



SEPTEMBER 2022

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD
School Ministry



SEPTEMBER 2022

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

Contents

Alight

“Making Disciples for Life:
The Legacy of Lutheran Schools”
Dr. Rebecca Schmidt

Community and Enrollment

“Overview of the Year’s Articles
and Staff Community”
Dr. Kristen Newell

Early Childhood Devotions

“God Chooses Us!”
Dr. Judith Christian

Family Matters

“There’s No Place Like Home”
Dr. Steven Christopher

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

“Kids Do Well if They Can”
Dr. Kara Bratton

Parent Pages

“God’s Brain Design for Making Disciples for Life”
Dr. Kim Marxhausen

Professionally Speaking

“Want to Make Disciples? Go with Subtle Sincerity”
Mr. Jim Scriven

Rattles & Prattles

“God Chooses Little Children”
Mrs. Judy Williams

School Shepherd

“School Shepherd and DISCIPLE”
Rev. Robert Riggert

Time Out for Directors

“When I Grow Up...”
Dr. Drew Gerdes



Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Making Disciples for Life The Legacy of Lutheran Schools

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19–20).

I recently had the opportunity to visit Peace Lutheran Church and School in Saginaw, Mich., as a part of a legacy reunion. Several confirmation classes gathered to give thanks to Peace Lutheran Ministries for its deep and abiding dedication to sharing the word of God daily with the children, families and community it has served so well.

I had a personal connection. My husband’s family are members of Peace. He grew up with his brothers there and attended Peace Lutheran School. I met my husband in college, and as a newlywed, I, too, became a member of Peace when we moved to the area. Little did I know the impact that Peace would have on our family with its wonderful team of pastors, teachers, church workers and congregation members who served so faithfully. My husband and I were surrounded by a church community who literally helped us raise our children in a loving, caring Christian environment.

My children and their cousins attended Peace Lutheran School. I met the parents of our children’s classmates, and we became life-long friends as we raised our children together supported by this loving community. Through life’s journey with Baptisms, preschool,

school days, Bible studies, chapel, music programs, athletics, confirmations, field trips and youth group, this community had a powerful impact on our family. Led by loving pastors, teachers and church workers, we had so many places to gather and opportunities to grow together in His Word where the beautiful Gospel message of God’s promise of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ was shared. At the center of our family was the blessing of Peace sharing this message of hope for all.

As the new school year unfolds, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod gathers around the “Making Disciples for Life” triennium theme. Historically and presently, Lutheran schools are integral to “Making Disciples for Life,” and this theme unites Lutheran schools in worship, witness and life together.

In Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus’ disciples were commissioned to make disciples, and the text continues to commission Lutheran schools to make disciples of children. Claimed as God’s children “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” in the waters of Baptism, children hear and learn God’s Word to grow as disciples for life. In 1,855 schools nationwide and 3 international schools in Hanoi, Shanghai and Hong Kong, educators continue to nurture and educate children in early childhood through high school. I give thanks for Peace Lutheran Ministries and all Lutheran schools for the legacy of Christian education for my family and for the generations of families to come.

Community & Enrollment



Overview of the Year's Articles and Staff Community



Are you rested, rejuvenated and ready to go?! Or are you already tired? Whether you are tired or rejuvenated, yearning for rest or ready to go, my prayer is that the articles in *Community and Enrollment* will not leave you with one more thing on your task list, but rather with hope that the life God desires for us, in community with believers, is one of joy, rest, support and renewal. Jesus promises those who take up His yoke will find rest even in the work (MATT. 11:28-29). As we learn about Christian community and how it can shape, support and grow a Lutheran school, we are released to live the life God has called us to — to make disciples as we go (MATT. 28:19).

Here are topics that will be covered this year:

- > **September** - *Staff Community*
- > **October** - *Insiders and Outsiders*
- > **November** - *The Inefficiency of Relationships*
- > **December** - *Welcoming People of Different Values*
- > **January** - *Samples of Innovative Community Building*
- > **February** - *Parent Connections*
- > **March** - *Social Media and Storytelling*
- > **April** - *Community vs. Individualism*
- > **May** - *Making Disciples of Children*

Let's start at the beginning: *Staff Community*. This is a foundational element for Lutheran school mission advancement. The April 2022 *Community and Enrollment* article focused on *Staff Community*. That article provided a snapshot of how building teams in Lutheran schools should look different than building teams in secular industries. Specifically, we talked about 1) Prayer, 2) Rest and 3) Celebrations. [For a refresher, go look up the article!](#) This month, we will dig a little deeper into building a vibrant staff community.

Growing enrollment is one aspect of school growth, but what else has to happen to support school growth in a distinctly Lutheran school? School growth isn't simply

an increase in numbers. Instead it includes, to name a few, innovative technology use, diversity of extra-curricular options and, of course, developing disciples of Jesus. That last one can be hard to measure, but, without *making disciples for life*, is a Lutheran school really growing? Therefore, in dreaming about enrollment growth, we must put first things first. How can we ensure that as enrollment numbers grow (or diminish), student bodies shift from Lutheran families to unchurched families and non-Lutheran trained teachers serve in our schools we still grow Christian disciples?

We cannot make disciples if we are not ourselves disciples of Jesus. With enrollment growth in mind, we must build a solid foundation among staff with a culture — a *community* — that supports each person's discipleship process. We must pray, rest and celebrate together. Other methods for building *staff community* for the purpose of discipleship include: 1) spending time away from school together, 2) being in Bible study, 3) including corporate worship as part of weekly habits and 4) teaching shared language around our faith.

The Lutheran Education Association (LEA) Convocation is a great way to build staff community as you spend time *together* away from the hustle and bustle of school. If you are going to Milwaukee this October, take advantage of time in vehicles, hotels and between sessions to laugh together, cry together and see each other as fellow *image bearers* of God. If you are not going to LEA this year, find a way to plan and experience your own retreat as a staff. Maybe there is a Lutheran camp close by where you can stay overnight. Maybe there is a generous church member with a lake house or large home where you can get away. Wherever it is, time spent together away from desks, computers and fluorescent lights can be valuable in nurturing *staff community* by getting to know each other, developing relationships and strengthening trust. Growing together personally is just as important as growing together professionally.

The collective habits of our days and weeks and the rhythms of our lives help form our communities. Pray, rest, celebrate ... and also, be in Scripture together. This may be a formal Bible study, devotions or just an intentional word (verse, passage) from the Bible with time for reflection. Also ... worship! Many Lutheran schools track student worship attendance. For most,



this is done to encourage worship. Do we do the same for staff members? How can we, in grace, uphold the value of worship and encourage it among all staff members? We cannot fully live out our callings as the Body of Christ without participating in corporate worship.

Lastly, as schools search for qualified teachers, it is necessary for many to hire teachers who did not go through an undergraduate Lutheran teaching program. This reality makes the Synod's colloquy program vital for our schools to remain distinctly Lutheran and intentionally focused on Christian teaching. Expecting all staff to be Lutheran trained can help unify values and beliefs and build a common language for how the Gospel is shared. Shared values and common language unify communities and lead to a collective identity.

Growing enrollment is desired in Lutheran schools *so that* we can share the Gospel of Jesus with more students. As we shape our school communities, they must grow as Christian, disciple-making pockets of love, grace and forgiveness. Staff members who are grounded in the desire to grow in relationship with Jesus know what it means to be a disciple. Only then can they walk alongside the Holy Spirit in the work of making disciples of their students. School growth is intrinsically tied to a *staff community* whose practices keep them focused on the main thing: *making disciples for life*.

Community & Enrollment

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Kristen Newell Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

MAKING DISCIPLES FOR LIFE **MATT. 28:19–20**

FOCUS: God chooses people to serve Him. God chooses children.



God Chooses Us!

Jesus and the Children (MATT. 19:13–15; MARK 10:13–16; LUKE 18:15–17)

Before You Teach

God chooses children as well as adults to forward the mission of Jesus Christ. There is no pre-determined age of majority in the kingdom of God. The call to worship Him, work in His kingdom and witness to His loving purpose spans a person's whole life. It has been said that Jesus taught adults and blessed children. Then, as now, such blessing flowed through them. Let us then thank God for the gift they are to us and endeavor to help shape them for service in His world.



Greeting

Set time aside to daily greet children upon entry. **Good morning/afternoon, child of God! I am so happy you are here today.** Statistically, the first five seconds upon a child's arrival are critical for establishing the child's positive outlook for the day.

Gathering

Consistently use a signal or song, such as "Happy Now We Gather" (LOSP, P. 9), for daily gathering together in your worship center. Introduce the biblical narrative "**Jesus and the Children.**"

Tell the Story

You will need: An image of Jesus with children.

Introduce and tell the narrative. Show the image of Jesus and the children. Signal children to repeat bold-type phrases after you.

People brought babies and little children to Jesus, wanting Him to pray for them. The 12 disciples scolded the people who brought the little children, and they said, "**Go away! Jesus is too busy for**

you!" Hearing this, Jesus scolded the disciples. Calling the children to Himself, Jesus said, "**Let the little children come to Me, and do not stop them. The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.**" Then Jesus took the babies and little children in His arms and blessed them. Jesus loved the babies and children. JESUS LOVES YOU!

Praying Together

Guide children to fold their hands, bow their heads and repeat each phrase after you.

PRAY: Dear Jesus,
Thank You for loving me all the time. I am Yours and You are mine. Help me to show and tell Your love, Your gift to all from heaven above. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (MATT. 28:19–20)

Conclude by together singing verse 3 of “We Pray for Each Other” (LOSP, P. 15).

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “Let the children come to me” (LUKE 18:16B).

Grades 1 & 2: “But Jesus called them to him, saying, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not hinder [stop] them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God’” (LUKE 18:16).

Activities

CREATE: Mirror, Mirror. You will need: tagboard, crayons or markers. Do: Precut hand-held oval mirror shapes from tagboard (one per child). Write children’s names on the “mirror” handles. Guide each child to draw his or her face in the “mirror.” Once completed, teach and together say: **“I look in the mirror, and what do I see? I see (child names self), and JESUS LOVES ME!”**

DO: Chant “Kids Can.” Signal children to repeat bold phrases chanted by the leader.

LEADER: As read in the Bible Book of Mark, our Lord Jesus said,

ALL: I love kids so let them come; it doesn’t matter where they’re from. Kids are awesome, super sensational. Kids are a walking testimonial.

LEADER: Kids can clap and kids can sing. Kids can jump, and skip and swing.

Kids can laugh and kids can wiggle. Kids can smile, and pray and giggle.



Kids can play and kids can share. Kids can help, and kids can care.

ALL: We love Jesus you will hear, as we clap our hands and give a cheer!

Stamp, clap; stamp, clap; stamp, clap, clap (repeat).

Y-a-a-y, JESUS (shout)!

SING: “God Chose Me” (LOSP, P. 107).

FUNDAY FRIDAY: Once a month plan a special, out-of-the-ordinary or funny activity. This month tiptoe from one place to another throughout the day.

CAMP SERVE: Engage children, parents, church members and community in acts of service. Enlist a volunteer leader and leadership team who have skills to recruit, organize and address identified school, church and/or community needs. Monthly ideas will be provided here; however, you are best positioned to identify local needs and opportunities for service.

Sending

You will need: A handheld mirror. Review the day. Guide children to carefully pass a handheld mirror. As it is received by each, children chant, **“I look in the mirror and who do I see? I see (child names self), and Jesus**

loves me. Repeat until all children have received and passed the mirror. Dismiss and say to each, Jesus loves YOU, all the time!

Live the Story

Avoid “hindering habits.” The sacrificial love of Jesus for each of us is unconditional. Let us strive to do likewise, speaking, teaching and exemplifying the words, “Jesus loves you, and I love you.”

Early Childhood Devotions

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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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Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



MAKING DISCIPLES FOR LIFE

“There’s No Place Like Home”

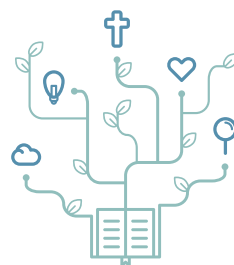
Most of us recognize the title phrase from the ending of the movie classic, *The Wizard of Oz* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939). It resonates well with those of us who were raised in stable households, with committed family members who provided a loving environment, where we were nurtured toward responsible adulthood. While many of us believe “there’s no place like home” to be true — that’s not always the case. Some people don’t have warm and positive feelings about the home they grew up in. Not everyone grew up in a supportive atmosphere that fostered healthy values, which guided toward mature adult living.

Whether we grew up in a happy and loving home or not, it’s a safe bet that we want to create a stable and caring household for our children. As Christian parents, we want to share the love of Jesus every day in our home, so that our children will grow daily in the Christian faith. We want to nurture faith within our family setting so that our kids will remain lifelong disciples of Jesus.

The home can be a constant resource for encouraging growth in faith. It can be a discipleship center for all generations. We often think of the church as the place for faith growth — which it most certainly is, with the charge to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments. But, what happens the rest of the week? Home is where people spend the majority of their time. Home is the place not only where we hang our hats, but also where we hang our hearts. So, it seems appropriate to encourage parents and leaders in the home to become equippers of the faith, in addition to those who serve in church positions, be they paid or volunteer leaders.

So, how is this done? How, in today’s glitzy, fast-paced, values-confused world, do we nurture faith in our homes? Let’s look to God’s Word — back to the Old Testament, where God gives some practical ideas of how His commands can remain upon the hearts of His people. Deuteronomy Chapter 6 states,

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (vv. 6–9).



Wow! Some very down-to-earth ideas. Visual reminders and conversation starters! Suggestions for what time of day and where to speak about such things. Even ideas for physical attire that will serve as a reminder of God’s commands. The goal here is to connect God’s message with His people through very simple means. Times may have changed since these words were first spoken, but the need for faith talk and family discussions is still clear within the home setting.

When Christian families and their faith are aligned in healthy ways, there is indeed, “no place like home.” And when a home becomes a household of faith, nurturing and supporting family members as they grow as disciples, there is a shared pathway to heaven, where of we can all say those same words, “there’s no place like home.”

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY //

Gather the family together around a table or other hard surface, with no electronic distractions, to enjoy the family activity outlined below.

FAMILY SYMBOLS PROJECT

PURPOSE: To engage family members in a fun activity that allows them to express their faith through symbols and words which can be displayed in the home.

OPENER: Ask the following questions in your family setting to get a discussion going.

- What's something you like about our family?
- What are some things our family likes to do?
- What are some new things you would like to see our family do in the coming school year?

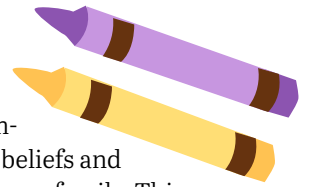
FUN FAMILY SYMBOLS: In the place where the family is sitting, please provide the following supplies:

- A roll or two of adhesive shelf liner paper (the lightly sticky kind that is easy to remove) or several pieces of colored construction paper
- White glue or several glue sticks
- Scissors for family members who can use them safely
- Scotch tape
- Yarn or string



1. Ask your family, "What are some important things that we do together?" Answers could include going to church, camping, sports, playing games, reading and so on. Make a list of these items.
2. Next, ask your family what are some important beliefs they hold to be true and want to follow in practical ways. Make a list of these items (e.g., Jesus loves us, we should follow God's Word in the Bible, we should love our neighbor, we should be kind and helpful to others, we can be joyful in all situations, we have the gift of eternal life because Jesus rose from the dead).

3. Review the two lists you made in #2 and #3 above, and try to think of pictures, images or symbols that would illustrate these beliefs and activities that are important to your family. This could be a cross, the picture of an open tomb, the Christian fish symbol, a soccer ball or other sports equipment and so on. If it's hard to think of a symbol, it could also be an important words like joy, serve, peace, love, be kind and so on.
4. As a family select five to seven items from your list of symbols or words that you want to display in the entryway of your home.
5. Using the adhesive shelf liner paper or construction paper, cut out these symbols and words that illustrate your family's faith and values.
6. When you have five to seven of them completed, walk to the entryway/front door area of your home and place them where they can be seen by all who enter (on the doorframes, the handrails, the front door, etc.).
7. When the symbols and words are all in place, hold hands as a family and have someone in the family read the closing prayer printed below in echo fashion, speaking it phrase by phrase, with everyone repeating the words.



CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for our home, and thank You for our family. Please bless all who enter our house. May our home be a place of joy, peace and love, centered around Jesus. Help us as a family to serve You and others, and to grow in our faith every day. In the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Kids Do Well if They Can



Can you relate to the following scenario? You give your class time to work independently on an assignment, but as soon as the students begin, Timmy gets out of his seat and starts talking to his friends. You kindly remind Timmy to return to his seat and start his work. He sits down but wads up his papers and starts throwing them at classmates. You approach his desk, smooth out his papers and prompt him again to start working. He tells you the assignment is stupid, crosses his arms and refuses to work. At this point, maybe you leave him alone for a couple minutes or ask if he needs help getting started, but the situation still escalates and results in Timmy yelling at you, him possibly threatening you or classmates and you seeing no choice but to remove him from the room. This is not the first time you've experienced this type of behavior with Timmy, and you

know it won't be the last. You're at a loss for how to help him, and his parents and school leadership are as well. Nothing seems to be resolving the challenging behavior.

This type of scenario seems to occur more frequently than we would like in our schools and educational settings. It is frustrating as a teacher and leader to not see lasting change no matter what you try, how consistently you follow the school's discipline plan or how many parent meetings are held. Also, it's likely that this topic wasn't covered in depth in any of your education courses. Even before the pandemic, there seemed to be a rising number of behavior concerns that were not being effectively resolved by following a traditional discipline plan or even a schoolwide approach or program. These plans work for some students, but when situations such as the one described above keep occurring regardless of our consistency in following the plan, program or approach, we need to have other tools available to help students and ourselves!

In these moments of challenging behavior and intense emotions, it can be difficult to remember that each student is *fearfully and wonderfully made*. Regardless of the frustrations and challenges that may come to the classroom environment, God created that student with a purpose and with unique strengths. This truth often gets lost in the day-to-day conversations about the student's behavior, what the consequences should be and what kind of behavior plan would work. God's purpose for each child can also get lost when conversations turn to unproductive thoughts that may assign blame to the child's parents or caregivers or may formally or informally label the child in discussions that should be about creating solutions.



This year, rather than continuing with some practices and narratives that have not led to change so far, let's explore other thoughts and strategies that may help us and our students. To start, think about this statement from Dr. Ross Greene: "Kids do well if they can." Do you agree with this, or do you find yourself thinking it should read, "Kids do well if they *want to*"? If you tend to think it should be the latter, then the issue becomes one of motivation. We're assuming the child has the skills to do well, but he or she is choosing not to use those skills. This may lead us to thinking about a student's behavior being manipulative or being on purpose. Manipulation requires skills in forethought, planning, organization and impulse control. These are skills that many students with behavioral challenges struggle with to a significant extent. Therefore, it is also not productive to think of children with behavioral challenges as being manipulative in most cases because it leads us down an ineffective road of not addressing the skills they may be lacking.

Here's another comparison to think about. Would you say that students who struggle to read have the skills to read proficiently and are choosing not to use them? Or would you agree that they are lacking some important skills related to reading? The same is often true of behavior! We need to find out what skills the child is lacking in order to find solutions. Behaviors occur

because of the lack of these skills, and that is what we need to address. So often, our classroom and schoolwide discipline procedures address the behavior and not the skills the child needs, and therefore we continue to have students who exhibit the same challenging behaviors. Let's start by reframing our mindset from "kids do well if they want to" to "kids do well if they can" and build strategies to help these students in our schools and classrooms.



Keep reading each month to explore this topic, learn effective (and ineffective) strategies and remember that each of these students is *fearfully and wonderfully made*. In the meantime, contact LSEM at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at luthsped.org and let us know how we can support you in your work with students this year!

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Kara Bratton Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



God's Brain Design for Making Disciples for Life

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”
(MATT. 28:19–20).

We know these verses as the Great Commission. They easily conjure up images of missionaries and Bible translators living in foreign lands. Yet, have you ever understood these verses as they relate to your parenting? When God blesses us with children, He also gives us the critical vocation to raise our children as His disciples.

As parents, our first step in discipleship is Baptism. In Baptism, the Holy Spirit brings your child into the faith and family of God. Being a part of the family of God presents you and your child with many blessings that help create a disciple for life. You are not left alone with the task of making disciples. If not for the redemptive work of Jesus, there would be no need for disciples. Furthermore, Jesus sends the Spirit to accomplish this task through us.

We want our children to experience growth in their faith, which the Spirit accomplishes through the Word and Sacraments. As we consider our participation in this task, we have the fundamental

tools of instruction and experience at our disposal. Instruction and experience are two different ways to teach and learn. Each has a part in our lives with our children.

Additionally, when we look at God's design for brains to learn, it is wise to consider three characteristics of brain development. First, your child's brain notes what he discovers within the *family*. Second, brains attend to information that is *repeated*. Third, brains take note of information learned in multiple *settings*. Family, repetition and multiple settings indicate to the brain that the activities are crucial for human survival. This indication encourages the brain to create and strengthen neural pathways. When we experience faith in these ways, God builds faith into our brains.

Instruction

Instruction is direct teaching. As parents, we are no strangers to instruction because in much of our time with our children, we teach them what they need to live happy, healthy lives. In discipleship, we realize that spiritual health is a crucial component of development and it requires instruction.

Family — Home devotions and prayer time are vital tools for making disciples of your children. These sessions do not need to be formal. Every time you pray with your child, you teach her about faith. Keep a



Bible on your dinner table and encourage your child to remind you to share. A devotion can come from a book or be as simple as a conversation about a favorite Scripture verse.

Repetition — One of the most significant benefits of family worship is the repetition of weekly worship attendance. The brain takes note of the things that families often do and uses those events to make connections for learning. Of course, it is wonderful to leave church with God's Word and peace filling your heart, but even when Sunday mornings feel hectic, God still uses the experience to make disciples.

Settings — Children learn when they hear God's Word at home, but their brains also notice when the same teaching found at home occurs in another location. So take advantage of the education opportunities you find at your church. School, childcare, Sunday School, vacation Bible school, family events and music groups all contribute to making disciples.

Experience

Experience is indirect teaching. This instruction is informal and happens all of the time. Our children watch us and learn every time we engage with them. Each interaction has the potential to point our children to Jesus.

Family — Remember to keep Law and Grace as a focus in your discipline practices. Children need rules and consequences. However, children will fail. So, children also need forgiveness. They need to be confident that while you will correct misbehaviors, their sins will not stop you from loving them.

Repetition — Modeling is an essential part of learning through experience. Two of the best things we can model are gratitude and prayer. By modeling prayer, you teach your child that we have an approachable God who cares about us. By modeling gratitude, you give your children the understanding that blessings are God's care for us.

Settings — Teaching your children to serve each other and working as a family to serve others is about putting discipleship into action. Teach your children that we serve because God loves us and Jesus saved us. Serving others is about the joy that faith brings.

The last part of the verse that begins this article is a treasured promise for parents. We will make mistakes as we work to make disciples, but Jesus is always with us. We do the earthly work, and God accomplishes the heavenly goal.





Professionally Speaking



Want to Make Disciples? Go with Subtle Sincerity

As we start off another school year, everyone serving in our Lutheran educational ministries should have an eye on the primary reason our schools exist: making disciples. It's true! Lutheran schools exist to help the Church teach the faith, model the Christian life and inspire children (and their families) to want to know our Lord better and to follow Him all their days. Offering high quality education, whether early childhood, elementary or high school, is merely our hook — how we engage with students and their parents to achieve our ultimate mission.

Sure, we want to see students well prepared to live as contributing members of society and ready to make a positive impact on those around them. But more importantly, we want to see our students with us in Heaven. That's why we operate these school ministries. Children can get an education in many ways. In fact, education is offered for FREE in most developed countries of the world. We don't operate our schools primarily to educate students in reading, math, science and history. It's really about Jesus.

Here's where we need to be subtle. We know that's our primary purpose. And we should never suggest it isn't a purpose of what we do. But we serve a clientele with varied backgrounds these days. To succeed in the greater mission of making disciples, we need to know our audience and speak with some wisdom.

Some of our families come to us because they are Lutheran, and they value having a distinctly Lutheran



education. Others are Christians looking for a loving Christian environment in which their children will grow and thrive. Still others may be inactive Christians; others yet may be those known as “dones” (raised in the Church but have left organized religion) or “nones” (don't see a need for religion). They've come for a rigorous education in a safe, caring environment, and they've signed up often despite the fact we teach the faith.

Nearly 100% of all the types of families have chosen to invest their financial resources in an education at your school. And honestly, they are primarily looking to see their children receive a high-quality education. They want to know that you have a great curriculum, that your teachers are credentialed and skilled and that you have put the time into your program so that it will prepare their children for education at the next level.

“We succeed best at our mission of sharing the faith, making disciples, when we fulfill the promises we make, delivering a high-quality Lutheran education while building relationships between the home and school.”



Most of these families don't want to be regularly reminded that our primary mission is making disciples. I'm sorry, but that's just not what they are paying for. Many of your Lutheran and Christian families are happy to see that as a complementary purpose, but they believe they can teach the faith at home and their children will learn about God at church; the education you provide better not be lacking so that you fit in Bible time and chapel. That's genuinely what some of them are thinking. Accordingly, we are wise to ensure our programs deliver excellent educational outcomes AND Jesus.

What's most important here, though, and what I believe our school leaders, teachers and all staff need to understand is that some of our families come to us these days watching and waiting for us to show what they believe to be our true colors. These are usually the families who don't have a church home. They may not even be Christian. They're at our schools because we were recommended, or they heard about our great reputation or when shopping around our school impressed them the most. But they aren't there for the Christian element. They don't think they need it. And they are on guard against when we demonstrate what we REALLY

care about is getting them to join our church because that plays right into the worldly stereotype about Christians: we just want more numbers in church and thus more money in the offering.

You and I KNOW that's not true. But people coming to us from outside the Church don't know that. They will be quick to believe the worst if we aren't careful. From day one in our schools, we need to say and show that we care about them as people, that we care enough about their children to provide the very best well-rounded education and that we are genuinely interested in getting to know them better. Just because we care.

You've all heard the maxim they won't care until they know you care. That is entirely true in Lutheran education. We succeed best at our mission of sharing the faith, making disciples, when we fulfill the promises we make, delivering a high-quality Lutheran education while building relationships between the home and school. Do that well and you'll build trusting, loyal advocates of your school; through those relationships you'll be able to share the faith in deeply meaningful ways.

Professionally Speaking // SEPTEMBER 2022

Writer: Mr. Jim Scriven Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



God chooses little children.

“GOD CHOOSES PEOPLE TO SERVE HIM” (MATT. 28:19-20).

BIBLE NARRATIVE

Jesus blesses the children.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Matt. 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16; Luke 18:15–17; Num. 6:22–27; Prov. 20:11

CENTRAL FOCUS

Little children are important to Jesus. He chooses and empowers them to serve Him — all their lives.



Prepare to Teach

- **Read** the narrative in several versions and a study Bible.
- **Think:** God chose each of us, before the creation of the world, to be His redeemed children through belief in the saving work of His Son, Jesus. Why? To love and serve Him. “... but through love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).
- **Pray:** Dear Father in Heaven, help us as we show and tell the children You **love** them and **choose** them to be Your very own. You love them so much You sent Jesus, to redeem them through His life, suffering, death and resurrection. Help me be an example of love and service for the children to emulate. In Jesus’ name. Amen



JESUS' TIME AND BIBLE NARRATIVE 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.
- Worship Center: small table; picture of Jesus (search internet or use the 8-by-10 picture from CPH (\$6.99) mounted on wall); Poster (see Tuesday Presentation below); Children's Bible (see Wednesday Sharing the Bible story); Click on this link <https://files.lcms.org/f/preschool-artwork-sept-2022> and download figures that can be used to make visuals for telling the Bible story and related curricular activities.

Gather for Jesus' Time

Invite staff and others to join you; sing (Melody: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

Won't you come and sit with me,
sit with me, sit with me? Won't
you come and sit with me —
right here on the floor?"



Invocation

Sing (Melody: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

We begin in our God's name, our God's name, our
God's name. We begin our God's name — Father,
Jesus and Spirit too.

Sharing the Bible Narrative/Story

Introduction: Show items that will be used for the story.
Sing (tune: "Mary Had a Little Lamb") **We've-come to
learn about our God, about our God, about our God.
We've-come to learn about our God; what-will-we
learn today?**

Monday Presentation: Use figures on a felt or magnet
board (for a visual).

Moms and Dads took their kids one day, walked-to-
see Jesus — not-far away (show smiling families; add
Jesus). They-wanted-Him-to bless-them-and-say,
"God-loves-and-cares-for-you, everyday!" Jesus'
helper said, "No! Look! Can't you see? Jesus is busy!
Go home, quietly!" (show angry disciple).

Jesus looked-at the kids, smiled-a-great big smile,
"Come here! Sit-with-Me for a-while. God loves and

cares-for-you, ev-ry day. He sent Me-to-show-His love
in-all-I-do-and-say." Jesus-blessed-the-children long
ago. He blesses us too; He's-our Savior; Yes, we KNOW.

Tuesday Presentation: Reuse the poem above, adding
**He lived, was-hurt, died and came alive. That makes
me happy; we'll do a little jive** and a Bible Story Poster
showing Jesus and children {find one on the Internet,
use picture from *Little Lambs, Too — Student Pages* (St.
Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005) or purchase
and use a picture from an old Bible story book [e.g., *My
Good Shepherd Bible Story Book* by Arnold Carl Mueller
(CPH, 1969)]}. Note: laminate posters; at the end of the
week, put them in a three-ring binder to make a class
Bible Story Book.

Wednesday Presentation: Read story from a children's
Bible: p. 1004 *Holy Bible* (International Children's Bible,
2015; or, p. 432 *The Beginner's Bible*, Questar Inc. 1989.

Thursday Presentation: Invite the pastor to wear vest-
ments and to come and act as Jesus. He can invite the
children to come and receive a blessing; comfort infants
who are frightened of pastor.

Friday Presentation: Pick a children's favorite song; or,
have a sing-a-long of favorite Jesus Songs {include songs
that share the Gospel message [e.g., "Jesus Loves the
Little Children" (*LOSP*, P. 94)]}.

What We Learned: God loves and cares for us; He sent
Jesus, His Son, to show us His love. Jesus loves us so
much He lived, was hurt, died, and came alive again so
we can be God's children. He invites us to show our love
for Him in all we say and do.

Song to Sing: "Jesus Loves the Little Ones" (*LOSP*, P. 41)
(verse 2: change "loves" to "chooses").

Time to Pray

Dear God, I'm glad You love and care for me. I'm glad
You sent Jesus to show me Your BIG love. I love You
too. Help me to show my love in all I say and do. In
Jesus' name. And, all God's children said Amen.

Closing/Benediction

Melody: "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Now it's time to
sing goodbye, sing goodbye, sing goodbye. Now it's
time to sing goodbye — for another day (or, it's time
for us to play).

CURRICULAR MATERIALS //

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

S Science, Nutrition & Large Motor:

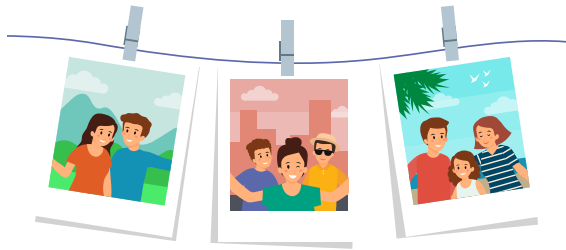
- **Science:** Take a walk and look around. What do we see? (trees, sky, clouds, birds). What did families see as they walked to see Jesus? You might collect items (rocks, leaves, grass, etc.) and “pinch” some (using clothespins) to paint a blue and green mural (see Art).
- **Nutrition:** foods/snacks parents might bring for the children as they walk to see Jesus (e.g., crackers and cheese, pieces of fruit).
- **Large Motor:** “walk to see Jesus” (e.g., slowly, fast, run). Toddlers: make a variation of “Let’s Go on a Bear Hunt” **Let’s go on a walk see Jesus: down the road; around a rock; up a hill, etc. Then, let’s run and see Jesus.**

T Technology

- Ask families to share pictures of their families. Display and name members. Make copies of each family and use to make a class book titled “Our Families.”

R Reading and Language Arts

- **Books:** *Come to Jesus* by Mary Mans Simon (CPH, 1992); *This is My Family* by Mercer Mayer (Golden Books, 1993). Create a class book using pictures of families; see Technology above.



- **Action Poem:** Jesus loves the grown-ups tall (stand), Jesus loves the children small (kneel down). Jesus loves us all you see. He lived, was hurt, died and came alive for you and me (make cross with arms). [“My Family” Finger Plays (FTTS, pp. 41-42)].

- **Infants/toddlers** love playing “Peek-a-Boo.” Play and add “Jesus loves you,” “Mommy loves you,” “Daddy loves you” and so on.

E Engineering

Use: blue and green finger paint, paper and fingers to fingerprint; see Art

Activity; use to make a mural of the Bible story or their families coming to see Jesus.

A Arts (art, music)

- **Art:** Use blue and green finger paint, tempera, markers and so on to make sky and ground for a story mural. Add picture of Jesus and the children; use for retelling the story and/or use the family pictures the children brought (Jesus invites us to come to Him too).
- **Music:** “Jesus Loves the Little Ones” (LOSP, P. 41); “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” (LOSP, P. 42); “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (LOSP, P. 94).

M Mathematics

- **Infants and Toddlers:** Count the number of people in families. Toddlers: chart the number of members: Who has more? Who has fewer? The same as?

S Social Studies

Use family pictures (see Technology); name relationships; call attention to ways each family member shows love for Jesus.

INVOLVING THE HOME

via personal contact/newsletter (electronic or paper)

Thank parents for choosing your center for their child’s care and education. Assure parents your center is Christ centered — where children learn about their Savior Jesus **and** required academics in a nurturing, play-based, child- and age-appropriate environment.

School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



2022-2023 THEME | Making Disciples for Life

School Shepherd and DISCIPLE

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (MATT. 28:19)

Lutheran schools join Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod churches in responding to the theme, “Making Disciples for Life.” The “Chapel Talks” resource will guide the school’s weekly worship response to the theme. The National Lutheran Schools’ Week resource will apply the theme to children, families, the church and the mission outreach to community and the world.

Thank you for being a shepherd in a Lutheran school ministry. This monthly resource is intended to celebrate your pastoral role in a Lutheran school and to support you in the unique tasks that go with shepherding the staff, children, families, supporting congregation and others who are blessed to be part of a Lutheran school ministry.

Before you were called to be a Lutheran school shepherd, you were called to be a disciple of Jesus.

Jesus’ commissioning words in Matthew 28, were directed to the disciples whom He had called early in His ministry. Other rabbis of Jesus’ day gathered disciples by portraying wisdom, dynamic personality, synagogue or community reputation or other human standards. Disciples often chose rabbis for themselves from whom they hoped to gain insights into the Levitical laws. Greeks frequently chose to follow gifted



philosophers and gathered around them to gain deeper intellectual insights.

In contrast, Jesus told His disciples, “You did not choose me, but I chose you ... [to] go and bear fruit” (JOHN 15:16). Jesus did the choosing. Jesus called fishermen, tax-collectors, zealots, doubters and deniers, and He invited them to “Follow me” (e.g., Matt. 4:19).

Jesus makes them His disciples by demonstrating His miraculous power and teaching them that His was not an earthly kingdom of glory, but a kingdom gained only through His sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus makes them His disciples by showing them His scarred hands and feet and the visible proofs of His resurrection from the dead. Jesus makes them His disciples by giving

them the Pentecost power of the Spirit. Jesus makes the Twelve His disciples “for life” during their earthly journey, but, more importantly, He makes them His disciples for eternal life.

Jesus makes you, the shepherd, His disciple. The command “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” shares the means by which Jesus made you His disciple. Jesus made you His disciple on the day of your Baptism, and He has continued to nurture you through His Word and Holy Supper.

In addition to the role of shepherd, depending on your family circumstances, life stage and ministry setting, you have a variety of other roles or titles in the family (husband, father, grandfather or sibling) and in the church (senior or associate pastor, circuit or district committees, community leader and more!).

In the school ministry setting your tasks may be many and varied: worship and devotional leader, staff and student counselor; board participant; team leader; office administrator; financial advisor; family ministry contact and more!

As you begin another school year, the lists (above) are humbling and sometimes exhausting. Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples” sounds like another task to add to the list. Mindful of our sinful nature and human limitations, we confess that we are not worthy to be disciples of Jesus.

Jesus called YOU to be His disciple. We are never worthy of His call, but in His grace He chose us. We are Jesus’ disciples because of what He has done for us, not because of what we have done or could ever do for Him. We are God’s new creation. We have become disciples in whom the Holy Spirit works.

Jesus also called YOU to be His shepherd in this time and place. The Savior who commissions His disciples also promises, “And behold, I



prayer

“Baptized into Your name most holy, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I claim a place, though weak and lowly, Among Your saints, Your chosen host. Buried with Christ and dead to sin, Your Spirit now shall live within.”

(LSB 590:1)

Amen.



am with you always, to the end of the age” (MATT. 28:20). The “always” includes every possible context of ministry in a Lutheran school: personnel issues, family crises, administrative challenges and the many joys of worship services, Baptisms, confirmations and other celebrations.

You ARE Jesus’ disciple. God bless your shepherding this school year, in Jesus’ name!

FOR PERSONAL OR STAFF REFLECTION:

- What significance does your Baptism have in your daily walk as Jesus’ disciple?
- What tasks or roles as school shepherd are most exciting for you as you begin another school year? What tasks or roles bring you the most apprehension? What assurances do you have as you fulfill your responsibilities?

School Shepherd

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Writer: Rev. Robert Riggert Designer: Frank Kohn

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Time Out *for* Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



When I Grow Up ...



A new school year has started. Crayons are probably still sharp, glue bottles still full and most teachers hopefully have not yet lost all of their patience. The start of the school year is hard work! Organizing items in the classroom, meeting students and parents, back-to-school faculty meetings and the list could go on and on! Have you had a rest yet?

Even though the busyness of a brand-new school year is hovering upon you like bugs around a porch light in the heat of summer, there is hopefully some excitement too. Yes, teachers enjoy setting up their classrooms and finding the perfect decor and new materials for students to use. Yes, teachers like the crisp new

papers and folders with neatly written student names on them. Yes, teachers look forward to what the new school year might bring.

The same is true for students; they also ponder what it will be like in a new school, with a new teacher or with new friends. Young children who may have never been in school wonder what all the excitement is; yes, they love playing with friends, but what is “school” really all about?

As you prepare for the start of the school year and imagine the students you will have around you, think about their journey through the year with you as their

teacher — their captain. Who will be the best “cleaner-upper”? Who will enjoy driving around the “trash truck” to clean up papers? Who will tell you they want to be a teacher when they grow up because they adore you so very much?

What will your students be when they grow up? Technology designers? Airline pilots? Perhaps they will have careers that have not even been thought of yet. No matter what their career paths might be, God has a great plan for their lives! Jeremiah 29:11 confirms God’s plan for your students in sharing, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” What wonderful and reassuring words these are, not just for your students, but also for you! Teach your students these words.

Now, as a teacher, you likely have goals for your students throughout the year too — is that right? You want your students to learn about math and literacy. You want them to grow in maturity and physical activity. You want them to grow in independence and responsibility. You want them to grow in personal relationships with their peers. And, as a teacher and leader in Lutheran schools, most importantly, you want them to grow in their faith!

As a teacher or leader in a Lutheran school, you have a great role — you are a disciple-maker! Do not take this special role lightly, as it does carry a big responsibility! You are one person in students’ lives who contributes to their development as disciples of Jesus Christ. God has placed you, and others — family members, friends, other teachers and caregivers — into the lives of your students to help them develop and grow in their faith. It’s a cycle that cannot be broken; you contribute to the discipleship of your students so they, too, in turn can contribute to the discipleship of others. Faith-formation is not a one-person role, but a process that matures over time due to the roles and impact of many others.

The students in your classroom are with you for an average of just 180 school days per year; that’s less than half the days of an entire calendar year. Be sure to pack those 180 school days with all you can to make



disciples. It is not a “punch card” where you stop when the days are done; rather, you are filling a student’s “faith bucket” each day so she can be a follower of Jesus Christ for her entire life!

In The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, a significant number of professional church workers have entered into the field of full-time ministry because they were encouraged by someone who took time to recognize their gifts and talents. Be intentional in talking with your students about being a teacher, pastor or leader within the church — no matter their age. As a significant role model in a child’s life, you contribute much to how he views serving Christ within the church in a variety of roles.

Workers to serve in Lutheran ministries are needed; workers to serve Christ in other careers through a Christ-centered understanding of vocation are also needed. As you teach your students about math and literacy, exercise and science, faith and God’s love, be sure to let them know the importance of being a disciple for life — serving Christ throughout one’s life — in any career.

As Matthew shares in Chapter 28, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (vv. 19–20). When you share this Scripture message with your students, emphasize that God will always be with them, no matter what career choices they make as adults. Remind your students that God’s plans are always good; encourage them to always share Christ’s love in their lives — from now until the end.

Ready, set, go! Go and make disciples!

Time Out for Directors

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Writer: Dr. Drew Gerdes Designer: Frank Kohn

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