

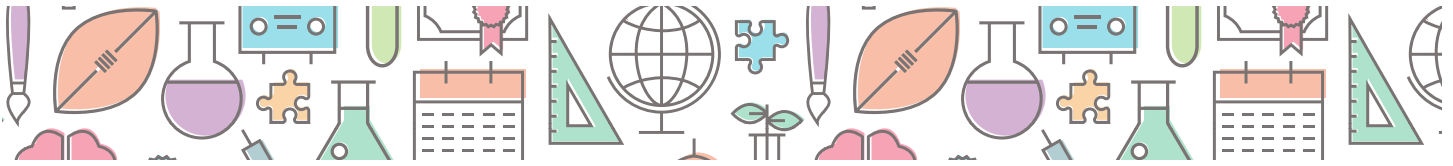


NOVEMBER 2022

SCHOOL MINISTRY

# Mailing





NOVEMBER 2022

## SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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# Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



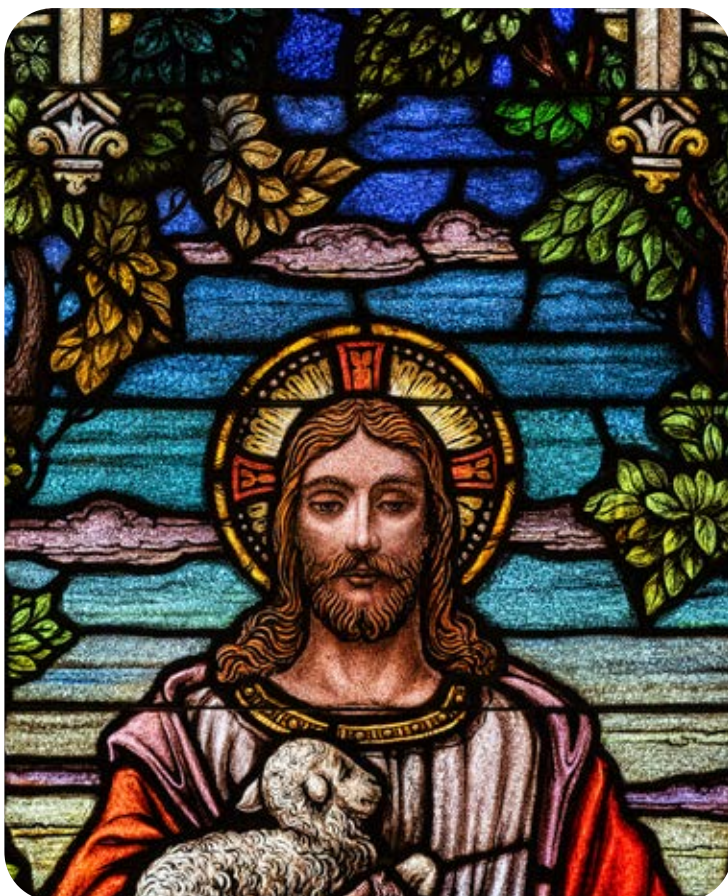
## Rev. Dr. Tim Ahlman NLSA School Shepherd 2022 Award Recipient

**T**he Lutheran School Shepherd Award was established by National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) to honor a faithful pastor who provides outstanding encouragement, support and service to his school. Pastors who are considered for this prestigious award understand and articulate a clear philosophy of Lutheran education and provide spiritual encouragement, guidance and support for the schools entrusted to their care. They are champions for their schools.

We are pleased to announce that the **Rev. Dr. Tim Ahlman**, who serves at Christ Greenfield Lutheran Church and School, Gilbert, Arizona, is selected as the 2022 NLSA School Shepherd.

Pastor Ahlman was nominated by the NLSA Validation Team at the time of Christ Greenfield Lutheran School's NLSA site visit in spring 2022. After his nomination was endorsed by LCMS Pacific Southwest District officials, a committee of well-respected pastors reviewed each application and unanimously selected Pastor Ahlman from the slate of deserving leaders nominated for this award.

When asked, "Why do you love your school?" Pastor Ahlman replied, "Jesus is magnified here. It's all about Him. Our staff is focused on sacrificially making Jesus known to our students. We continue to grow every way possible. Our holistic care for families is what I love about our school."



"Jesus is magnified here. It's all about Him. Our staff is focused on sacrificially making Jesus known to our students."

Rachel Klitzing, the Executive Director of Schools for the LCMS Pacific Southwest District, endorses Pastor Ahlman's nomination and shares, "Pastor Ahlman serves as the spiritual leader of the faculty and staff by regularly leading discussion-based, active-participation devotions. It was evident to the visiting team that the faculty and staff feel supported and encouraged by Pastor Ahlman. He is THEIR pastor even if their regular church attendance isn't Christ Greenfield."

"He leads people to seek HIS word, worship HIM with zeal and serve the church in the capacity of one's gifts."

Principal Tanya Calendo affirms, "Pastor Tim cares for the whole school community. He prioritizes welcoming new families and caring for families who do not have a church home. He weekly mentors middle school boys and greets students at drop-off. His weekly Bible study with school staff always includes encouragement, one of his greatest gifts!"

A member of Christ Greenfield Lutheran Church shares, "Simply put, he leads people to seek HIS word, worship HIM with zeal and serve the church in the capacity of one's gifts."

A community parent observes, "One of the things I admire most about Pastor Tim as a leader is his humility and love for the truth. Our relationship with the school has not been one that has been conflict free, nor would any growth-minded relationship be. Pastor Tim is able to hear the reality of the problem, not take offense, process that problem through the filter of God's Word, encourage and speak faith over the issue and usher in change where needed. That kind of leader is only found when their identity rests firmly in Christ, and it is the reason this community thrives."

A graduate of the Concordia University, Nebraska, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Pastor Ahlman has faithfully served at Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School, Lakewood, Colo. (2008–2013) and Christ Greenfield Lutheran Church and School, Gilbert, Ariz. (2013–Present).

Pastor Ahlman's leadership exemplifies the traits of a faithful school shepherd and NLSA is pleased to recognize his service and contributions to Lutheran education with the 2022 School Shepherd Award.





# Community & Enrollment



## ARTICLE 3: The Inefficiency of Relationships



**T**o be *known* is a powerful thing. To be fully known and still loved in the midst of our sinfulness is nothing short of a miracle. To be *seen* is comforting. To be seen in the midst of our suffering by a God who knows suffering and who alone can ultimately rescue us is a wonder our earthly minds cannot understand. This is the grace and love of God our Father. We have a God who is capable of knowing and seeing us each uniquely and individually, who draws us to a personal relationship with Him, and who includes us in His family.

While He was busy putting in place the foundations of the Messianic line, God *saw* Hagar in her suffering and urged her to return to community (GEN. 16:6–15).

While Jesus was busy putting together His ministry team, the 12 disciples, Jesus made sure Nathaniel knew He *saw* him under the fig tree (JOHN 1:48). Nathaniel then joins in the community of the disciples. God knows us as well, fully and completely, and draws us into His family (GAL. 4:4–7).

God knows us and sees us because He created us, loves us and is mysteriously and powerfully omnipresent. He is able to be in a personal relationship with all people at all times. We too are called to know and see others as we minister to them. For us, knowing others requires time with them and intentionality in listening, serving and being open to a relationship with them in return. It is through personal relationships that we draw people



into community because “community is always at the core of discipleship.”<sup>1</sup>

Let’s be honest, community is complicated and personal relationships are hard. Relationships and community seem like an extremely *inefficient* way to go about our mission to make disciples for life. Yet, this is the example we have from Jesus. Jesus spent the bulk of His ministry with the Twelve and had an even deeper relationship with Peter, James and John. When thinking of the scope of His mission, to draw all people to himself (JOHN 12:32), it seems shortsighted and inefficient to spend so much time with such a limited group of people. Why not meet with a different group of people every month? Couldn’t Jesus have moved faster and farther if He traveled by Himself? Yes, He healed and did miracles for thousands, but the dedicated time He spent being in relationship with the Twelve is unique.

“God’s plan for reaching people is through people.”<sup>2</sup> Passing on the habits of faith takes time together. Time in small groups, time in conversation and time following Jesus. Relationships are not easy. Relationships are slow and messy, but as we draw people into the

community of the Body of Christ, relationships are where discipleship happens.

This is why the school where I serve initiated “Equipping Nights.” The goal was to help “equip” parents to disciple their children. These nights were a short-term effort directly connected to an organization-wide focus on *The Forgiving Challenge* by Zach Zehnder.<sup>3</sup> We invited all families from our 400+ student body. Invitations were sent out from teachers and our principal via email, school newsletters and personal phone calls and conversations. All of our invitational efforts yielded about six families that came regularly to these nights. Out of over 300 families, it would have been easy to be discouraged at this low number.

Those families, though, expressed gratitude for the chance to come to an intimate setting with a teacher leader who cared for them, where they could talk about faith, God, life, and how all of that intersects with their role as parents, raising children in this world. Some of those families came each week and found depth in relationships that would have been hard to develop in a larger setting. Were these nights *inefficient*? Well, looking at the numbers, you might say, “Yes.” And yet, the 12 or so people that came to each Equipping Night were reflective of the group of 12 that Jesus *inefficiently* spent most of His ministry/teacher efforts with. Both groups spent time at the feet of Jesus together, in community, building relationships with each other. As they all strived to follow after Jesus they helped support each other in the discipleship process.

If this is where you are — small numbers but authentic relationships — be encouraged. If you are wanting to start intentional community building and discipleship but are afraid you won’t draw big crowds, don’t give up. With your eyes on enrollment growth, don’t forsake the slow work of relationships. Each one matters. Spend the time, make the connections and adjust staff appropriately so that people don’t turn into numbers. Be inefficient; see people; know people; and through relationships draw them into your community where they will encounter Jesus through the Body of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture: How to Release a Missional Movement by Discipling People Like Jesus Did* (Greenville, SC: 3DM Publishing, 2016), 103.

<sup>2</sup> Debbie Teike, *The Art of Invitation: Building Enduring Relationships; Connecting Community* (Independently published, 2021), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Zach Zehnder, *Forgiving Challenge: A 40-Day Life-Changing Journey to Freedom* (Elkorn, NE: Red Letter Living LLC, 2021).

## Community & Enrollment

VOL. 2, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2022

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 Children.



## God Chooses Joseph (GENESIS 37-45)

### Before You Teach

Initially the narrative of Joseph could be viewed as a tragedy. Upon reflection, however, the narrative is a love story. With love, God chose and sent Joseph to rescue God's people from starvation. Our story is also one of love. From the storehouse of His love, God sent Jesus, to save us from the ravages of sin. With grateful hearts we receive and celebrate all that God provides, shouting to the heavens, "THANK YOU!"

### Greeting

Welcome each child upon arrival. **Good morning, [name of child], "God chooses YOU to share His love."** These first few seconds establish the child's outlook for the day.

### Gathering

Gather in your worship center. Say: **"We begin our time together with Jesus, thankful for His love."**

### Tell the Story

*Preparation:* Search online for an image of "Joseph and his brothers." Download and adhere image to a tagboard heart, trimming to fit. When dry, cut heart into **five** puzzle pieces. Adhere double-sided tape or magnetic strips (depending on display surface) to each puzzle piece. As narrative is told, assemble the puzzle, adding a piece each time the words "love," "loves" or "loved" are spoken.

**Joseph's father LOVED him and gave him a coat of beautiful colors. His brothers were very jealous. One day**



**Joseph told them of a dream in which his brothers bowed down to him. Angry, his brothers captured and sold Joseph as a slave. Taken away to the far away country of Egypt, Joseph trusted God to LOVE and care for him.**

**Years went by. Then Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, had dreams that worried him. Hearing that Joseph could tell what dreams meant, he ordered Joseph brought to him. God showed Joseph that soon there would be seven years of much food in the land – a time of plenty. Then there would be seven years of famine – a time of very little food. Hearing this, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "God LOVES and has chosen you to serve at this time. My people will do as you command." Joseph ordered food to be gathered and stored. When the famine came, Joseph opened the food storehouses. People came from everywhere to Egypt for food. God LOVED and cared for Joseph and God's people. We are God's people! God LOVES and cares for us. To God we say, "THANK YOU!"**

**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)

## Praying Together

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

**PRAY:** Father in Heaven, Thank You for all Your gifts to me, for food and friends and family, For Jesus sent to set me free, I thank You for Your love for me. Amen.

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:** “Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good” (PSALM 136:1A).

**Grades 1 & 2:** “Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever” (PSALM 136:1).

## Activities

**CREATE:** Thanksgiving Hearts. Psalm 136:1 suggests hearts are appropriate at this time of year as we reflect on God’s gifts with gratitude. **YOU WILL NEED:** paper hearts, decorative materials. **DO:** Children decorate hearts. Display with Psalm verse.

**CHANT:** “Kids Can!” (Adapted for Thanksgiving)

**LEADER:** Jesus said, “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.”

We can thank and praise His name. Our sins forgiven, His love we claim.

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

**DO:** Practice saying, “Please may I ...” and “Thank you.” Provide scenarios to which children respond, for example, when needing marker or crayon color we say, “May I please use ...” When shared, we say, “Thank you!”

**SING:** “God Chose Me” (LOSP, p. 107); “It’s Good to Give Thanks” (LOSP, p. 61). Repeat verse 2, naming categories, for example, family members: “It’s good to give thanks

for my MOM ...” Conclude by singing verse 3 (point to others), and verse 4 (point to self).

**FUNDAY FRIDAY.** Heart Hop: Laminate precut hearts. Space and securely tape hearts to the floor, creating a path. Children move from heart to heart as called out by the leader, for example, walk, tiptoe, sideways.

**CAMP SERVE.** Food for Families: Leadership team identifies individuals who are food insecure, or organizations that serve them. Respecting privacy needs, provide information to school families, congregation and the greater community regarding *what* is needed by *when* (dates and times), and *where* (drop-off location). Add child-created thanksgiving cards. Deliver. Praise God for the opportunity!

## Sending

**YOU WILL NEED:** A heart to pass and receive.

Gather in your sending circle. Review the day. Guide children to pray as heart is passed and received, or to silently pass it on. Dismiss, saying to each, “I’m thankful for YOU!”

## Live the Story

Communicate your gratitude to those for whom you are thankful.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

# Early Childhood Devotions

VOL. 27, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2022

Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Erica Schwan

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

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# Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



## MAKING DISCIPLES FOR LIFE

# Lifelong Disciples ... Are Grateful and Generous

**I**t seems that we spend a lot of time trying to acquire more things. From an early age, we ask children what they want for their birthday. We also ask what kind of elaborate themed birthday party we can throw them. Then of course, there is Christmas! The request lists we ask kids and other family members to provide can get quite lengthy. There is also the convenience of online shopping, which makes it very easy to “click” our way to a variety of purchases.

What a blessing it is, however, to be able to grant Christmas and birthday wishes for our children. What a blessing it is to be able to give both needed and special request items to family and friends. We have an abundant God who blesses His people beyond measure, and in turn allows us to be a blessing to others through our generosity.

Every November, we pause for a National Day of Thanksgiving in our country, and rightfully so — for we are blessed with many freedoms, and we enjoy liberties that other countries and cultures do not experience. For a believer, it is a natural response to “give thanks to God” for all His goodness to us. Christians sing songs of thankfulness and praise to God at this time of year (and throughout the year), knowing that all good gifts come from a loving God. A God who showers His blessings upon His creation, whether deserved or not.

As parents, we are quick to teach our young children to say, “thank you,” when they are given a gift or experience

a special surprise. We want to instill in them the ability to express their appreciation in a genuine manner. We hope that if a child learns to express gratefulness at an early age that it will become a lifelong habit.

When we are fortunate to be on the receiving end of a gift, there is always someone on the other end doing the giving. When you are a child, it is often a parent or other family member doing the giving. As one grows older, it might be a friend or significant other who becomes a giver of gifts. As we grow in faith as lifelong disciples, we discover that there is great joy in giving, and our perspective can shift from wanting to become a “getter” to becoming a “giver.”

As the people of God, we have received the greatest gift from our heavenly Father in His Son, Jesus, who died on the cross for our sins. He then rose from the dead to give us the assurance of eternal life. We didn’t ask for this gift, it was freely given.

It was the gift that required the highest level of sacrifice — a willingness to intentionally die for someone else. Talk about givers — God the Father giving us His only Son; and Jesus, living a perfect life and then dying on the cross to give us the gift of eternal life! Wow!

At this time of year, as we celebrate all that God has given us, may our thankfulness be expressed in our love toward family and friends and in gratefulness to God. This Thanksgiving, may our hearts reflect a loving God, who first loved us, so that we can in turn love others with thankful hearts.



# 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.

## CREATING A FAMILY GIVING PLAN

**PURPOSE:** To engage family members in an activity where they create a sacrificial giving plan, and then plan on ways to act on that plan.

### CREATING A SACRIFICIAL FAMILY GIVING PLAN:

Please share the following chart with your family that will guide them in creating a Family Giving Plan. Make extra copies of the chart if you have a larger family, or prepare one chart for each family member.

- Begin with a family discussion, talking and sharing about all the wonderful things that God has blessed you with, including time, talents and things.
- Write down the name of each family member in the far left-hand column.
- Have each family member think and share about a *thing* they have, a *talent* they have or a *time* they have available to share with others. Put that in the proper column on the chart.
- Urge family members to really think about how they can share their gifts with someone else, going beyond simple generosity.
- Next, have each family member think about to whom, or where, they want to direct their gift of time, to share

their talent/skill or to give away something they possess. Write that down in the appropriate column.

- Then select a date by which it will be accomplished.
- Review the list as a family and talk about how you can support each other as you go about making these sacrifices to show heartfelt generosity.
- Post the list in a prominent place in your home as a reminder and encouragement to serve others by sharing the gifts you have.
- As a family, close your time together by having an adult or older child read the prayer below, phrase by phrase, with family members repeating each phrase in “echo” fashion.

**CLOSING ECHO PRAYER:** Gracious heavenly Father, thank you for all the gifts you give us in this life. Thank you for our home, for food, for our family and for fun things. Bless our plans to help others through our sacrifices. Thank you for the gift of Jesus, who died on the cross for our sins, making the ultimate sacrifice for us. Thank for the gift of eternal life, which we have because Jesus rose from the dead. Help us to be generous to others, and give us a willingness to sacrifice for others. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

FAMILY MEMBER	ITEM (Thing/Talent/Time)	RECIPIENT	DATE



# Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



## If it's Predictable, it's Preventable



**S**o far this year, we've talked about the **why concerning behavior** and provided Dr. Ross Greene's free tool to help identify the skills a student may be lacking that are leading to these behaviors. Remember, "kids do well if they can" is our motto rather than "kids do well if they want to." If you took the opportunity to look at the free Assessment of Lagging Skills & Unsolved Problems (ALSUP: [livesinthebalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ALSUP21.pdf](https://livesinthebalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ALSUP21.pdf)), you may be thinking, "now what?" It's great to have a checklist of skills that a child is struggling with or lacking, but now it's time to look toward the next step.

As you think of a student who has demonstrated concerning behaviors, try to remember *when* the behaviors happened the most. Perhaps you're thinking, "they happened *all* the time!," but that's not the case.

Those concerning behaviors don't occur all the time, only sometimes, and that's an important difference! To address these behaviors, we want to identify the conditions under which the child is exhibiting those behaviors. In other words, what expectations is the child having difficulty meeting? For example, if a student in your class is having difficulty meeting the expectation of completing his math homework, that's a time you may see a concerning behavior. If the student wasn't having difficulty meeting that expectation and had the skills needed to adapt and respond to the situation, you wouldn't see the concerning behavior at that time. Remember, it's not about being manipulative or stubborn, it's about a lack of skills in some area(s) and difficulty meeting an expectation. If we know what expectations a child is having difficulty meeting, along with the why, this adds to the predictability of the concerning behavior. If it's predictable, it's preventable. We want to address these challenges proactively in order to truly resolve them rather than being reactive. These unsolved problems and unmet expectations are mostly predictable based on skills the child is lacking, so it is possible to spend more time in crisis prevention mode than crisis management mode.

The second part of the ALSUP form included above addresses unsolved problems, and it provides guidelines for how to phrase these to move forward with the problem-solving process. The wording may not seem important initially, but it is! This is because the phrasing used will help introduce the unsolved problem to the student when it comes times for the next steps. Carefully worded unsolved problems will make it more likely that the child will be a willing participant in the problem-solving process. The first key in outlining an





unsolved problem is to avoid talking about the specific behavior. We want to focus on the lacking skill(s) and expectations that are not being met rather than punishing or rewarding the behavior. Dr. Greene suggests beginning with the word *difficulty* to describe an expectation not being met. For example, “difficulty completing math homework,” or “difficulty being a good friend to Johnny on the playground.” By eliminating the behavior from these statements, it allows the child not to feel defensive from the beginning. Also, resist the urge to explain the unsolved problem with your own theory about why the behavior is happening. This limits the effectiveness of the problem-solving process and makes it difficult for the child to share information about the challenges of meeting a certain expectation. If the adult(s) has already determined this, often incorrectly, for the child, then engaging in the problem-solving dialogue is not needed. You’re back to where you started with the concerning behavior. These unsolved problems should also be specific and broken down as much as possible. For example, if the student is having trouble completing math homework and difficulty writing essay responses in English class, these should be listed as two different unsolved problems rather than lumping them together into one statement such as “difficulty completing homework.” This is important because there might be different reasons that these individual tasks are challenging for the child, and we want the child to provide specific information about each challenge as the problem-solving process begins. This may

make the list of unsolved problems long, but they will not all be addressed at once. If we try to solve all of these at once, it’s an easy way to ensure that none of the problems get solved! Set any unsolved problems having to do with safety as the highest priority, and then any problems that are creating the most frequent concerning behaviors.

Also remember that while these steps may seem to focus on the negative, we should intentionally point out students’ positive God-given gifts and let them know that God’s grace extends to them even as we work through concerning behaviors.



Keep reading next month to learn about the problem-solving process and how this will result in behavior changes for our students. Please contact us at LSEM at [lsem@luthsped.org](mailto:lsem@luthsped.org) or visit our website at [luthsped.org](http://luthsped.org) if we can provide guidance on concerning behaviors being observed in your classroom.

## Fearfully and Wonderfully Made VOL. 6, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2022

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



## CHILDREN IN A FAST-MOVING World of Technology



**The world offers us so much in the way of technology. Not only that, but technology changes quickly, tempting us with more options every year. So while adults might survive trying every new thing, parents should not assume that more is better for children and technology.**

At the same time, we cannot, and should not, shield our children from all technology. It is an essential part of our world. Unfortunately, however, our world is rarely concerned with the best interests of our children. Therefore, we must be discerning about technology use and teach discernment to our children.

When considering the newest trend in screen technology for children, we should carefully consider what is best for developing brains. While children understandably want every new toy, we must remember that healthy brains engage with others, express themselves in many ways, show strong imaginations and are eager to explore new ideas. Some technologies assist in these skills. Other technologies make these brain developments less likely. Our children's brains become what they do, so paying attention to what they do is essential.

Let's look at some crucial questions to ask about screen technology, including devices and their applications:

### **1. Is the technology used primarily for entertainment or as a tool?**

I don't know that too many children would use an old-fashioned dictionary as a toy. However, our new way of looking up words comes along with many kinds of games and other entertainment. When evaluating tech use, it is wise to consider how much the technology aids in completing work and how much it provides amusement. If technology use is part of an education process, it will be doing more good than harm. However, teach your child to discern between education and amusement as they might not see a difference. Sometimes the best option is to make the tool available for education, but limit entertainment use.

### **2. Is your child passive or active while using the technology?**

It can be easy to assume that if your child is playing with a learning app or watching educational videos, this behavior is suitable for the brain. However, God designed our brains to learn actively, not passively. If the technology encourages your child to explore or build something, then it promotes

active learning. If the educational value stops when your child turns off the device, it is probably another form of entertainment.

### 3. Does this tool promote or interrupt the interaction between your child and others

Your child's brain craves human interaction. The brain learns language, thinking skills, emotional control and social skills by engaging in conversation and activities with other people. Time spent with technology is a poor substitute for face-to-face time because the brain processes technology differently. In addition, the amount of time spent on technology will cut into the time a child spends interacting. Too much screen time means that, over time, the brain begins to develop a deficit. Human interaction is essential for brain development for children 8 years old and younger. Human interaction is vital for the mental health of children of all ages, especially pre-teens and adolescents.

### 4. Is the technology used as a part of a rotation of activities, or does it replace healthier undertakings?

This question is an incredibly crucial one in terms of adolescent technology use. If your teen is spending more time alone on screens than in the presence of people, take this behavior as a red-flag warning. It may be a coping strategy

for anxiety or depression. For younger children, spending large amounts of time on screens will lead them to avoid healthy activities such as play, learning activities such as reading or music, or problem-solving activities such as playing with a group or planning a project. For any age, it is wise to keep screen use to a minimum, so it does not supersede the activities a child's brain desperately needs.

**The wonders of technology** bring us many life blessings. It gets us places, helps us find things and connects us with loved ones. Our goal is for our children to learn about technology and not just experience how to use it. In addition, we want them to understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy use of technology.

**In Luther's Small Catechism**, we turn to the meaning of the First Article of the Creed, and we read, **"I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them."** Unlike the world, our Heavenly Father does want what's best for us. He created our bodies to grow and learn and be healthy. His Son's death and resurrection assure our salvation, and the Spirit's work sanctifies us. **We have every reason to rejoice in His grace.**



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

## Parent Pages VOL. 22, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2022

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# Professionally Speaking



## Improving Your Juggling

**N**ot counting participating in some special event, everyone who has still been working at school at 8 p.m., raise your hand. Lower it when I get to the time you've never still been working at school: 9 p.m., 10 p.m. Really? 11 p.m. Ok, this is getting serious. Midnight. One in the morning? Wow, seriously? Don't you think that's a bit much?

While I might be talking to some of you, my own hand was still in the air. On multiple occasions I worked until the wee hours of the morning, sometimes with my wife (also a teacher) there with me. Sometimes with one or both children asleep on a mat in the corner. I stayed super late in preparations for school drama performances. I worked in my office to finish end of quarter awards. I spent *so much time* putting up art for the school art show.

I never should have been working so late. No one made me. I made myself, in several different ways. I'll talk about that in a moment. But by doing this, I, and those of you who are just as guilty, pay a price. Excessively late nights take a mental and physical toll. We are left drained, off our game. You can tell yourself all sorts of stories, but when you are overstressed and overtired, you aren't mentally sharp, your patience is short and your judgement is impaired. It's

science, people. Keep it up and you can develop long-term repercussions.

Why did I, why would anyone, stay at work so late into the night? I'll put forward three reasons: commitment, overcommitment and lack of commitment. Allow me to expound.

> **Commitment:** I had very high expectations, the standards I wanted to achieve. Whatever I was working on, I wasn't willing to settle for "good enough." I wanted things up to a certain level, to meet my mind's vision, and I would work however long it took to achieve that. Again, no one was forcing me to work through midnight. In fact, most people probably never knew. I would've been told to go home! I was driving this to achieve my own goals and standards.

> **Overcommitment:** It would never have been necessary to work so late if I wasn't already overcommitted with my time. I needed to learn to use the word "no." A person can't just keep saying "yes" to every professional and personal request. There is a price of time paid for every yes. It took me years to learn sometimes you have to say no because you've already said a more important yes, or simply too many other yeses. If you must work until 10 p.m. to meet that deadline, you should have said no more



## Don't blame the lack of time. Learn to use it better.



often, to free up your time. That includes saying no to social commitments sometimes as well.

› **Lack of Commitment:** How can this also be true? A person needs to work so late when they have failed to commit to time management and/or failed to delegate and ask others for help. Time management often involves planning out a schedule. Know what time you have available, then schedule it out for the things you have on your plate. Goals take time. Look ahead and plan out what you'll need over days and weeks so that you aren't caught at the last minute with so much to do and no time left except the wee hours. And for goodness' sake, stop trying to do everything on your own. Ask for help. Recruit volunteers. Turn to your colleagues. Conscript your spouse, family and/or significant other. There are plenty of people around who would help you, if you simply ask and then entrust them with part of the tasks.

The title of this article was about improving your juggling, and that IS what this is about. You are managing all sorts of activities and commitments each day, week and month. Rarely can you work on just one thing to completion, then move onto the next. Instead, we juggle multiple commitments simultaneously. We want to manage them all well, look graceful and relaxed, and drop nothing.

What people commonly will say is, "If only there was more time in the day." Nonsense! God has given us the perfect amount of time. If we're running out, it's because we've been ineffective stewards of that time. Don't blame the lack of time. Learn to use it better. As we learn to manage time by managing *ourselves* better, we will better model the life God means for His children, where we can give our best to the activities at hand without shortchanging quality, sacrificing family time, and squeezing out things like caring for others, being in prayer and the Word, and enjoying the blessings He's provided.

## Professionally Speaking // NOVEMBER 2022

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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# Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



## God chooses Joseph.

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



### BIBLE NARRATIVE

God chose Joseph to save his family from starvation.

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Portions of Genesis 37:3-4, 12-14a, 23-24, 28; 39:1-2, 20-21; 41:41, 46-49, 56-57; 42:1-2, 8; 45:4-7, 14-15; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 2:9

### CENTRAL FOCUS

- Joseph served as a child when he helped his brothers care for sheep (GEN. 37:2).
- God chose Joseph to be instrumental in saving his family/ God’s people from starvation. This is a glimpse into what Jesus’ saving work accomplishes for all people.
- We, and the children we teach, are chosen to serve God in unique ways (EPH. 2:8-10).

### Prepare to Teach

- › **Read** the Bible references in several translations and in a study Bible.
- › **Think:** God chose Joseph to save His people by storing food (e.g., grain for making flour/bread). God chose His Son, Jesus, to save His people from sin, death and the power of Satan. God chooses us to share this Good News with the children in our care. God chooses children to be His own and to serve Him in unique ways.
- › **Pray:** Dear God, thank You for choosing Joseph to save Your people. Thank You for choosing us to be Your very own children; and, through the work of Your Spirit, to show our love for You, as we serve and share the Good News of Jesus. In His name, Amen.





## JESUS' TIME AND BIBLE NARRATIVE PRESENTATION

### You will need

- Resources: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)* (CPH, 1989); *Fingers Tell the Story (FTTS)* (CPH, 1989)
- Worship Center: small table, laminated picture of Jesus [search the internet or use an 8" x 10" picture from CPH (\$6.99)] mounted on the wall; poster (see Tues. Presentation below); children's Bible (see Wednesday, Sharing the Bible story); included reproducible with figures for sharing the Bible story (available here:) <https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/9F9oDBA6-D644-4624-94FA-BD5706364EDF?>

### Gather for Jesus' Time

Invite staff and children to join you at the Worship Center. 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, & Spirit, too."**



### Sharing the Bible Narrative/Story

**Introduction:** Show what will be used for telling the story as you sing (Melody: "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?"** Show small pictures of the Bible story from the reproducible.

**Monday Presentation:** Prior to the lesson, laminate figures cut from the reproducible (Show figure of Joseph the boy wearing his special coat.) **"The Bible has a story of a little kid, like you."** (Show pictures of Joseph with family.) **"Joseph loved God and his family, and he liked to help them, too. His dad gave him a special coat — beautiful to see. The brothers all were very sad. Where is a coat for me?"**

(Show picture of Joseph without the coat.) **"So, they sent Joseph far away — off to Egypt land. Joseph walked, and walked — upon the desert sand. Joseph**

**missed his family as he worked hard far away. He knew God was with him there helping him each day."**

(Show Joseph wearing a royal coat.) **"When Pharaoh needed help; Joseph was so-o-o glad. He saved food for all the people; no one would be sad."**

(Show Joseph with his brothers.) **"Joseph's hungry brothers came looking for food to eat. Joseph gave them some as well as something extra neat. Joseph said he loved them and forgave them for being mean to him."**

**Tuesday Presentation:** Retell the Bible story using the guideline above and show a Bible story poster. Find one on the internet or use a picture from *Little Lambs Student Pages* (CPH, 2001) #4; or find a copy of a Bible story book (online, thrift store, etc.), such as, *My Good Shepherd Bible Story Book* (CPH, 1969), p. 24.

**Wednesday Presentation:** Read selected verses from a children's Bible: *Holy Bible* [International Children's Bible (1969)], or *The Beginner's Bible* [Questar Inc. (1989)], pp. 73–74, 85, 88–90 (see Scripture references above).

**Thursday Presentation:** Invite pastor to come and retell the Bible narrative using the Bible references and including "What the narrative teaches and the prayer for the day" (see below).

**Friday Presentation:** Repeat a favorite presentation; or have a sing-a-long of favorite Jesus' songs.

**What We Learn:** God knows we need food to grow and live. In the story, God provided food for all the people through the work of Joseph. We thank God for all He did long ago, and also for providing food for us now.

**Song to Sing:** Sing "Thank You, Loving Father" (*LOSP*, p. 71).

### Time to Pray

Lead the children in a responsive prayer: **Thank You, God. Thank You, God ... for choosing and helping Joseph to save and share food. Thank You, God ... for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You, God for choosing and helping us to live as Your children. In Jesus name. Amen.**

### Closing/Benediction

Sing (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."**

## CURRICULAR MATERIALS //

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

#### S Science, Nutrition & Large Motor:

- **Science:** Plants provide food for us to eat. Purchase fruit and veggies (carrots with tops) for the children to examine and touch, and be able to eat (e.g., bananas, oranges, etc.)
- **Nutrition (snack):** serve edible plants (e.g., fruits, veggies); see Science above.
- **Large Motor:** Invite the children to use the toy tractors, trucks and so forth. Invite the children to load fruit (real or faux) in wagons or wheelbarrows and move them to a pretend storage.

#### T Technology

- Display miniature/toys items used for growing foods (e.g. shovels, rakes, hoes, etc.). Invite children to use them and items used for harvesting/transporting.

#### R Reading and Language Arts

- **Books:** *Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors* (Little Golden Book); *The Little Gardener* (Teenie Greenie) board book by Jan Geradi; *Nana's Garden* by Larissa Juliano.
- **Rhyme/Poem:** "Little Seeds" (FTTS, p. 39); "Thank You, God, for Food" (FTTS, p. 76)

#### E Engineering

Use blocks to make planters for growing food or garages to store tractors.

#### A Arts (art, music)

- **Art:** Fold a piece of paper in half; then re-open. Invite each child to pick a color of tempera and use a spoon to make a small puddle of paint on the paper; place leaves of garden plants on the paper; fold the paper and rub; open up and look at the design. Remove leaves and let dry — a beautiful garden picture.
- Make colors for children to show the colors that might have been in Joseph's coat.
- **Music:** "The Lord Is Good to Me" (LOSP, p. 16); "Our Hands We Fold" (LOSP, p. 17).

#### M Mathematics

- Use the grocery store in the dramatic play (see Social Studies) to provide many opportunities for counting and sorting.

#### S Social Studies

Change the dramatic play area to a store with food items to display and toy shopping carts for children to pretend to shop for food.

Since Thanksgiving is celebrated this month, use the story to thank God for food and the blessings He gives, especially Jesus, our Savior.

#### INVOLVING THE HOME via personal contact/newsletter (electronic or paper)

Encourage parents to thank God for food and blessings, especially Jesus, our Savior. Include sample prayers.



## Rattles & Prattles

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



# School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



## Making Disciples for Life

# School Shepherd and **Baptism**

“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).

Among the joys of the pastoral ministry is officiating at a Baptism. The Baptism of little children is the most common context for sharing the Sacrament. The baptismal family hears Jesus’ invitation, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God” (MARK 10:14). As the pastor administers the water “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” the little child receives the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

Our Lutheran confession states the promises and power of Baptism for all who have been baptized, even children. Children too are baptized into Christ’s death, burial and resurrection (ROM. 6). Children too receive the Holy Spirit and His gifts (ACTS 2:38-39). Children too are members of the church now and eternally.

Lutheran schools are unique baptismal gathering places. In the context of the Lutheran school, children have the opportunity to begin each day with the invocation recalling their Baptism, “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Children gather for chapel worship in the sanctuary with the baptismal font before them.



In the Lutheran schools, children are reminded daily of their baptismal identity. As their name is called in school contexts, they are reminded that God called their name in Baptism. When the law is shared in the classroom or in one-on-one conversations, the child receives the assurance that in their Baptism their sins have been washed away. Because the “Old Adam” (Luther’s explanation to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism: “What does such baptizing with water indicate?”) has been drowned in Baptism, the child now “live[s] before God in righteousness and purity” in the classroom, on the playground and in every school setting.

Lutheran schools grow God’s kingdom through Baptism. Acts 2:41 shares the Spirit-blessed response to Peter’s Pentecost sermon: “So those who received his word



were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” The Spirit continued to work through Paul’s witness in Philippi as Lydia’s household (ACTS 16:14–15) and the jailer’s family (ACTS 16:29–34) were baptized. Lutheran schools continue to be Pentecost places as the Word is preached by pastors and taught by teachers leading little children to faith. Families and children who have not been baptized but have enrolled in a Lutheran school learn of God’s gifts through Baptism and are welcomed into God’s family through Baptism. The exciting news in the annual Lutheran school statistical summary shares the number of Baptisms that have taken place because of a Lutheran school witness.

Lutheran schools connect children and families to the church family. Following a Baptism, many congregations include the response of the congregation: “We receive you in Jesus’ name as our brother/sister in Christ, that together we might hear His Word, receive His gifts, and proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light” (LSB 271). The child and family that once may have been noted as a “school family” are now also a “church family.” They have a “family” that worships with them, partners with them in the faith nurture of their children and supports them in times of need.

Lutheran schools share the baptismal promise of an eternity with Jesus. Jane Fryar’s book, *Go and Make Disciples* (CPH, 1992, pp. 13–14), tells the story of “Jon.”



The single parent mother came to a Lutheran school to enroll her son. She told the principal, “Teach him about Jesus.” The Holy Spirit used the staff of the Lutheran school to fulfill the mother’s request. Month after month, Jon grew in his faith. In late spring the school received a call from the mother sharing that while riding his bike, Jon had been struck by a drunk driver and had died. As the principal cried with the mother at the funeral home and expressed her own grief, the mother responded, “I asked you to tell Jon about Jesus and you did. Jon is with Jesus now. And we will be, too, some day. Thank you. Thank you for what you gave him.”

Lutheran schools share the Gospel and then make it personal through Holy Baptism. God’s promise is sure, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (MARK 16:16). The school shepherd will be blessed to gather eternally with those he has been privileged to baptize in the school and church ministries.

#### FOR PERSONAL OR STAFF REFLECTION:

- ▶ How is the Lutheran confession of Baptism taught and lived in your Lutheran school? How are baptismal “birthdays” celebrated in the school?
- ▶ How is the confession of Baptism and the opportunity for children to be baptized shared with children and families who are enrolled in the school but not baptized?

prayer

“Gracious Head, Your member own;  
Shepherd, take Your lamb and feed it;

Prince of Peace, make here Your throne;  
Way of life, to heaven lead it;

Precious Vine, let nothing sever  
From Your side this branch forever.”

(LSB 592, v. 4)





# Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



*I Think You Need Some Help:*

## Difficult conversations

Working with young children is such an amazing gift. The smiles, giggles and joy-filled experiences you share with them are priceless. Conversations are filled with imagination, seriousness, and silliness — sometimes all at once! Playing the role of teacher in a child's life is one with honor and responsibility, as well. As a teacher, you are an educational leader in a child's life. As an administrator, you have oversight of those children in your school, as do faculty and staff who daily interact with and teach those children.

One of the key tasks of an early childhood educator is helping children learn communication, social norms and effective ways of communicating with others. Sierra may find it easy to get what she needs while at home, but struggles in communicating those needs while at school. Matthew may play well with his little brother at home, but has trouble navigating the complexity of friendships with many different peers in a classroom. And, for teachers of toddlers who are still learning language and verbalizations, helping them learn ways of age-appropriate communication is a key part of their growth, too.

So ... what do you do to help children learn about communicating their need for help? How do the educators in your school effectively support students in using their gestures, words and body language to let others know they need assistance? Teaching children



how to ask for help is part of early childhood learning; it's a cornerstone of development. When children can effectively ask for help, their lifestyle is improved. Being able to ask for help, or having someone identify when someone else needs help, is important. Part of growing up is learning to know when you need help and how to appropriately ask for it.

However, what happens when you know a colleague could use some help, professionally, but may not be aware of it? What happens when you are concerned about the behavior or pedagogy of a teacher ... what are the steps you take to approach the topic, give suggestions and follow up?

Difficult conversations are never fun, never easy and certainly never predictable. Difficult conversations, though, sometimes need to happen. And, when Law is shared, so Gospel must be shared also. When a child is misbehaving, a difficult conversation must be held to help correct the behavior. The child is loved, but the behavior needs to be changed. When someone is not obeying the law, a member of law enforcement may need to have a difficult conversation with a citizen so all within the community can be safe. When a colleague, especially one that you supervise, is not moving forward in an expected and professional way, a conversation, likely difficult, will need to happen to make sure children are safe, learning and receiving the model of Christ-like behaviors. Part of modeling the faith is

being honest, and that sometimes includes tough conversations; these conversations must still be wrapped in God's love, grace and forgiveness.

It is important to plan for difficult conversations before they happen. What are some topics that you often need to address with your faculty? Professional dress? Being on time? Effective lesson planning? Make a list of topics and keep it in a safe place; add to the list when you think of something that may need to be addressed at some time during the school year.

One of the special aspects of teaching and leading in a Lutheran school is the understanding and practice of Law and Gospel. The Law shows the sinful nature all people have because of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden so long ago. The Gospel shows the saving grace of Jesus Christ who died on the cross and rose again to pay the price for the sins of all people. For some in a supervisory role, it's easier to point out fault and may be more difficult to show grace and forgiveness.

During difficult conversations, it is important to share with the other person the wrong or issue that is happening; it is also important to note you are sharing this with the other person because you care. You care about her as a person, as a colleague and as a fellow Christian. Just as you wrote down some topics that might lead to a difficult conversation, also write down some phrases you may use when having such a conversation with a colleague. A few ideas may include:

"Because I care about you, I want to talk to you about something that concerns me."

"I have noticed some recent events in your classroom that need attention. I'm sharing this with you because I care."

"I can tell part of your school day has been difficult recently. I want you to know I care for you."

As you provide details about the concern, but sure to quickly mention that you care and are there to support and provide guidance, too. Because you care about the person, you offer a gentle disposition in such conversations, offering God's message of grace, love and forgiveness. Again, write down some phrases you might use after you have shared the initial concern with a colleague. Some potential ideas are:

"Together, we can come up with a solution."

"I am here to provide a listening ear and brainstorm ways to improve and grow as a professional."

"Let's pray together for God's guidance as we think about this difficulty. I know His guidance will help."

This year, as you "make disciples," remember that such an important task is not only targeted toward students, but also colleagues — adults in your midst who you lead, supervise and care for. The goal of entering into a difficult conversation is not to drive a rift in a relationship, but to offer a word of Christian care and concern that partners with a Christ-pleasing solution. Prayer is powerful — prayer for the situation, for the colleague and for the conversation.

When engaged in a difficult conversation with a colleague, consider referencing shared beliefs and intentions; these may help the other person understand that you have common agreements and understandings, a common goal. When it comes to child safety, everyone must work together. When it comes to helping children learn, much attention to detail and effective practice must be evident for high quality instruction and learning. And, when it comes to sharing the faith, a Christ-filled approach filled with Biblical teaching is not negotiable.

When you anticipate a difficult conversation and the need to let someone know they need help, be sure to pray. Pray before, during and after the process of a difficult conversation. Pray that God would give you and the colleague listening ears, an open heart and a faith-filled understanding and approach to professionalism.

Being a school leader is not always easy; it's not always smooth sailing; and it's not always predictable. However, know that as you make disciples each day and tend to their spiritual nurture and care, God is always with you, just as Joshua shared, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (JOSHUA 1:9).

## Time Out for Directors

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