



MARCH 2022

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing





MARCH 2022

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

Contents

Alight

“Lutheran Schools Today and Tomorrow”
Dr. Rebecca Schmidt

Community and Enrollment

“Shared Emotional Connection and Building Community”
Dr. Kristen Newell

Computer File

“Creating Games and Code”
Mr. Corey Nelson

Early Childhood Devotions

“Zacchaeus”
Dr. Judith Christian

Family Matters

“In All Things ... Stand Firm”
Dr. Steven Christopher

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

“The Opportunity for Social-Emotional Learning”
Dr. Kara Bratton

Parent Pages

“Understanding the Sensory Sensitive Child”
Dr. Kim Marxhausen

Professionally Speaking

“In All Things, Keep Marching On”
Mr. Jim Scriven

Rattles & Prattles

“Jesus came for ALL people”
Mrs. Judy Williams

School Shepherd

“All Things Considered in SERVING”
Rev. Robert Riggert

Time Out for Directors

“Joyful Notes: Rejoice in the Lord Always”
Dr. Drew Gerdes



Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



LUTHERAN SCHOOLS today and tomorrow



Then he said to his disciples, 'the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"

(MATT. 9:37-38)



IN PHOTO:

A kindergarten student dressed for career dress day works in his classroom at Word of Life Lutheran School in St. Louis during National Lutheran Schools Week in 2021.



I love a great celebration for National Lutheran Schools Week!

It's a wonderful way to celebrate Lutheran schools every year. With chapel services, spirit days and special guests, schools across the nation gather together to celebrate what it means to be a cherished part of a Lutheran School community in creative and innovative ways. Pastors and teachers are the heart of National Lutheran Schools Week!

God calls us into specific ministry roles in our churches and schools and has chosen each of us to serve in this time and place. We make ourselves known to be followers of Jesus by following His example and sharing the Gospel message of Christ's death and resurrection. It's the message that has been shared by pastors and teachers with children and families for genera-

tions and that is taught and lived daily in classrooms in Lutheran schools across the nation and abroad.

I recently had the opportunity to worship with a congregation and school during this special week. The K-2 choir presented three songs as part of the worship service. The children sang with exuberance and shared a message that supported what they were learning in their church and school. During each song, a joy-filled and inspired 4-year-old stepped into the aisle and began to sing along with the older children. She knew every word and expressed her joy by enthusiastically directing the children's choir. Her joy was contagious! After the service, I talked to the little girl's mother and shared how much I enjoyed the service with her daughter's whole-hearted participation. Clearly, my thought was that someday she would be a wonderful church musician and choir director.

Today, we face the critical fact that there are not enough church workers to fill the positions in our churches and schools. I thought again of the joy-filled 4-year-old leading the children's choir. What an opportunity! Now is the time to encourage children of all ages to imagine themselves leading our churches and schools, teaching children in a classroom or even

leading a children's choir in worship. I was blessed to experience the sheer joy of a child's love of music. I am confident that someday she will be a blessing for the children that she might lead. Today, my prayer is that she will be surrounded by caring adults who will consistently encourage and support her as she continues to grow and thrive. Whom can you encourage to become a future church worker? This is where our work will bring joy for the future.



National Lutheran Schools Week

- ▲ Students at Trinity Lutheran School, Waconia, Minn., learned about how Jesus cares for us "In All Things," the 2022 schools week theme.
- ▶ Students at Concordia Lutheran School, Seattle, dressed up in their pajamas in 2020.



Community & Enrollment

This is the **seventh** 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?”



Shared Emotional Connection AND BUILDING COMMUNITY



Can you picture it? The African savanna: dry, brown grass stretching as far as the eye can see, with few trees to break up the horizon. But then, an oasis, the watering hole. Where water is abundant, life gathers. Animals of all species migrate to the watering hole for much needed refreshment. The young play, the old and tired are revived and vibrant community life unfolds.

Is your school a watering hole? Do you facilitate watering-hole moments for your community? As we strive to build strong, vibrant communities within our schools,

we must create experiences *where people gather together long enough to get to know each other*. McMillan and Chavis said “The more people interact, the more likely they are to become close”¹ (p. 13). This becoming close is a result of having shared emotional connections, which is the fourth element of *sense of community*.¹

Creating opportunities for parents to have shared emotional connections with other parents may be as simple (and as difficult) as having events at your school. Simple because every school seems to do this already. However, using events to generate emotional connections is difficult because not all events are created equally. McMillan and Chavis said the experiences must be positive and successful with clear goals and closure.¹

During peer review of my dissertation, one principal noted it is better to not do an event at all than it is to do a poorly planned, poorly executed event that may end up being a negative experience for students and parents.²

Is there a secret to making an event a place where people connect and community grows? In my dissertation, the schools that focused on *relationship building* seemed to have the most success cultivating a strong community (and had stable and growing enrollment).² One school even had *relationship building* as part of its strategic plan. Since the intentional focus on *relationships* began,

that school experienced enrollment growth. Positive relationships and *emotional connection* are cyclical, each building and deepening each other.

All nine schools in my dissertation study mentioned doing events to build community.² However, not all nine claimed to focus on relationship building during those events. If you want events to build relationships, you need to make sure the event is designed to allow *authentic opportunities* for people to get to know each other. Many schools focus on what the students will be doing during events but don't structure the event so adults can talk with each other. It may not be possible to gear every event toward building relationships between parents, but if that is kept as a sub-goal, you would be getting closer. Additionally, schools can also have adult-only events, or offer babysitting, so that adults can spend some intentional time together.

Events can get a forced feeling to them. A watering hole should be a place where people go because they are naturally drawn in. So, what else can be done to give opportunities for relationships to grow besides doing events? One way parents get to know each other is by sitting on the sidelines at sporting events or hanging around waiting for practices to be over. This low-key time provides moments for parents to get to know each other while their children are otherwise occupied. It is also an *authentic* experience where people may mesh together who would not otherwise get together. There were schools in my study experiencing growth that had initiated extracurricular opportunities all the way down to kindergarten.³ For these schools, the activities provided a well-rounded experience for students, but the decision to do activities was deeper than student growth. The principals recognized the need to invest in student activities at all grade levels so *that* parents would be rubbing elbows. For these schools, hiring staff members to manage extracurriculars and doing the work to get students involved was seen as an investment in community.

Unfortunately, COVID prevented many schools from offering school-wide, intermingling events during the 2020–2021 school year. However, many schools still saw a heightened *sense of community* within their school population. This may have been because of the “tremendous bonding among people who experience a crisis



together”¹ (p. 14). While we don't want to rely on crises to strengthen our communities, don't be afraid to leverage negative situations to build trust, display empathy and create a spirit of one-ness within your school.

Jesus is our watering hole. He told the Samaritan woman, “Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again” (JOHN 4:14). Ultimately, we want the students, parents and families at our schools to know Christ and be filled by Him. Jesus also modeled to us how to spend time with people and build relationships. Jesus spent time with people. He preached and healed in the midst of large crowds. He went to wedding parties and large dinners. Jesus spent intimate time with His 12 disciples and had even closer relationships with Peter, James and John. Jesus showed us that spending time with people is important. It is by being with people that we can show them love, minister to their needs and share the Gospel of Jesus with them. Facilitating Christian fellowship and authentic opportunities for relationship building are important ways Lutheran schools can share the Gospel and advance God's kingdom. Let's be watering holes, gathered to grow as disciples of Jesus!

Footnotes

¹ 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.

² 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.

Community & Enrollment

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Kristen Newell Designer: Frank Kohn

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Computer File



Creating Games and Code



“**T**here is no surprise about the following statistic: 75% of kids play video games weekly. Sometimes, it seems like video games might be the only way kids play anymore! Still there are some interesting findings when players are surveyed. Video game players are about evenly split between boys and girls. Players also report many positive effects of playing video games: joy, inspiration, mental stimulation and stress relief. Advancements in technology, internet speeds and online communities have also allowed video games to bring people from very different backgrounds together. Gaming is also bringing families together: 74% of parents say they play video games with their children at least once a week.¹

With the interest in games being so high, *creating* video games seems like an amazing opportunity and even a natural next step for schools! Designing original games combines the love of video games, an opportunity for creativity and a real-world experience of receiving feedback from an audience!

With the opportunity to create games, there are many choices, as shown below. One of the main questions in this realm is “To code or not to code?” Coding *can* be part of the game design process, but it doesn’t have to be. In my opinion, game creation is the perfect way to introduce coding to students. First, that built-in motivation eliminates much of the hesitation students may have for trying coding. Additionally, designing a game that requires coding gives an authentic goal for the coding process. Sometimes, lessons that teach coding have somewhat artificial tasks built into the process.

Even with all of the automation and AI (artificial intelligence) becoming more and more prevalent, forecasts don’t point to a lack of need for those who know how to code. Coding is still seen as the “most important job skill for the future.” More industries are becoming increasingly dependent on technology all the time. This leads to an increased need for coding in the industry as well as in cybersecurity

¹ theesa.com/resource/2021-essential-facts-about-the-video-game-industry/

for that industry. Even the increasing use of automation means an increased reliance on coding. Someone has to code the automation!²

All of this leads to a wonderful opportunity for our students to create both games and the code that builds those games! Many of the coding opportunities out there have now been around for a good amount of time. They have proven to be reliable and innovative in staying relevant with technological advancements. Even if the coding languages evolve and change in the future, the skills gained through coding and game design are highly valued. The World Economic Forum has now listed the following skills as the three most important for students to have moving into the future: complex problem solving, critical thinking and creativity.³

Game design and coding can provide all of that! So, with that ... here are my recommendations!

Scratch (scratch.mit.edu/) **Video:** youtu.be/7NN5v2wSL4U

My View: Scratch is my personal favorite! It does so many things well, and it integrates with other technologies (like Makey Makey). This is a great place to introduce logical and sequential thinking and block-based programming. So many platforms use block coding now, and this is an excellent springboard. Scratch is so versatile that I use it from grades 2 through 8. There are also many online resources for Scratch. Did I mention that it's entirely free?

Concerns: I'd like to say I have no concerns. The one minor complaint is that there is no education/teacher account availability. That makes student sign-up and sharing of games a bit of an obstacle.

CoSpaces (cospaces.io/edu/) **Video:** youtu.be/KvouXADAVtI

My View: This is much like I stated in January's *Computer File*. You get access to a classroom dashboard and the ability to assign tasks. Students can develop 3D worlds that can be experienced through virtual reality. Block-based coding is also a strong component, allowing students to program objects in the environment to move and become interactive. The coding here is similar to Scratch, and you have the option of text-based coding as well.

Concerns: CoSpaces does have a per-student cost that may be somewhat of an obstacle. Check it out and decide if you'll use it enough to justify the cost. I think you will;

CoSpaces can be used in so many areas!

Code.org (code.org/) **Video:** youtu.be/M_VQ4o4n2ho

My View: Code.org has so many things to offer. If you are totally new to the world of coding, this is probably the place to start. Everything is free, and there's something for all interest levels and grade levels. There are entire computer science courses at this site. There are parts simply for designing characters, creating art, creating apps and designing games! Soon, code.org will even introduce a high-school level computer science course!

Concerns: There isn't a lot to dislike here. I guess I could say that there are so many options to follow that you may feel overwhelmed at first. My suggestion is to pick something for your grade level and try it with your students!

App Inventor (appinventor.mit.edu/) **Video:** youtu.be/BT4YihNXiYw

My View: Like Scratch, this comes from our friends at MIT. It allows your students to create actual apps that can be simulated on anything that has the Android OS. Teachers can set up a classroom dashboard, and an entire curriculum is included. The site includes many tutorials, and there are many resources online as well. Students usually are amazed by seeing their own apps appear on an Android phone!

Concerns: The App Inventor isn't as smooth as Scratch. There is a higher learning curve, and you're going to need to put some time in yourself before you use it with students. Watch some of the tutorial videos and research some project ideas so you can start with a successful launch!

Online Game Design Platforms: Once upon a time, there was an incredible game design site called Sploder. The games you could design were amazing, and no coding was required. All interest-levels and skill-levels found success. Plus, it was free! Then ... Sploder stopped being supported. Since then, I've been searching for a replacement. I haven't found the perfect solution yet, but here are some suggestions:

GDevelop App (gdevelop-app.com/) **Video:** youtu.be/XgDdO1TKgGA

Overview: There is a lot here, and it may be overwhelming for beginners. It does everything you would want, and it even has the option to export games created to Android devices.

² webwriterspotlight.com/why-coding-is-the-most-important-job-skill-for-the-future

³ infento.com/blog/the-top-10-skills-your-child-needs-for-the-jobs-of-the-future/

Flowlab (flowlab.io/) **Video:** youtu.be/FIraTzalyLk

Overview: Flowlab looks to be a high-powered game design engine, with a teacher dashboard and no coding experience needed. There is a significant price, so I could recommend using the free version while you try it out. This would be easier to start with than GDevelop.

Bloxels (edu.bloxelsbuilder.com/) **Video:** youtu.be/ZWtUzosvfuk

Overview: This is a very well-designed experience for students. The biggest benefit to Bloxels is that the students create game components on a physical board with physical blocks (“bloxels”). The approach is very cool, but there is a yearly price. Bloxels is very active online with developing new content and new features. It could be a major piece of your game design plan.

Gamefroot (make.gamefroot.com/) **Video:** youtu.be/pJM_woxuWyk

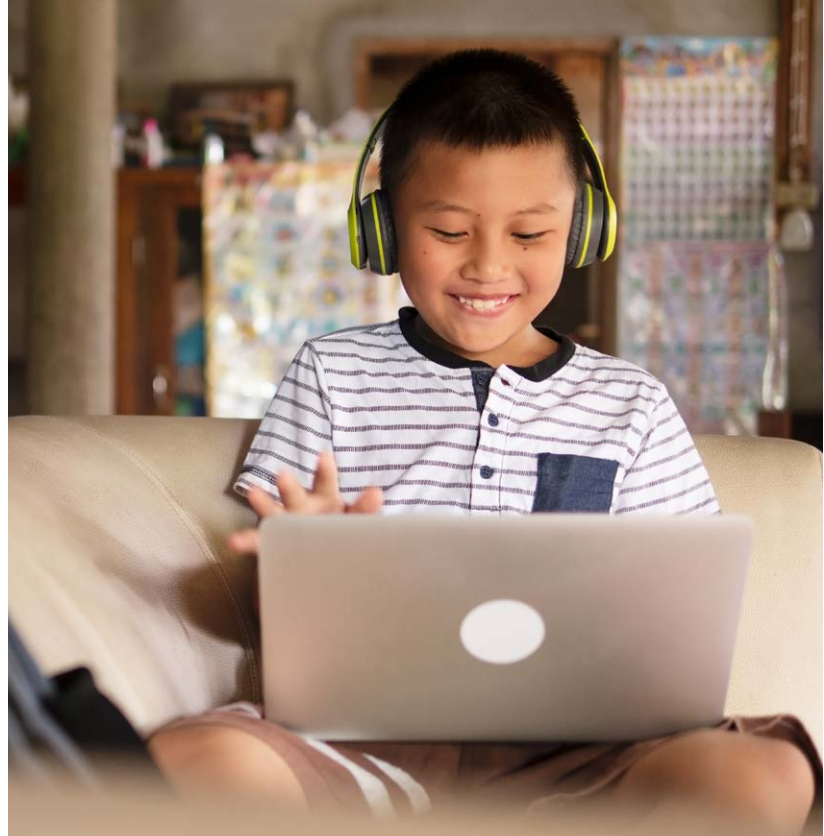
Overview: This one has many possibilities. It has similarities to Scratch and could be the next step for students after using Scratch. There is a nice bridge here to text-based coding as well. Again, the price could be prohibitive, so try creating a game yourself first. So many features! It would be nice to see more tutorials and a curriculum.

Ready Maker (getready.io/educators) **Video:** youtu.be/NZ3LTEqKvAo

Overview: This one is very impressive! They have developed a great approach for teachers. The curriculum included shows students what to do step-by-step! The game designing is fun and intuitive. Ready Maker even compares itself to Scratch! There is a nice bonus of being able to control robots with the Ready Maker app!

Draw Your Game (draw-your-game.com/) **Video:** youtu.be/kNY5aWl-FkE

Overview: Students will love to be able to draw a picture and have it *become the video game*! Yes, that’s really what happens! The app is free, but there are in-app purchases to unlock all features. Unfortunately, there are no educator resources for this one.



Other options out there include **Roblox** (roblox.com/) and **Struckd** (struckd.com/). These are both social gaming networks that strongly support game design and creation. Roblox is one of the heavy hitters out there currently. They are trying to make a big push in education. To do full-fledged game design, coding and 3D modelling, you’ll need a PC or Mac, however.

Hopefully, you can try one or more of these ideas for creating games and code! Just have fun with it! If you show an adventurous spirit, your students will follow! Here is this month’s **video overview:** watch.screencastify.com/v/eXGetgy36hEeMvuJCaxW.

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 **Blackbird** (blackbirdcode.com/) (**Video:** youtu.be/fWA7ju_geuE). This is a new site for teaching coding. It bills itself as a step between Scratch and text-based coding. Try it out!

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

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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

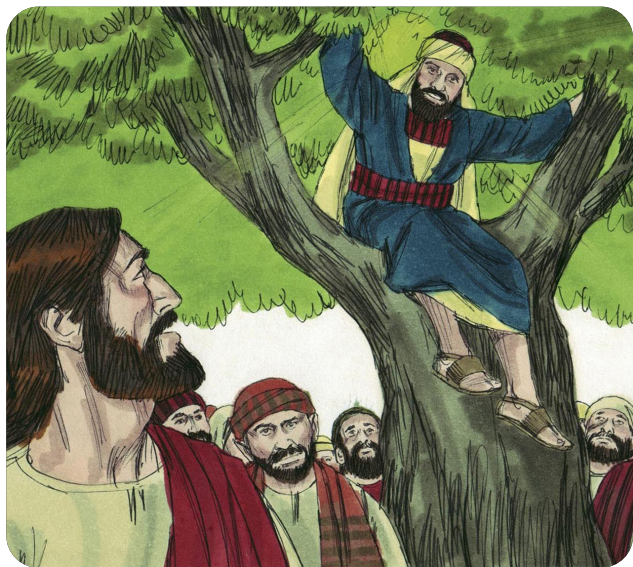


IN ALL THINGS **JOHN 1:3**

FOCUS: Jesus in All (Col. 1:15–20)

Zacchaeus

(Luke 19:1–10)



Before You Teach

“Nobody loves me, everybody hates me” begins a familiar childhood refrain. Zacchaeus probably sang that song every day of his adult life. He repulsed people because of his work — collecting taxes (which he apparently did dishonestly) — and his short stature excluded him from normal adult interaction. Through his own choices, and the chance inheritance of his physical birth, he was the quintessential outsider. But he was attracted to Jesus, and Jesus sought him out to restore him to the community and the family of God. From this story may we learn — and teach — such loving inclusion as a mark of those who follow Jesus.

Greeting

Continue to set time aside to greet each child upon arrival. Statistically you have approximately five seconds to establish a positive tone for the day. **Good morning/afternoon, God’s dear child.** Note: If extra assistance is needed at this time, enlist non-parent volunteers to briefly assist in getting children settled into the room and engaged in routine activities.

Gathering

Signal children to gather in your worship area. Sing “Happy Now We Gather” (*LOSP*, P. 9). Pray together. Introduce the biblical narrative of Zacchaeus.

Tell the Story

DO: Guide children to listen and to (1) squat to be small each time they hear the name “Zacchaeus” and (2) use their index fingers to form a cross each time they hear the name “Jesus.” Practice. Tell the narrative.

The Bible tells us about a man named **Zacchaeus** who was a tax collector. He cheated people, taking more money from them than they needed to pay. Keeping the extra money for himself, **Zacchaeus** became very rich. The people knew he cheated. They did not like **Zacchaeus**. One day **Jesus** went to the city of Jericho. **Zacchaeus**, being curious, wanted to see who **Jesus** was. The crowd of people was very big. **Zacchaeus** was very little. He could not see **Jesus**. Running ahead, **Zacchaeus** climbed up into a sycamore tree. There,

Zacchaeus could see **Jesus** coming. **Jesus** stopped and looked up as He passed by. He said, “**Zacchaeus**, hurry and come down. I’m staying at your house today.” **Zacchaeus** quickly climbed down from the tree and joyfully greeted **Jesus**. When the crowd of people saw this, they grumbled and complained. But **Zacchaeus** said “Half of what I own, I will give to the poor. And, if I have cheated anyone, I will give back four times as much.” **Jesus** said to **Zacchaeus**, “I’m coming to your house today. I have come to find and save sinners.”

Praying Together

Sing “We pray for Each Other” stanza 3 (LOSP, P.15) to conclude prayer time.

**Thank You, Jesus,
For calling me by name. I’ll never be the same.
Thank You for loving me, a sinner though I be.
Amen.**

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “[Christ] died for all” (2 COR. 5:15).

Grades 1 & 2: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (ACTS 2:21).



Activities

CREATE: You will need: Colored markers, crayons or tempera paint; an image of Jesus.

DO: Children draw or paint images of their homes. Download, size and reproduce an image of Jesus. When paint has dried, adhere an image of Jesus to each home's front door.

DO: Select games that include ALL children. Avoid games that exclude or penalize players, such as dodge-ball, red rover and keep-away. Teach, model and practice cooperative play and inclusion, affirming each child's sense of belonging.

SING: “Zacchaeus” (LOSP, P. 55); “There Is a Name I Love to Hear” (with actions) (LOSP, P. 44).

FUNDAY FRIDAY: Zacchaeus was little. Play “Big and Little.” Guide children to stand on their tiptoes, raising or spreading their arms when something big is named and squatting down to make themselves small when something little is named. *Example:* Big: trees, elephants, houses; little: puppies, ants, building bricks.

CAMP SERVE: Zacchaeus promised to give to the poor.

DO: Invite the community to gather art supplies (e.g., tempera paint, drawing tablets, colored construction paper, crayons, washable markers, colored chalks). Donate these for distribution to children and families in need or to schools in underserved communities.

Sending

You will need: A cross to pass.

Gather children in your “Sending Circle.” Review the day. Invite children to pray as the cross is passed and received. Children may choose to quietly pass the cross along without speaking. As children exit say to each, “**Jesus goes with you.**”

Living the Story

Regularly assess games and activities for their inclusiveness. Seek and select games and activities that engage all children in collaborative and cooperative play.

Early Childhood Devotions

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Lisa Moeller

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

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IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



IN ALL THINGS Stand Firm



“Too busy. Way too busy!”

This was the response of a young mother of two when a good friend asked, “How are things going?”

This, unfortunately, is not an uncommon statement. Not just for a young mother of two, but also for many of the rest of us, no matter our age.

It often seems that to get ahead in life we have to work longer and work harder to achieve those things we want; however, the desired result isn’t always reached. Why is it that after working hard at a job for several years, a young father is let go? Why is it that after several seasons of

success, a single mom no longer finds her services needed at a company she has dedicated herself to for years? These questions are not always easily answered. Our response then is to try harder! Pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, and go after it again!

But, what are we going after?

Are we seeking financial security? How about the comforts of a good life? How about excitement? Notoriety? Peace and quiet? Just predictability or some kind of stability? Maybe it’s all of the above, or at least some combination.

Like a building, a well-lived life needs a firm foundation — a foundation that creates stability in the key areas of life, a foundation that will withstand the pressures of this busy world in which we live. Many seek the foundation of finance, health, friendships or community connections, workplace success, acquisitions or accomplishments. While these all contribute to an enjoyable life, they do not create the foundation needed to address the challenges of a 21st century world. Only faith does — faith in Christ alone!

Christ is the cornerstone on which we can build a life, and where we can find a firm foundation for our family and create a healthy home. It begins with faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior — faith that is given as a gift in Baptism and encouraged by the regular reading and hearing of God’s Word, faith that is inspired through worship, faith that is assimilated in daily living through service to others. Stability in this life is framed by the knowledge that we have the assurance of eternal life in heaven through the perfectly lived life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Busyness won’t bring happiness. Activity doesn’t always produce productivity. We will never achieve a perfect life, no matter how hard we try. We can, however, enjoy a life built on a foundation of faith in Christ Jesus. This is a life that will weather storms and remain firm in all things.

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: OUR FAMILY ROCKS

PURPOSE

To engage family members in an activity that helps them understand that Jesus is our Rock and on Him we can build a firm foundation for life.

OPENERS

Have each family member respond as they are able to the following:

- Share a time when you felt shaky or uncertain about something in your life.
- What happened? Did it get resolved? Did you figure something out?

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

Look up the following verses in the Bible and share what you think they have to say about building a foundation of faith.

- 1 Samuel 2:2 (there is no Rock like our God)
- Psalm 62:1–2 (we find our salvation from God alone)
- 1 Peter 2:4–5 (in Christ we are being built into a spiritual house)

FAMILY ADVENTURE ACTIVITY

Pick the option below that works best for your family.

- ➊ As a family, go on hike in a place where you can retrieve some rocks that are big enough and smooth enough to write words on. Try to get at least three rocks per family member.

- ➋ Go to a home supply store or landscape yard that has large rocks, available for purchase, big and smooth enough to write on. Purchase at least three rocks per family member.

BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION

Once you have the rocks (at least three per family member), find a place where you can lay them all out and do the following.

- ➊ Have several permanent markers (or colored paints) available for family members to use.
- ➋ As a family, think of faith words that are important to you as individuals and as a family, and that you want to practice every day in your home. (Some examples might be: care, listen, peace, love, worship, goodness, faith, joy, patience, etc.)
- ➌ Have each family member pick a word, write it on a rock and share why it was chosen as being important for you and the family. (Older siblings or parents may have to help younger ones with the writing of the words on the rocks.)
- ➍ Continue this process until everyone has had a chance to share at least three words.
- ➎ Place the rocks in a circle. Have the family gather in a circle around the rocks, holding hands, and have an adult or older sibling read the following echo prayer, section by section, with all the family members repeating the words.

Dear Jesus, thank You for being our Rock. Thank You for being the Rock of our salvation, for dying on the cross for our sins, for walking out of the tomb after the angel rolled away the big stone. Help us every day to walk by faith in You, and to have You as our firm foundation. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Now, as a family decide where in your home (inside or outside) that you want to display these rocks of faith. May these stones with these special words of faith written on them be a reminder of your faith in Jesus in all things, every day.



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



The Opportunity for Social-Emotional Learning



Much focus has been given to the academic impact of the pandemic on students and how to address unfinished learning. Discussions this year and going forward also need to address the social and emotional impact of the last two years and to consider another opportunity that has come from this time: the opportunity to provide social-emotional learning at a school-wide level.

God created us to live in community with one another and to model Christ's love to others. Building social-emotional skills, especially coming out of times of great stress, disruption and lack of social interactions, can help to carry out God's plan for us. Matthew 22:37-39 says "[Jesus] said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Social-emotional skills can help students with their social and relationship skills, along with responsible decision-making, self-awareness and self-management.

Current trends with primary students show that some are reverting to behaviors they exhibited when they

were younger. This could include having difficulty separating from family each day and having difficulty with known routines and procedures. Even at the start of next school year, you may need to continue to spend extra time on routines and procedures. Also, think about incorporating an emotional check-in as part of the morning routine.

This could be a spot on their desk where they pick a picture that shows the emotion they are currently feeling, or a chart you keep at your desk where they post a picture of their emotion. For many older elementary students, their social relationships are even more challenging than in a typical year. Students this age may still be getting used to interacting with their peers and adults in person and need specific practice with social and friendship skills. Find texts already within your curriculum, or short texts to supplement, that can present opportunities for discussions around making God-pleasing decisions and treating each other kindly, even if you feel these are skills they should already have mastered. Regression in some of these social skills can be expected currently, but planning for some additional supports will be helpful for all students.

Middle school students likely spent even more time than usual on technology and social media over the last two years. As with older elementary students, this likely has affected their social skills, but, combined with the physical and emotional changes that occur at this age, the impact could have more significant outcomes if not addressed. There may be online bullying or other social media postings affecting students' social and emotional skills at this age. Even though it may not be happening at school, it is a good opportunity to see if the school's anti-bullying approach needs to be revisited or readdressed with students. This may also be a time when students of this age are testing boundaries even more. Think about creating more opportunities that give them a voice in the school about important matters through a student advisory group, having student representatives at parent-teacher organization meetings, student council or other opportunities to give voice to their ideas.

High school students have had many areas of their social-emotional learning impacted as well. Some have faced increased responsibility at home, either by getting a part-time job, being responsible for the distance learning of younger siblings or providing support to family members who have been ill. They also may have reactions to current politics and social justice issues which are affecting their social-emotional skills. Identify any community groups or specialized clubs these students could participate in for enjoyment or think about a peer mentoring program for these students to support one another.

These ideas can be available to all students in the school, along with incorporating a specific social-emotional curriculum that provides explicit instruction in these skills, aligns with the school's Christian mission and can be worked into the academic curriculum during short blocks of time throughout the week. This social-emotional learning benefits all students and is not reserved for a specific few students or small groups. While these supports are provided universally, there will be some students who need greater and personalized support in these areas. If your school is fortunate enough to have a counselor on staff, even part-time, or a trusted community group that can provide these



additional services, make sure that there is coordination between these providers and the school. There should be procedures for identifying and referring students to these services, similar to what you may already have in place for academic support. Include these providers in academic team discussions about students as well so that none of the supports is operating as an island.

Obviously this is a very broad and extensive area in which students need, and will continue to need, support. As you and your school think about what may be appropriate to implement and how to do this, a helpful resource is available at schoolguide.casel.org. This guide from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) helps schools assess current practices and plan for improvement. Also reach out to LSEM 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. 7 // MARCH 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



Understanding the Sensory Sensitive Child

Some children are a bit more reactive to intense sensory information than others. Often, loud noises make these children jump or strong tastes cause them to reject food. These examples are within normal ranges and can often lessen over time as children adjust to their environment.

However, some children have persistently strong reactions to sensory information. For example, they may become overwhelmed by loud noises, bright lights or the constant feeling of the label of a shirt on the back of the neck. Or, they may crave strong tastes or need to touch everything they see. These children may have brains that process sensory information differently. When children react to sensory input in ways that are not characteristic of someone their age, we call this a sensory meltdown. The anxiety they feel puts their brains in panic mode. For example, children might have a meltdown that shows fight (a tantrum), flight (hiding) or freeze (refusing to proceed). Such children are not defiant; they have found ineffective ways to cope with what is bothering them. Often, they do not know how to tell an adult about the problem.

For most of us, our brains can filter out unnecessary sensory information to allow us to focus on learning or work. However, when this process does not work, the brain can go into meltdown mode. We call meltdowns maladaptive behavior because it serves a purpose (stops the problem) but does so in a way that

is not helpful to learning. The goal is to move the child toward adaptive behaviors which deal with anxiety appropriately. An adaptive behavior would include talking about what is causing the bother and finding a safe and effective way to deal with it.

It is important to remember that the reaction to sensory overload is due to anxiety. A meltdown is not about disobedience. This insight is essential to remember because punishment or reward is not likely to change or prevent this behavior. For the brain, the need to deal with anxiety is more robust than any punishment or reward. You will not be able to discipline your child out of this kind of reaction, but you can teach him ways to cope. In the face of a meltdown,





the first step is to deal with the anxiety. Here are some techniques that can help.

1. Do what helps your child feel safe. Some options are to hold the child in your lap with your arms wrapped gently around her or soothingly rub his back,
2. Reduce sensory input by turning off lights and turning down noise. Noise-canceling headphones help some children. A weighted blanket can give consistent tactile stimulation and bring on a calmer mood.
3. In a quiet voice, talk your child through some deep breathing and encourage her to pay attention to how her body feels.

Once your child has returned to a state of calm, then discussion can identify what caused the meltdown. This information will help you to move your child toward a more adaptive response to being overwhelmed. The goal is for your child to identify when a meltdown is about to happen and determine what is needed to prevent it.

If your child experiences frequent meltdowns due to sensory overload, it is wise to seek professional help. Your child's primary care provider can direct you to an occupational therapist to help you and your child

better understand and deal with sensory challenges. Keep in mind your child is not defective — just different. When sensory-sensitive children learn to cope, they begin to identify the gifts God gave them.

There are healthy family activities that can encourage good sensory development in children. Even children who process sensory information in a typical way benefit from sensory practice. Take a look at how your children spend their days and identify some of the following activities that you can encourage:

- › **Art, music and movement:** Any activity involving the arts provides children with active sensory practice. Your child does not have to take formal lessons to enjoy this kind of sensory input. Likewise, any activity that gets your child moving and creating will provide sensory integration practice.
- › **Environment:** We seem to have become people of the indoors, but developing brains love being outside. The outdoors offers the brain a broad range of sensory information, allowing the brain to practice integrating sights, sounds and smells.
- › **People:** When we add people into the mix of activities, we challenge the brain to work a little bit harder on sensory integration because being around other people means taking in more information. Any art, music, movement or outdoor activity with friends or family will help children develop sensory and self-regulation skills.

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!” (PSALM 34:8)

God gave us our senses to allow us to enjoy His beautiful creation. Because of the saving work of our Savior, we find refuge from the trials of the world and enjoy its beauty.



Professionally Speaking



IN ALL THINGS Keep Marching On



March can be difficult for some in education. Much of the school year has been accomplished, yet the big finish is still far off. Some start to drag in March, finding the battery low; giving their best day in and day out seems to take more than it's worth.

I'd suggest if you feel like that, your focus has turned to the wrong things. Educational ministry is not a job. It's a calling, a lifestyle. It's a privilege and a chance to impact the lives of children and families *forever*. What we do in Lutheran schools is about so much more than teaching social skills, arithmetic, reading and the fine arts. We are blessed to talk about Jesus, to model our faith, to directly share God's love through every interaction and conversation. Indeed, parents pay tuition so we will teach their children about the Savior. Wow.

Many of you think I'm preaching to the choir. You know what we do in Lutheran schools is more than providing an education. Still, it's exhausting work, and by now you feel bone tired. Just knowing the meaning and purpose of our mission hasn't been enough to keep up your energy level.

To borrow a Lutheran phrase, "what does this mean?" Serving Lutheran school ministry is an exceedingly joyful and fulfilling enterprise, but there are aspects of this service that can be draining. March can feel so tiring because we've made a mistake: powering through the work without heeding the need to refresh and recharge, to rest and renew. Remember, God created the world in six days, and then He rested. He gave that cycle to His people — "Remember the Sabbath day" (e.g., Ex. 20:8). Jesus emphasized this in response to Pharisee criticism



when He didn't deter His hungry disciples from gathering grain on the Sabbath. The Gospel of Mark shares:

One Sabbath he was going through the grain-fields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath." (vv. 23–28)

My point is that we were not created only to work, follow rules and neglect our own needs. Yet in school ministry, unless we are careful and intentional, that's exactly what happens. We work endlessly, we try to be all for all, to never disappoint and to always meet the expectations of everyone. We regularly put off time to get away and rest. And people look at us and think, "What a dedicated and committed worker for the Church."

Actually, no. Despite how hard you work, many take you for granted. Some will still think you don't do enough, and others will actually have the nerve to consider you overpaid. Certainly, many appreciate all that you contribute, but you'll never please everyone. And with all that effort, all that dedication and the lack of self-care, the failure to be fully appreciated takes a toll. *That's* how some end up feeling low by March.

Yet, we are called to keep serving. How do we keep marching on with energy? Two ways! First, focus on whom you are truly serving. You don't need to please everyone. You simply need to serve the God who created you for this ministry. He is the One who sees your true effort, and His love motivates you. He will be the One to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (e.g., Matt. 25:21). Second, protect your ability to serve with joyful energy by giving yourself permission to say "no." Stop overcommitting. Say "yes" to that weekend away, that evening not answering the phone, the plan that emails don't get responded to after (pick a time). Create boundaries that allow you the time needed for mental and physical wellness. This helps energy not to flag, and you will continue to bring your best to educational ministry, letting Christ shine in all things. **EVEN** in March.

Professionally Speaking // MARCH 2022

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mr. Jim Scriven Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



Jesus came for ALL people. “CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL” (COL. 3:11).

Bible Story: Jesus and the Children

Scripture References: Matt. 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16; Luke 18:15–17

What it teaches us: “[Jesus] took the children in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them” (MARK 10:16). Jesus touched the children and blessed them. We touch the children and their families as we care for them and share Jesus’ story.

Prepare to Teach

➤ **Read:** Matt. 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–15; Luke 18:15–17

➤ **Think:** Mark tells us Jesus put “his hands on them” — Jesus touched them. There are many references in Scripture to the power of touch (e.g., our story, Jesus touched and healed blind Bartimaeus, the woman healed by touching His robe, Thomas touched Jesus’ scars and knew He was indeed the risen, crucified Lord). We all need Jesus’ loving, caring touch.

➤ **Pray:** Dear Jesus, You touch us in so many ways — through Baptism, Your Word the Bible and the Lord’s Supper. Please help us to touch the children and their families, as we share Your life-giving Word. In Your name we pray. Amen.



WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

You will need

- *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.
- *Fingers Tell the Story (FTS)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.
- Pictures of Jesus, people, families with kids, unwelcoming disciple, welcoming Jesus, Jesus with children.

Gather for Worship

Use tune of “Good-bye, Good-bye” (*LOSP*, P. 40).

**Hel-lo, Hell-o, Hel-lo; Hel-lo-o-o, my friends, to you.
Please come here and sit with me; we’ll learn of Jesus too. Helo-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. Hel-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

Out in the country up on a hill — were many people listening so-o-o still.

Jesus told them of God’s BIG love; that God sent Him from heaven above.

Families came with all their kids; want to see Jesus, get a blessing from Him.

Jesus’ helper frowned, shook his head NO. “He’s too busy; back home you must go.”

Jesus smiled, opened His arms big and wide. “Come here, kids.” They ran to His side.

Jesus blessed them. Jesus loved them and He loves me and you. Jesus loved kids who lived long ago; He loves us and, He’s our Savior we know.

Sing the Theme Song: “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (*LOSP*, P. 94)

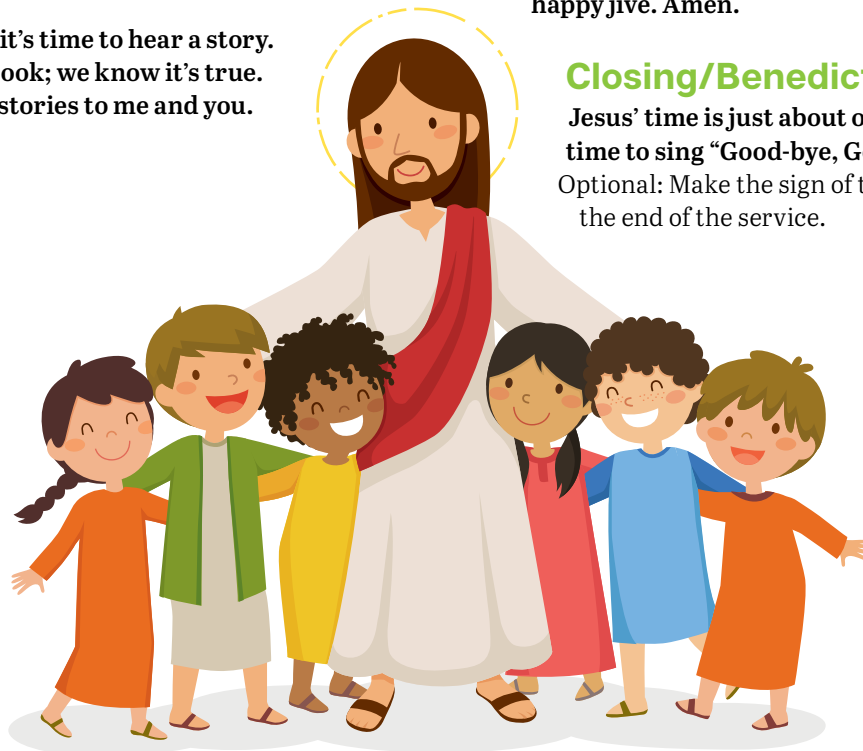
Time to Pray

We thank You, God, for Jesus. We thank You for His love. We’re thankful that You sent Him down from heaven above. We know He is the Savior who died and came alive, so we can be Your children. Let’s do a happy jive. 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:** Focus on the sense of touch and different textures.

› **Nutrition:** Serve smooth pudding and add a texture (e.g., pieces of fruit, crushed nuts).

T Technology

› **Touch:** Make/purchase a board with different textures for the children to feel.

R Reading and Language Arts

› **Books:** Read the classic *Pat the Bunny* by Dorothy Kunhardt (Random House, 1940); *Jesus Loves the Little Children* and *Jesus Loves Me* board books by Debbie Anderson (David C Cook, 1998); *Jesus Blesses the Children* by Gloria Truitt (an Arch book, CPH, 1996); *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, a board book by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury (Little Simon, 1997).

› **Finger Play:** "How Much Does Jesus Love Me?" (FTS, P. 26) End with Jesus loves us so much He opened His arms wide and was nailed to a cross.

E Engineering

› **Travel:** Encourage toddlers to choose a riding toy to go and see Jesus. As they go, chant: "We're gonna go see Jesus." Have a blanket at the end where they can sit and listen to the story rhyme.

A Arts (art, music and physical education)

› **Art:** Make a collage of items discovered on an outdoor walk and glue to a piece of heavy cardboard or thin piece of plywood. Focus on different textures.

› **Music:** "I Have Hands" (LOSP, P. 29): focus on "have fingers that can feel, feel, feel"; "God Gave Me Eyes" (LOSP, P. 75), especially stanza 5.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

Ongoing research shows that children NEED loving touch in order to grow and learn. In our Bible story, Jesus touched the children, blessed and prayed with them. Our children need our and Jesus' touch. They are touched with Jesus' love as we care for them and especially through Baptism, where Jesus touches them in the water and, through the power of God's Word, makes them God's very own children.



› Physical Education:

Create a walk to go and see Jesus, similar to "Going on a Bear Hunt" (e.g., walking down a road, climbing up a hill, jumping over rocks).

M Mathematics

› **Counting song:** Use the melody of "Ten Little Indians"

One little, two little, three little children; four little ... went to see our Savior.

... Jesus hugged each one of them.

... Jesus prayed with each of them.

S Social Studies

› **Families brought children to see Jesus.** Take the children to church to see Pastor wearing his vestments (similar to the clothes Jesus wore). Tell them of Jesus' love; give hugs and pray with/for each of them.



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | SERVING in the name of Jesus in All Things

All Things Considered in SERVING

“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done for you” (JOHN 13:14–15).

Jesus serves His disciples a few hours before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, trials before Caiaphas and Pilate, death on the cross and the other events of the Passion remembered during the Lenten season. Jesus’ service did not begin in the Upper Room. During His earthly ministry Jesus welcomed and served little children. Through His miracles He served the physical needs of the hungry, lame and leprous. Jesus served those deemed unworthy of His attention because of their heritage or social standing. Jesus came to serve.

Jesus came to serve sinners. Jesus came to serve us. We confess that we are selective in our service, seeking to serve those who will reward us for our service, rather than serving the less fortunate and less connected. We serve in times and settings that are comfortable and convenient, rather than serving generously and randomly.

Jesus’ washing of feet was a prelude to the ultimate act of service. Jesus goes on to serve denying Peter and fleeing, doubting

disciples as He suffers and dies on the cross. Jesus serves the penitent thief who hangs beside Him and the believing centurion who has assisted in the crucifixion. Jesus serves His distraught mother and an obedient disciple. Jesus serves those at the scene of His crucifixion and all who in faith visit that scene each Lenten season.

In the foot washing setting of the Upper Room, Jesus’ service from the cross would be forever shared with the disciples as Jesus instituted the Last Supper. He continues to serve His body and blood to His church as communicants come to the Lord’s Supper.

Students in Lutheran schools learn of Jesus’ service for them. While students learn of Jesus every day in a Lutheran school, the Lenten season provides a unique opportunity for teaching about Jesus’ service and serving others following His example.



Servant leadership in the Lutheran school begins with the school shepherd. While servant leadership is emphasized in many corporate and other contexts, it takes on new meaning in our church and school settings. Lutheran school and church leaders respond to Christ’s sacrificial service. Luther gives wise counsel applicable to school shepherds: “But our old Adam finds such washing of feet very sour work, for he would always prefer being served

to being obliged to serve others. And he is especially hurt when gratitude fails to follow. But the washing of feet is to continue even if little or no gratitude follows. Therefore we need not only diligent practice but also constant prayer that God would give us His grace to be patient and humble” [Ewald Plass ed., *What Luther Says*, Vol. III (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 1285].

The school administration, staff and students follow the lead of the school shepherd in service. The school shepherd preaches and teaches about the Servant and Suffering Savior. The school shepherd gives life to the message as he demonstrates service. The examples differ based on the ministry contexts and gifts of the shepherd. The shepherd may assist the little child crossing the street, pick up the garbage on the school parking lot or the litter in the school hallway, sweep the gym floor or help clear the snow-covered walkway, play with the little child on the playground, listen attentively to the burdens of a school parent or serve in other ways. The pastoral heart brings the servant opportunities to the school shepherd.

Lutheran school students serve because Jesus served: middle school students serve primary grade students, the athlete serves the musician, the familiar student serves the new enrollee, the popular student serves the insecure student, the experienced teacher mentors the new faculty member, school families respond generously to the family in crisis.

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

- › Where have you seen servant hearts and servant leadership in your church and school setting?
- › What opportunities are students given to serve one another and their church and community?
- › How do you recognize the service of volunteers?

HYMN

“Jesus, greatest at the table,
The almighty Son of Man,
Laid aside His outer clothing,
Poured some water in a pan;
As the Twelve lay, hushed in silence,
He the servant’s task began.

“Jesus took the role of servant
When upon that gruesome span,
For all human sin He suffered
As a vile and loathsome man;
On the cross poured out like water
To fulfill the Father’s plan.” (LSB 446:1, 3)

prayer

ALL THINGS IN JESUS’ NAME

Jesus, You came to be the
Suffering Servant. Because of
Your sacrificial service, we are
blessed to serve children and
families through our Lutheran
school ministry. Bless our
serving, in Jesus’ name. Amen.



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



Joyful Notes: Rejoice in the Lord Always

Go ahead and sing along, or at least hum along, as you read the next three phrases:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!

The more we get together, the happier we'll be!

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so!

The gift of music is one to cherish and enjoy! For young children, music is often the door that opens their minds to creativity, imagination and learning. Music is an enjoyable and an often easy activity to participate in. Ponder what visuals may come to a child's mind when he hears the nursery rhyme of "Hickory Dickory Dock," or what he may think when he sings along to "The Wheels on the Bus." Reflect for a moment what a child feels inside her heart when she hears the words to "Jesus Loves Me." Music, and the lyrics included within music, are powerful in many ways!

Music is a special benefit for all people. Music can calm anxious minds. Music can boost physical exercise. Music can create an environment of rest, but also one of energy. Music can also help us remember specific things; the use of music in remembering something specific is powerful. The ABCs are set to a tune, and many math facts can be

learned through repetition and song. Yes, music is used in many educational ways too.

There are many ways to share music. Some people appreciate classical music while others appreciate rock. Some people enjoy playing the piano while others prefer to make music with their computers. As Paul wrote to the people of Ephesus, how great it is to be "addressing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart" (EPH. 5:19). When it comes to making music that glorifies God, there are many ways in which it can be done.

When children create their own music, they do so out of creativity and enjoyment. While most young children do not how to officially play the drums, toddler drums sets are popular toys; while most children are unable to correctly identify notes played on a piano, kiddie pianos are, again, popular toys for young children. Children love to imitate adults; playing instruments and singing songs — even made-up songs — are creative ways that children explore the world around them.

Scripture shares many words of faith, love and trust in God in Psalms, the longest book in the Bible — all through musical lyrics. Numerous times, the psalmist wrote about the value of music — both vocal and instrumental:



“Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!” (PSALM 95:1),

“Oh sing to the LORD a new song” (PSALM 98:1A), and

“Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth” (PSALM 100:1).

For early childhood educators and leaders, it is often quite natural to engage in music with students. Once an adult begins a song, children quickly join in. Young children often make their own music with instruments, naturally, in their environments. God has wired brains to enjoy music and creatively make music in many ways.

Why use music in early childhood? Why are songs and instruments important? Music leads to children’s natural growth and development. As a leader or teacher in your Lutheran school, it is necessary to share music and engage children in musical exchanges. Here are some examples of using music to grow young minds:

SING IMPORTANT WORDS AND PHRASES

The use of songs to signal clean up, greetings, good-byes and the start of “Jesus Time” in your classroom lets children know that music can be used to signal important events. Music also assists with memorization. The more something is repeated, the easier it is for a young mind to learn.

MAKE A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

The value of making a simple musical instrument is often overlooked in many classrooms. The creative mind of a young child can easily think of ways to make an everyday object musical. Provide items and supplies that children can use to creatively make musical instruments often, both inside and outside of the classroom. The STEAM initiative is popular in education; see what opportunities you can provide your students in this area.

USE BACKGROUND MUSIC

Some adults think that background music in a classroom leads to extra noise. However, research shares that background music can have a positive impact on student behaviors and moods. Quiet music not only can help children rest well, but it can also help children think more deeply and boost short-term focus.



READ MUSICAL BOOKS

Many popular nursery rhymes and children’s songs have been put into written and illustrated book format. Use these books for classroom read-alouds often, and encourage children to read (and sing) them during free choice time as well. These books make great choices for libraries, too, as children can enjoy the books (and corresponding musical features) at home with family members.

The list of ways to engage in music throughout the day is endless. As a teacher in early childhood, you have so many opportunities each day not only to use music with your students, but to also encourage the use of music by your students — independently and cooperatively. Look for ways that you can daily praise God through music — by listening to music, singing or playing a musical instrument.

And, remember ... music can be soft or loud, fast or slow. Music has a special meaning for those who create, and for those who receive! As the words in Psalm 150 say, “Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!”

In all things, praise God!