the option of working with a partner or small group also provides collaboration that often does not happen during these times.

Collaboration and student-to-student interaction

are helpful instructional practices to incorporate as you increase instructional minutes described above, but they are also critical practices to continue during your lessons and time spent teaching. Many students frequently missed out on these opportunities over the last two years. Obviously, there needs to be time when you’re introducing new content or teaching key vocabulary terms, but a recommended goal is to spend 50% of your instructional minutes on student-to-student interactions and collaboration. The other 50% of the time includes time for directly teaching content or having students engage in independent practice. This breakdown does not have to be in one large chunk of time, but as an overall breakdown of instructional minutes.

These ideas are just a few things to think about as you work to maximize your instructional time with students and spend time building on the strengths God has given them. For more ideas, contact us at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at luthsped.org and let us know how we can support you!



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

VOL. 5, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2022

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Kara Bratton Designer: Erica Schwan

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



The Trouble with Absences

C OVID has changed the way we understand school. Gone are the days when we felt education happened only in a particular building. While it is an improvement to realize the blessing of education in the home, there is a downside to developing a casual attitude regarding school attendance. A child does not need to miss weeks of school to experience detrimental effects. Consider that missing only two days a month adds up to the loss of almost an entire month of education over the year.

Research shows that missing school impacts a student's ability to reach essential learning milestones. For instance, absences in early elementary school can prevent a child from being a proficient reader by third grade. Children who haven't reached this milestone in a timely manner are much more likely to struggle in high school.

Teachers had to make significant changes during the pandemic to continue education under challenging circumstances. For parents, it can be easy to assume the worksheets the child completes are the sum total of learning. However, when a child misses in-class instruction and then does the make-up work, he is not getting the same level of learning. Here are some of the missing pieces:

› **Layered curriculum:** Students do not generally learn a skill in one sitting. They need to be exposed to the skill multiple times and use it in various ways. When teachers instruct a skill, they introduce, teach and review the skill. If the child misses the introduction of a skill and then experiences the teaching or review of that skill, learning will not be as smooth. The

child who missed a previous lesson will start behind classmates who have a familiarity with the skill.

› **Interaction:** Listening to a well-crafted lesson and participation in skill practice are only two aspects of school learning. We should realize that children learn much from interacting with each other. School helps children enhance self-regulation, practice social skills and develop language skills as they communicate and negotiate ideas. These are all skills that grow through experience in community, not in isolation. Each time a child misses a day of school, he misses out on several hours of practicing and developing skills learned through interaction with peers and adults.

› **Social capital:** Social capital is how we create networks of friends within a community. Research shows that students who are good at developing relationships with peers and adults develop assets for future





When children pray with parents at home, hear Bible stories at church and are encouraged to live out their faith at school, they have multiple ways to grow in their understanding of the saving work of Jesus Christ.

learning. Having good relationships at school will improve a student's school success significantly. Part of it is knowing whom to go to for help, and part of social capital is knowing you have a place in a community. Students learn social capital through the experience of interacting, especially when they participate in group activities

➤ **Conscientiousness:** Conscientiousness is a personality characteristic that supports good learning, health, general happiness and success in life. Because it is a personality trait, we can promote it with good parenting. When we teach our children that school attendance is essential unless there is a significant reason, such as illness, we are teaching them to pay attention to life details and make carefully calculated decisions. It is easy to see how taking care with learning and decision-making gives a child excellent practice for future life decisions. Children do not need to have perfect attendance to learn this skill. They need to be able to carefully consider the reasons for missing school. This is a skill we can model for them that will pay off big for their future.

Many life events can interfere with school attendance. COVID is an example, but so is chronic illness or family situations. If you can predict future problems with attendance, it is best to meet with school personnel to create a contingency plan that allows your child to

get the most out of a school year. For example, some children miss school due to social anxiety. Because the struggle to get such a child to attend is real and challenging, it can be easier to allow absences to stack up. Unfortunately, social anxiety does not typically go away on its own. Working with a therapist and your child's primary health care provider will provide you with a plan for dealing with the anxiety and making school attendance a desired thing for your child once again.

One of the most important reasons for strong school attendance has to do with faith development. The responsibility to teach the faith rests with both parents and the church. When children pray with parents at home, hear Bible stories at church and are encouraged to live out their faith at school, they have multiple ways to grow in their understanding of the saving work of Jesus Christ. Each time your child misses school, she also misses out on the opportunity to hear and study God's word. Martin Luther promoted good school attendance because, in his day, so many parents pulled their children out of school to work in the family business. Luther knew the value of a good education and the benefits of a society full of educated people who were also well taught in the catechism. We are blessed to have good Lutheran schools and teachers who help us to raise our children in the knowledge of the Lord.

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Kim Marxhausen Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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PHOTO: LCMS/ERIK M. LUNSFORD



Professionally Speaking



Loving Our Neighbor IN ALL THINGS



When was the last time a neighbor completely changed his life because you told him he was making wrong choices? Simplify that. When was the last time anyone stopped one simple behavior or practice because you pointed out that wasn't God's plan for us? Yeah, not easy to come up with examples. In fact, it's difficult to shift the mindset of even those who are nearest and dearest to us — spouse, parents, children, lifelong friends — particularly when we lead with, "You're doing it wrong."

Christian churches have developed a negative connotation in the eyes of much of American society, particularly those outside the Church. "Nones" (those claiming no church membership) and "Dones" (those who have left the church and want nothing more to do with it) have

harsh things to say about the Christian church, and we Lutherans get lumped right in. One of those beliefs is that we (the Church) are all about judgement, telling people what they are doing wrong, and if they don't agree, they'll spend eternity in hell.

Wow. Sounds pretty harsh, doesn't it? How do we overcome such opinions? I posit that the school ministry of the LCMS is one of our most effective instruments. It works because people *choose* to come to our schools, because of a reputation for quality, for care, for exceptional service. We build relationships starting around a common care for the growth and welfare of children — parents love their children, and so do we! Through that common value we have the close up and personal opportunity to speak and live the positive difference being a



... always being prepared to *make a defense* to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it *with gentleness and respect* ...

disciple of Jesus makes. In our classrooms we teach the Good News, we share the truths of Holy Scripture, we pray together and we engage in serving our neighbor as we put God's love into action. Soon enough, families who come to our schools from outside our congregations can feel the difference being a Lutheran school creates, all flowing from God's love and the Spirit moving through His people in this place.

And then that moment happens. Maybe it's during a parent/teacher conference. Perhaps a casual conversation as you sit next to a parent at her child's soccer match. It could happen at an ice cream social or a band concert. It might even be a parent just walking up to the principal during end-of-day dismissal. But that parent comes up and asks, "What's going on? We came to this school because of all the good things we'd heard, almost too good

to be true, but now we see there's something different here. What's the secret? *Why are you all just so happy all the time?!*"

I live for those moments.

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (1 PETER 3:13-17)

As we fulfill our mission of Lutheran education in the preschools, childcares, elementary schools and high schools of the LCMS, we do so with the joy of our Lord shining through us in everything we do. And people notice! In this world, where so much is darkness, shining the light of God's love makes a clear difference, and people end up wanting to know more. Children who transferred from other schools start loving to come to school. Parents who expected nothing but judgement from "church people" make friends with Christian parents who just welcome them with unconditional love. Stereotypes are overcome, and lives are changed. Sometimes this even leads to Baptisms and new families in our congregations.

Best of all, the Holy Spirit transforms lives of both students and parents through this. As Lutheran educators, we don't have to go around telling students and parents, "You're doing it wrong." Instead, we regularly and faithfully expose them to God's way through the relationships they have in our schools, and the Spirit uses this to bring about faith, to create a desire for change and to welcome new people into the family of God.

Now THAT'S how we love our neighbor in all things.

Professionally Speaking // FEBRUARY 2022

Writer: Mr. Jim Scriven Designer: Lisa Moeller

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



Faith in Jesus changes us –
ALL we think, say and do.
“CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL” (COL. 3:11).



Bible Story: Jesus Visits Zacchaeus.

Scripture References: Luke 19:1–10

What it teaches us: Zacchaeus learns what it means to be loved by Jesus, the promised Savior. This love prompts him to repay any whom he may have cheated and to show God’s love to others through his words and actions, exactly what Paul reminds us to do in our theme for this year (COL. 3:1–17).

Prepare to teach

➤ **Read** the story in the references and, if possible, a study Bible.

➤ **Think:** Jesus was often criticized for hanging out with the outcasts of His day. He reminds His critics that He came to be everyone’s Savior. *Note: this happens shortly before Holy Week when Jesus would suffer, die and come alive again to take away the sins of EVERYONE.*

➤ **Pray:** Jesus, Savior, we know You take away all the wrong choices/sins we do each day. Help us show our love for You in everything we say and do. Amen.

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’” (LUKE 19:9–10)

WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

You will need

- › Songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.
- › Picture of Jesus (do an internet search).
- › Pictures of the Bible story: Jesus, Zacchaeus and a tree.

Gather for Worship

Use tune of “Goodbye, Goodbye” (*LOSP*, P. 40).

Hello, Hello, He-lo-o-o, Hello, my friends, to you.
Please come here and sit with me; we’ll learn of Jesus too. He-lo-o!

Invocation

Use melody from above.

Hel-lo, Hell-o, Hel-lo; Hel-lo-o-o. Hello, dear God, to You. We know You are our Father, God’s Son and Spirit too. He-lo-o!

Opening Song: Show picture of Jesus. Sing “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (*LOSP*, P. 94).

Introduction: Use the melody of “A Tisket, A Tasket.” Sing:

A story, a story; it’s time to hear a story.
It’s from God’s Book; we know it’s true.
God gives these stories to me and you.

Bible Story

Zacchaeus wasn’t very tall; to tell the truth, he was very small.

He made bad choices, lots of them; so, people stayed away from him.

Zacchaeus was very, very sad; he wanted a friend so he would feel glad.

Zacchaeus heard Jesus was friendly; but wondered, “Would Jesus like ME?”

He tried to see Him — not tall enough to-see. So, Zacchaeus climbed-up in a-tree.

Jesus looked up, saw him and said, “Come down! Let’s go to your house and eat meat ‘n’ bread.”

Zacchaeus learned Jesus was HIS friend; that’s not all, That’s NOT THE end!

Jesus was His Savior who took away — ALL his bad choices. Hooray! Hooray!

Zacchaeus was happy, happy-as-can be; he made lots of good choices and lived happily! Thanks to Jesus, His best Friend and Savior.

What the Story Teaches: Jesus is everyone’s best Friend and Savior too. Jesus lived, was hurt, died and came alive again for us to take away all our wrong choices. We can be happy. Jesus will help us to make good choices just like Zacchaeus.

Song to Sing: “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (*LOSP*, P. 94) — excellent because it shares the Gospel message. Sing the traditional “Zacchaeus” (*LOSP*, P. 55).

Prayer

Jesus, Savior, thank You for being our best Friend and Savior. Please help us live as Your happy children. Amen.

Closing/Benediction

Jesus’ time is just about over; before we go it’s time to sing “Good-bye, Good-bye” (*LOSP*, P. 40). Optional: Make the sign of the cross as pastors do at the end of the service.



CURRICULAR MATERIALS //

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

S Science and Nutrition

› **Science:** Zacchaeus used a tree so he could get up high and see Jesus. How do we use trees? Look for items made from wood in the classroom. You may mention a tree was used to make the cross on which Jesus died for us.

› **Physical Education:** Scripture tells us Zacchaeus ran and climbed the tree. Encourage the children to walk/run; walk slow/then fast; also teach go/stop.

› **Nutrition:** Serve chunks of fruit/cheese — foods Jesus and Zacchaeus may have eaten. Serve edible trees (broccoli — cook and cut into pieces before serving).

T Technology

› **Make story time a special event.** Find a YouTube video of someone reading a story of Zacchaeus and share it with the children.

R Reading and Language Arts

› **Books:** Check your local dollar store for Bible story board books and look for one on Zacchaeus; *The Foot Book* by Dr. Seuss (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1996) contains lots of feet actions.

› **Rhyme/Poem:** Use the traditional “Open, shut them ...” End with peek-a-boo.

Jesus love you, (name of child).
Jesus loved Zacchaeus and He loves each of us.

E Engineering

› **Use cardboard tubes** to make puppets for the Bible story. Talk about what else you can do/make using a cardboard tube.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

We shared the story of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a tax collector who was shunned by almost everyone, except Jesus. In this Bible story we see Jesus loved Zacchaeus, and us, so much He came to be his and our best Friend and Savior.

A Arts (art and music)

› **Art:** Red is traditionally the color of love. Invite the children to use a medium of their choice and fill a piece of paper with red. Cut into heart shapes. Post them with a picture of Jesus and caption “Jesus loves us; we love Jesus.”

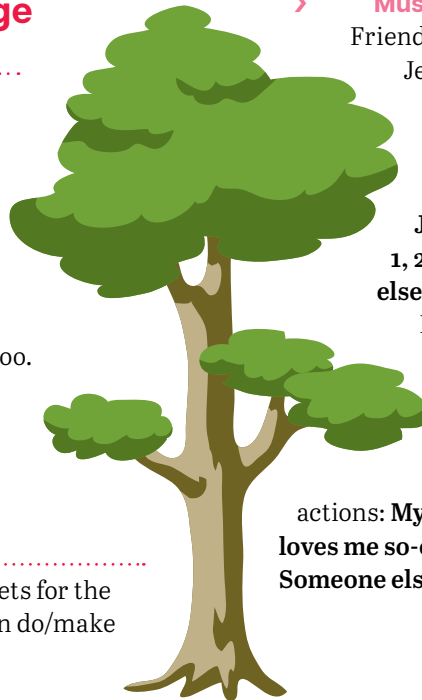
› **Music:** Zacchaeus learned Jesus was his best Friend; He’s ours too. Sing: “My Best Friend is Jesus” (LOSP, P. 45).

M Mathematics

› **Ordinal counting:** chant/song: **1, 2. Jesus loves you. 1, 2, 3. Jesus loves me. 1, 2, 3, 4. He loves us more than ANYONE else has before.** —adapted from “1, 2, 3, Jesus Loves Me.” (1987, Celebration. Admin. By Marantha! Music).

S Social Studies

› **Families love each other.** Make up actions: **My mommy loves me; yes, it’s true. Daddy loves me so-o-o much, too.** (nod head and smile). **Someone else loves us; do you know who?**



Rattles & Prattles

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Writer: Mrs. Judy Williams Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | The LOVE of Jesus in All Things

All Things LOVINGly Considered

“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 JOHN 4:10-11).

“**L**ove is ...” cartoons have enlightened and entertained for decades. “Love is ...” portrays love as simple as a few words or attentive actions. Valentine’s Day advertisements portray love as simple as a card, box of candy, piece of jewelry, bouquet of flowers or some other gift.

Love is never simple. Since the fall into sin, love is not natural. Adam blamed Eve, Cain murdered his brother, Abraham dismissed Sarah as his sister, Jacob favored one wife over another, Joseph’s brothers threw him in a pit and faked his death, David committed adultery. The Biblical illustrations go on and on and on.

Love is not simple in our relationships. Marriages end in divorce, siblings disown one another, friendships dissolve, churches and schools are in conflict.

Lutheran schools can be unloving places. Children on the playground may be heard to angrily respond, “I hate you.” The teenager texts cruel comments about a classmate. Faculty members ignore or gossip about one another. The pastor and principal refuse to reconcile their differences. We rightly and humbly confess: “We have not loved as we ought.”

The Good News is “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (ROM. 5:8). Christ loved the unloving. He loved us to death! John’s



epistle calls the readers “beloved” (1 JOHN 4:11). Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, we are loved by God.

Having God’s love poured out on him in Baptism, tasting of His love at the altar and reading of His love in Scripture, the school shepherd preaches and teaches the Good News of Jesus’ love. In multiple ministry contexts, the message is shared: “God loves the world (JOHN 3:16) and God loves you.” The message of God’s love in Christ is the message of the Christian church. It is the message of the Lutheran church and school.

“If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 JOHN 4:11). The school shepherd struggled in his relationship with a school board member. It felt as though the shepherd’s every word and action were criticized. The shepherd shared his struggle with a ministry confidant. The confidant advised, “Love him.” The shepherd listened attentively to the criticism and responded respectfully. With a desire to love, the heart of the shepherd became less defensive and more open to the relationship. In time, the board member also responded more respectfully, appropriately and lovingly.

Paul’s words to the Ephesians also speak to Lutheran school shepherds, staff, children, parents and partners: “Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (EPH. 5:1-2). Through the Spirit, the fruit of love is shared. “We also ought to love one another” (1 JOHN 4:11) flows from the sacrificial love of Jesus.

The love of Jesus is not illustrated in a cute cartoon. It is illustrated in the lives of God’s people as they live in the Spirit according to the description of the Apostle Paul: “Love is patient and kind ... Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 COR. 13:4-7).

In the Lutheran school, “love is ...”

- the staff gathering in the love of Jesus, hearing His word, worshiping with the church family and tasting the love of Jesus in His Supper.

prayer

ALL THINGS IN JESUS’ NAME

Jesus, thank You for forgiving me and loving me from the cross. Send Your Spirit so that I might live and serve lovingly, in Your holy name. Amen.

- confessing “I am sorry. I have sinned against you.” Receiving the absolution, “Jesus has forgiven you and so have I.”
- addressing conflict immediately and confidentially, and seeking God’s will in relationships.
- acting in love to one another, to the church family and to the community.
- telling the world about the love of Jesus in prayers and support for missionaries.

CONNECTIONS AND CONVERSATIONS IN ALL THINGS (with staff, board and ministry partners):

- What does love look like in the classrooms, office, playground and other settings in your Lutheran school?
- How is the love of Jesus shared in word and deed in your church and school community?

HYMN:

“Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav’n, to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter ev’ry trembling heart.” (LSB 700:1)



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



The Fear Is Real – So Is God's Peace



Micah has a hard time at preschool when he gets dropped off each morning. Julie has a meltdown when it is her turn to be in front of the class for show-and-tell. Stephen nervously looks at the sky on any day it is filled with clouds. Vanessa refuses to use the slide on the playground because she once saw a spider on the stairs.

What do these four children all have in common? If you guessed a form of anxiety, you win a prize! A toddler who cautiously holds the couch while taking a few first steps shows some anxiety, and a kindergartener who

quietly reads aloud and often looks to the teacher for reassurance also shows some anxiety. There is nothing wrong about being anxious; even adults show anxiety in their daily lives. Some adults have a fear of heights, a fear of city highway driving or a fear of snakes. No matter what the fear or the root of anxiousness is, people exhibit their worries in many different ways.

As a Christian, you know that God grants peace. God grants an inner peace that can calm even the most troubled of hearts.

It is completely normal for young children to be afraid of large, barking dogs, to worry about losing a parent or to be afraid of the dark. Only when these fears become all-encompassing, interfere with overall happiness or lead to an inability to interact in society do they become considered as an anxiety disorder. Some research studies estimate that anywhere from 10–20% of preschool-age children suffer from an anxiety disorder. When anxiety hits young, it unfortunately can hold on into adolescence and adulthood.

Why do so many young children show fears and anxieties? Younger children are less able to articulate their worries; they simply do not have the language or vocabulary to do so. Some children may lack some of the cognitive skills to be afraid of abstract situations. Instead, they worry about things like separation, barking dogs, loud noises, darkness and stormy weather.

The four most common anxiety disorders in preschool children are:

SEPARATION ANXIETY

an excessive fear surrounding separation from caregivers. Sobbing at childcare or school drop-off is a common example. The behavior is normal in the first few years of life.



SOCIAL ANXIETY

an excessive fear of negative social evaluation ... essentially a fear of judgment from others. Some children are anxious about a new haircut or wearing a certain type of clothing to school for fear of being made fun of.

GENERALIZED ANXIETY

an excessive anxious anticipation of future events. Examples include children worrying about the house burning down or about mom dying while the child is at school. These anxieties are about events or circumstances that are very unlikely to happen, but the child becomes fixated on their possibility.

SPECIFIC PHOBIAS

an excessive fear of specific things, such as dogs, spiders or heights. Research shares that types of sensory phobias are becoming more common too, such as a fear of touching something sticky or slimy.

Educators in Lutheran schools are servant-minded and seek ways to help students overcome fears and anxieties. What makes it difficult is that what works well for one student may not work at all for another. Trial and error, along with strong communication with parents, is critical.

Some ideas to help children overcome their fears include:

TAKE SMALL STEPS

Many young children eventually outgrow their fears, slowly learning to use logic to overrule their impulse to be scared. It may be helpful for a child to get used to being around things that cause anxiety, taking a slow and gentle approach in little doses that feel comfortable. This, of course, needs to happen within a relationship built on trust with caring adults. Reassure children that caring people will be with them; remind them that Jesus is always with them.

TALK IT OUT

When a child encounters something that is fearful, help her talk through the process. She may not always understand everything you say, but your soothing voice and the fact that you are not worried is significantly reassuring. Do not dismiss a fear; it makes children think you do not understand the problem. A phrase like, "You don't like that noise — it's scary," gives children words they'll eventually learn to apply to their fears. Share



God
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troubled
of hearts.*

words of prayer with the child. A few simple sentences shared in prayer can teach children to look to God in times of trouble.

SET MORE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Sometimes society today expects more from young children than is realistic. It is not terrible if a child doesn't easily separate from parents until kindergarten. It is also not a bad thing if a child is afraid of the dark and wants to join in bed with mom and dad during the night. Sometimes the pressure placed on children is based on adult perspectives and wishes. Some children are more prone to fears than others. Read books together about children who are fearful and discuss how the story characters dealt with their fears. The Bible is full of stories that show God's peace to overcome people's fears.

GENTLE CARE GOES A LONG WAY

Young children have limited coping skills, and when they are upset they can lose what skills they have altogether. Adults — parents and teachers alike — need to hold it together for the sake of the child, too, when meltdowns occur as a result of fear or anxiety. During anxious meltdowns it can be helpful to imagine your child as a crying newborn and soothe him accordingly. Try singing, rubbing his back or rocking him. Use a gentle voice and avoid judgement statements. Telling a child to stop is likely not effective. Again, share words of prayer together as you ask for God's comfort and peace in the situation.

All humans have some form of fear; it's natural. But, one does not need to be overcome with fear. Scripture is filled with words of reassurance of God's peace. Remember to share God's peace and gentle care with your students; even adults need the same reminders too. Offer parents words of wisdom, such as those shared above, in support of them and their parenting.

***“Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give you”***

(JOHN 14:27)

***“Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous.
Do not be frightened, and
do not be dismayed, for the
LORD your God will be with
you wherever you go”***

(JOSHUA 1:9)

***“Therefore do not be anxious
about tomorrow, for tomorrow
will be anxious for itself. Sufficient
for the day is its own trouble”***

(MATT. 6:34)

***“I sought the LORD, and he
answered me and delivered
me from all my fears”***

(PSALM 34:4)



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