



FEBRUARY 2023

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing





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SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



We Preach Christ Crucified

Lutheran schools mean different things to different people. For some, it is a place to get “a good private education.” For others, they believe their children will be taught Christian morals and will protect them from this sinful world. For others, they believe the Lutheran school is just another “Christian school” much like other denominational schools.

Martin Luther wrote the Smalcald Articles in 1537. He believed he had little time left on this earth and he wrote these articles of faith as his last will and testament. He titles Article I as “The First and Chief Article.” He begins this way, “That Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification.” He concludes like this:

Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered [nor can anything be granted or permitted contrary to the same], even though heaven and earth, and whatever will not abide, should sink to ruin. For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved ... Upon this article all things depend which we teach and practise in opposition to the Pope, the devil, and the [whole] world. (*Concordia Triglotta* (CPH 1921), pp. 461–63)

Lutheran schools are more than “Christ centered.” When others talk about being Christ-centered, they often fall into the ditch of “Gospel reductionism.”

Lutherans don’t reduce and distill everything down to Christ, as though nothing else mattered. Lutherans interpret Scripture and understand *all doctrine* through Christ, through which everything matters. This includes infant Baptism, the real presence in the Lord’s Supper, the Ten Commandments, the Office of the Holy Ministry, the holy Christian church, human sexuality, creation and more.

This is why our Lutheran school teachers are so important! *You* teach Jesus every day! You integrate and permeate Christ into everything you teach and do every day. This happens during religion time, chapel, science class, music and choir, discipline, home visits, when a child needs extra care and counsel, and more. Everything you are as a Lutheran school teacher is about Jesus Christ because there is nothing more important than this eternal treasure — Jesus Christ and our eternal salvation.

This is why *Set Apart to Serve* is so important. You are a most significant influencer who teaches the faith and instills the desire in your students to become Lutheran teachers themselves one day. Through your example and conversation, your students may one day do what you’re doing — permeating their classroom with Christ crucified so that their students may believe and have eternal life.

Rev. Dr. James Baneck
LCMS Executive Director of Pastoral Education



Community & Enrollment



ARTICLE 6: Parent Connections



Enrollment is easy to measure. We track numbers, so many numbers! Number of students per grade, number of students in the school, number of students who left the school, number of students who are new and more! Many of us keep multiple documents, spreadsheets and data tables devoted entirely to enrollment numbers. (Shout out to all of the number trackers out there! Your work is valuable.)

The level of community at a school is more difficult to objectively quantify. If we are committed to strengthening and building community, how do we know if we are successful? One way to measure the level and

impact of community is to see how it self-propagates beyond staff members and those “officially” working to drive community, values and programs. Do parents authentically, creatively and independently invest in the community at the school?

Let's jump to an example. At one Lutheran school a parent (to note: a self-proclaimed non-Christian parent who values how she sees her children loved and welcomed at the school) spontaneously created an entire summer worth of playdates for her kindergarten child. This was no small task. She put together a playdate for each week from the end of school in May to the beginning of school in August. She intentionally chose a different day/time each week to accommodate different family schedules. To make sure things did not get dull, she selected a different city park each week and even mixed in some splash pad days. This mom put it together, typed it up, sent it out to the whole class and then *showed up* throughout the summer. These playdates were community building successes initiated by someone who was not obligated to put forth so much effort. This was more than a class birthday party. This was community rubbing off; community taking hold.

If this happened at your school, would you even know about it? On one hand, the point of parent driven community events is that staff members don't need to know when and how it happens. On the other hand, we want to be able to see and celebrate community. Tracking parent connections and parent involvement with the same intentionality as tracking enrollment numbers can be a concrete way to build awareness of community, celebrate growth, and invite and encourage individual members to step into a deeper role in the school community.



One LCMS early childhood program tracks parent connections/involvement in an intentional and consistent manner. Each early childhood teacher keeps a spreadsheet of the parents in her class. She marks and describes the times when a parent invests in the school community. These things might include: helps plan a class party, reads to students on Guest Reader Day, cuts out laminations, makes copies, runs the game at the Valentine's party and so forth. Then, at regularly scheduled meetings, each teacher shares names of parents who are highly involved and takes note of parents who have stayed on the fringes of the school community. Other teachers may fill in the blanks as some parents are involved in the classroom of one child but not in that of a sibling.

In the end, the teaching team can brainstorm together ways to encourage parents to be involved who may not currently have many connection points. Teachers can also brainstorm barriers that may be preventing the parent from being involved. Does the family feel unwelcome? Is it a single parent or busy family who does not have time to commit to large projects or time frames? Does a stay-at-home mom, who desires community and involvement in her child's school, find it difficult to be present at the school because of young children at home? Brainstorming barriers can help teachers find creative ways to help parents feel connected and get involved.

Tracking parent involvement should be done with grace. As we love one another, we need to learn when to extend an *invitation* to join the community of the school and when to *challenge* someone to take a step of deeper commitment and involvement. There cannot be one without the other, both invitation and challenge are needed. It is a matter of learning to what level each person needs to be invited and welcomed, and to what level someone can be challenged to do more. True community has each person at times filling the role of host and server, and at other times filling the role of guest and recipient. There is no community without both roles. All people at times need to give. All people at times need to receive.

Inviting some into the work it takes to form a community and challenging others into a deeper investment is another way we follow Christ's lead. He invites us into His family through no merit of our own. Our place in the family was purchased with His blood. We are also challenged to work alongside our God when Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (MATT. 28:19). We are invited and challenged by God. So we too can invite others into the Body of Christ and challenge them to serve in new ways. When people invest in community all members benefit from the opportunities to both give and receive.

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.



God Chooses David

DAVID'S CARE FOR MEPHIBOSHETH (1 SAMUEL 18–20; 2 SAMUEL 5 & 9)

Before You Teach

Stories of conflict between enemies abound in the Bible. Stories of deep friendships, like that between David and Jonathan, are rare. The Bible uses the word “love” to describe their connection, which began in childhood and lasted into the next generation, since David had promised that he would care for and protect Jonathan’s children. The story of David and Jonathan shows us that deep friendship transcends possessions and adverse circumstances. In the New Testament, Jesus calls us His friends and blesses us with the benefits of that eternal friendship. How will we include others in His circle of friendship?



Telling the Story

YOU WILL NEED: Tagboard. **DO:** Search internet for images of David, Jonathan, Mephibosheth images. **DO:** Adhere images to a tagboard heart. When dry, cut heart into puzzle pieces. Add double stick tape to backs of puzzle pieces. As story is told, assemble the pieces to reveal image of David and Jonathan.

David and Jonathan, the son of King Saul, were best friends. David had become king, ruling over God’s people. Though his best friend Jonathan had died, David wondered about

Jonathan’s family. King David asked, “Is there anyone in Jonathan’s family to whom I may show kindness?” He learned that Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth was alive, but had crippled feet; David chose to care for him. He ordered Mephibosheth brought to him. As Mephibosheth came and bowed down to him, David said, “Do not be afraid. I loved your father, my friend, Jonathan. The lands of Saul, your grandfather, and all that he owned will be yours. You will always be welcome here, eating at my table.” King David then called Saul’s servant, telling him that everything that belonged to Jonathan should be given to Mephibosheth. David loved and cared for Mephibosheth as one of his own sons. Bad things happened to

Greeting

Welcome each child upon arrival, establishing the child’s positive outlook for the day. “**Jesus loves YOU, child of God!**”

Gathering

Signal children to gather in your worship area. Introduce this love story.

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)

Mephibosheth, but God chose David to watch over him. God watches over us; He gives us people who care for each of us, and He sent Jesus to save us. We thank God, sharing His loving care with others.

Praying Together

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

PRAY: **Father in Heaven,**
Thank you for watching over me, sending Jesus to set me free. Help me serve others so they see your loving care shine in me. Amen.

Sing verse 3 of “We Pray for Each Other” (LOSP, p. 15).

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “Love one another as I have loved you” (JOHN 15:12B).

Grades 1 & 2: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (JOHN 15:12).

Activities

CREATE: Tissue Paper Hearts. **YOU WILL NEED:** A cross or image of Jesus; precut white construction paper or tagboard hearts; red, pink and white tissue paper squares; liquid starch; paint brushes; and small containers. **DO:** Children lightly brush liquid starch onto overlapped tissue paper squares placed on construction paper/tagboard hearts. Dry. Display with the cross or an image of Jesus, and the words from John 15:12.

DO. Love Letter to Jesus. Ask children, “If you wrote a love letter to Jesus, what would you tell him?” Write a class letter to Jesus, including their expressed thoughts: “Dear Jesus, ...” When complete, pray the love letter together. Reproduce and share the Love Letter to Jesus with children’s families.

SING. “My Best Friend Is Jesus” (LOSP, p. 45); “Love in a Box” (LOSP, p. 35).

FUNDAY FRIDAY. Valentine Bingo. **YOU WILL NEED:** Paper or tagboard divided into nine squares, valentine candy hearts.

DO: Precut number cards and add a number, one through

nine, to each square. Mix cards. **PLAY:** Guide children to place a candy heart over each square as the corresponding number is called. After nine calls, everyone wins!

CAMP SERVE. Love in a Box: Gift church and school staff with candy hearts (chocolate or other candy). Place in small gift boxes. Add notes of thanks for their service.

Sending

YOU WILL NEED: A heart.

Gather children in your sending circle. Review the day. Pray together. Invite children to add prayer thoughts as the heart is passed and received, or to silently pass it along. Dismiss, saying to each upon exiting, “**Share the love of Jesus.**”

Live the Story

Jesus set an unattainable standard for love, sacrificing His life on our behalf. Yet we strive to love as Jesus did, caring for others and forgiving one another as He did. In doing so, we grow in our understanding of, and appreciation for, the magnitude of His gift of grace.



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



Lifelong Disciples ... Love Unconditionally

It seems that nearly everyone wants to be number one. This makes sense in sports, as it bestows championship status. In business sales, it acknowledges success. In academic life, it gives valedictorian honors.

But what about relationships? What about love? How does the energy we put forth in athletics, academics and work life translate to our home life, our families, our relationship with our spouse? It can be very confusing because it doesn't always transfer equally or line up. That's because love is complicated. Love is not logical. You can have a business plan, a game plan, a learning plan — but can you have a “love plan”?

Well, you can! But, it's not quite the same. In sports, in business and even in academic pursuits, you can create a set of objectives or goals, that when met can render a logical or predictable result. It's not the same in love. While one can choose a variety of ways to display and communicate love to another, there is no guarantee that it will be received and then reciprocated. This can be very frustrating because when we love we usually desire to be loved in return. Our experience in the world says that if you work hard enough and go the “extra mile,” then you can achieve your goal.

We know that doesn't always work in relationships. Parents can express love in a wide array of ways to a closed-off teenager, but there is no guarantee that the child will love in return. One can try to love a spouse

who seems distant, with the hope of creating a closer relationship, but no amount of attention, gifts or words can assure us of their love in return. We can try to reach out to an estranged family member in an attempt to reconcile some past issues, but even the kindest, most heartfelt words won't always cause them to return our love.

While we can't always expect love in return, we can adjust our expectations regarding love. Instead of expecting love to come back our way as we want, we can adopt a mindset of being one who will always “give” love, instead of being a person who always wants to “get” love. This follows the example of Jesus! Our

Savior was always showing and sharing love with others in His earthly life. It wasn't always returned. In many instances it was not even recognized. In fact, it was rejected and He was rejected. However, Christ's love for others was so deep, so strong and so committed that it took Him all the way to the cross — where He willingly died in our place so that we could have eternal life. Because of Christ's love for us we can live with Him in heaven, so that He can love us forever and ever.

Love is not always returned as expected, yet we are invited to love at all times and to love others without conditions, following the example of Jesus. Even when we don't always feel loved, we can know that we are loved by the One who died and rose from the dead, making it more easy for us to love others and to forget about trying to be number one.



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.

SIGNS OF LOVE

PURPOSE: To engage family members in a fun activity that allows them to create visual reminders of how they can practice showing love to others in their daily lives.

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

- › How do you know when someone loves you?
- › How do you like to show others that you love them? (Words, actions, gifts, attention, etc.)

A MOMENT IN THE WORD: As a family read 1 Corinthians 13. One person can read it aloud or several family members can take turns reading sections of it.

LOVE REMINDER SIGNS PROJECT: This wonderful section of Scripture gives us some very practical descriptions of what love is, and what love is not. It's good to have inspiring words like these as visual reminders all around us!

Provide the following supplies listed below:

- › Poster board
- › Box of crayons
- › Markers in various colors
- › Tissue paper
- › Various other "artsy" supplies

Have each family member make a "love reminder" poster in various shapes, sizes, and colors. You can use the words/phrases from 1 Corinthians 13, like "love is patient," "love is kind," "love does not boast" and so forth. Or, you can make up other love reminder phrases, or chose one from the list below, such as:

- › Love lets others go first.
- › Love takes the first step
- › Love goes out of its way.
- › Love never gives up.



- › We love because He first loved us.
- › God is love.
- › Other: _____

Older children or adults will have to help write out the words for younger children, allowing them to pick the words for their posters, and then color and decorate them as they desire.

When each person has made a poster (or even several), hang them in various places around the house (entry way, kitchen, stairwell, TV room, garage, etc.) as visual reminders of love for all the family members to see and read.

As a family, close this 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: Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us, for sending Jesus to be our Savior and our friend. Thank You Jesus, for walking with us every day. Watch over us always, and help us to be loving to others, and to share Your love with them. In Your loving name we pray. Amen.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



The Escalation Cycle



You may have been keeping up with the recommendations on how to approach behavior in a different way and implement those strategies. Even if that's the case, there will still be times when a student's behavior escalates, and you need strategies for that moment. It's important to start with an understanding of the escalation cycle and how a student may progress through these stages. This information is also helpful in preventing a student from reaching a point of full escalation, since this is always the goal!

Students who exhibit challenging behaviors move through a process of escalation, also known as an acting-out cycle. Sometimes we don't notice the initial phases of this process

or things happen so quickly that we don't have time to notice some of the signs. We'll start with an overview of the whole cycle and then dig into each phase more deeply in the upcoming months. It is also important to note that some students may move through this cycle more quickly than others, but it's helpful to think through and document specific signs of each phase for that individual student as you notice them over time.

Also keep in mind our phrase for the year: "kids do well when they can." When we understand that behavior is communication and that students need our help with certain skills, we can be effective at helping them do well. Challenging behavior is often an inappropriate way for a student to obtain something desired, such as attention, access to an activity, a sensory need or a tangible item. Alternatively, the behavior may be a way for the child to avoid something, such as a difficult task or activity, a certain person, an undesirable situation or a sensory need. Try to think of which purpose a student's behavior may be communicating as part of this process as well.

The first phase of the escalation, or acting-out cycle, is the calm phase. This likely doesn't need much elaboration since this is when students are engaged and cooperative. Next comes the trigger phase. Student behavior is a response to something that is happening currently, or it could also be something that happened prior to that student being in the classroom. In this phase, you may notice signs of the student being restless, anxious or frustrated. If you have identified specific triggers over time for that student, you may also be on the lookout for it since you know what will likely follow. Remember, if it's predictable, it's preventable!



Agitation comes next, and this phase of the cycle may be more easily observable. Students may engage in different off-task behaviors and start to disengage by tapping, staring off into space, moving around the room or fidgeting at their desk. They may also make some sounds like sighing or expressing displeasure with what is happening in the room. The following acceleration phase is often when behavior quickly intensifies and becomes directed at the teacher. This leads to the peak phase when the behavior becomes out of control. It may involve yelling, hitting or destroying property, and it often creates an unsafe classroom environment. Our goal is always to intervene at much earlier phases in the cycle to prevent the peak behaviors from occurring, since it is easier to get students back to the calm phase earlier.

After the peak phase, students will start the de-escalation phase. They are not back to the calm phase yet, but they are less agitated, and the behavior is no longer out of control. The student may be slightly disoriented and confused about what happened. He or she may withdraw and deny responsibility for a bit longer. The student needs this time to de-escalate before moving forward with discussion about the behavior and further action. The final phase

is the recovery phase in which the student can return to the calm phase, and you can start to get the student and class back on track with what was happening prior to the behavior escalation. Resist the urge to skip the de-escalation and recovery phase, as these are very important steps in the cycle. If they are skipped, it's possible that the student will go back to the phases of the acting-out cycle in a short period of time.



In the meantime, please reach out to LSEM at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at luthsped.org and let us know how we can help with your ministry to students and families!

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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



10 Ways TO TEACH YOUR CHILD TO PRAY



Teaching children to pray is an ideal way to help them mature on their discipleship journey. When children learn to pray, they learn to communicate their faith. This learning is a process that happens over time. An example of process learning is infants learning to talk. First, they listen, then move on to babbling. Gradually their sounds turn into words. Similarly, when children learn to write, they first scribble; as they learn about sounds and words, sentences begin to form. We don't need to wait until we think our children are "ready" to pray. Prayer is a spiritual communication with God.

"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (COL. 4:2).

The beginning step in teaching our children to be steadfast in prayer is to invite them to pray regardless of their skill level. In the process of daily prayer, your children will develop skills that will assist them on their life's journey. Irrespective of the age of your children, the time

to begin prayer is now. Read through these suggestions and find some that will work for your family.

1. Start with the prayer Jesus taught us.

Teach the Lord's Prayer by reciting it with your children every day. With this method, even young children will easily learn. Knowing the Lord's Prayer is a beautiful and simple way to participate in the church service.

2. Make prayer a part of a routine.

If you connect prayer to something you already do, you will have a natural reminder. For instance, try praying in your car before heading to school, at mealtime devotion or at bedtime. Children learn through routine and



repetition. As your family commits to this practice, you will see them grow into prayer.

3. Teach your children to pray for others. When children are encouraged to remember others, they practice empathy. Put the names of family members, friends and other essential people on pieces of paper in a jar and choose one each day. (Be sure to include teachers and pastors.) When your children are ready to expand their prayers, encourage them to think of two or three specific things regarding the loved one.

4. Encourage your children to confess their wrongs in a prayer. Let them learn to give their sin and guilt to God. We don't want children to be comfortable with sinning, but we also do not want them to feel conflicted about confessing. Confessing to God in prayer will make them less likely to be in denial about their need for forgiveness and correction.

5. Develop a quick family discussion time before you begin your prayers.

Help your children identify their worries and requests. You want them to know they can trust God to care for them. Also, talk with your children about things God has done during the day. Let your children go into prayer with trust and praise in their hearts.

6. As your children grow into prayer, teach them to construct a prayer by first imagining what their life would be like without something. For instance, have them imagine what their life would be like without their school or church. This process is an effective way to connect gratitude to the process of prayer.

This connection will resurface in their brains when they find themselves in a struggle.

7. Teach your children a song prayer. Children learn better when we put words to music. When the day has rendered your children too tired to pray, they will likely still have enough energy to sing a simple prayer.

8. Formal prayer is appropriate, but we also want to teach our children that prayer is a conversation with God. Allow them to wander off subject and interject on occasion. Their prayers will grow more focused over time.

9. Encourage your child to lead your family in prayer. As your child begins this skill, it is important to accept their efforts. An excellent way for younger children to grow into this skill is to have them start a family prayer, then allow each family member a turn.

10. As your child begins to pray, keep a prayer journal where you record their efforts. Over a year, you will see amazing growth, and this journal will make a unique gift when your child is confirmed. In your prayer journal, keep a chart with a list of prayer requests. When God answers the prayer, go back and make a notation after the request. Show your child how God answers prayer with what we ask or with His alternative plan.

“I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies” (PSALM 18:3).

King David made this statement as part of a prayer when God rescued him from grave danger. We are blessed to be encouraged to reach out to our God and Savior in prayer. Know that the Holy Spirit is eager to assist you in your efforts to teach your children how to pray.





Professionally Speaking



Finding Value in Disagreements

It's a rare soul who seems particularly enthusiastic about conflicts. We mostly prefer when everyone is happy with our ideas and decisions. Some high schools and middle schools offer students the opportunity to compete through disagreements, debate, where they argue opposite sides of an issue and try to make clear and compelling cases for why their perspective is the right one to take. Yet debate teams don't tend to have to turn away interested participants. People are just not naturally eager to deal with disagreements if they can avoid them.

That's not to say people won't make a stink and argue if they don't like what you are saying or doing. It's just that they often won't do so well. An example is silence in a meeting, then negative talk *about* you and your decision to others. Another is passive aggressive resistance; people don't directly voice their disagreement,

but then their actions do nothing to support your effort and may actually undermine what you are working toward.

As professional Christian educators seeking to model the life of a disciple of Jesus, we should practice embracing and benefiting from conflict. There is a wealth of opportunity to be discovered in disagreements. To access this, both sides of a disagreement should acknowledge a few things:

› **Disagreement is about the issue, not the people.**

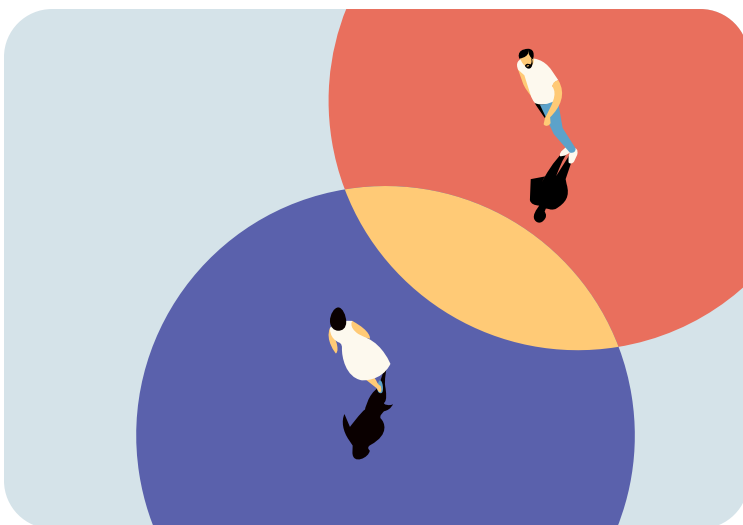
Keep focused on the topic. Due to sin, it becomes easy to make disagreements personal. Let's be better than that, through God's help!

› **Don't tell yourself a story.** It's so easy to believe you know exactly what the other person is thinking — but you don't! Ask to hear the other person's rationale, and truly listen. There is much to gain in understanding another person's point of view, and this will help you express your own perspective in a more relevant manner.

› **There often is more than one right answer.**

Resolving a disagreement is not about winning, proving your answer is the best. What value can we draw from both perspectives? Work toward a resolution where everyone wins because the final decision is better than where we began.

If you are always the smartest person in the room, with all the right answers every time, your room is too small. In fact, that sounds like a one-person closet. Value differences of opinion and seek the wisdom in ideas that differ from yours.



There are proactive ways a person can keep disagreements from being disagreeable. I don't believe the fact that people may disagree with our ideas is what we find uncomfortable. We don't like how unpleasant and stressful the *behaviors* of people can become (even within ourselves) when disagreements go poorly. Here are some suggestions for helping your experience with disagreements to have generally positive outcomes:

› **Build strong relationships founded on care for others.** Demonstrate in your words and actions how much you value the people around you, and that you want the best for them. As people come to know and trust you, they become less likely to disagree in a belligerent manner. They believe you are open to alternate ideas, and that you'll listen.

› **Specifically tell people how much you value disagreements.** Make it regularly known that you recognize you are NOT omniscient, and that you rely on the people around you to speak up with their ideas and thoughts. You believe this helps you to make better decisions, beyond what you would have come up with on your own. Actively invite the ideas of others that differ from yours. Thank people for speaking up when they do.

› **Filter disagreements through the lens of your mission.** It shouldn't be about what you want or they want, but what will best advance our Christian mission. What are we trying to achieve? How do our ideas align with the goals of our ministry?

› **Seek out the alternate opinions.** Don't wait for people to build up the nerve (or the frustration) to voice their disagreement. Ask what people don't agree with in what you are suggesting, saying or doing. Invite alternatives and give all ideas consideration.



When you handle disagreements well, you create a culture where people feel safe to speak their minds and offer alternate opinions. This is the sort of environment brothers and sisters in Christ *should* be able to demonstrate. People feel respected and valued when they know they can share their own thoughts rather than having to be “yes” people. Operating in such a way, your school ministry will shine as distinctly different from the pattern of this world, a light for Christ in your community. The results can be amazing!

Professionally Speaking // FEBRUARY 2023

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mr. Jim Scriven Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



God chooses David.

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



BIBLE NARRATIVE

David serves as shepherd as a child and later as king.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

1 Samuel 16:1-22; 2 Samuel 4:4; 9:1-13; 2 Samuel 5:1-4

CENTRAL FOCUS

Scripture tells us we ARE chosen ... to praise God (1 Peter 2:9); chosen to do good works that God prepared (Eph. 2:10; Psalm 139:13-16). God chose David to serve God/his family as a child (shepherd); as king (1 Samuel 16:1-13).

Prepare to Teach

- › **Read** the narrative in several versions of the Bible, and, if possible, a study Bible.
- › **Think:** Just as God chose David to serve Him, God chose His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior who would live, suffer, die and come alive again. Through faith in His work and through Baptism, we become God's sons and daughters, chosen to serve Him unique ways.
- › **Pray:** Dear God, YOU are awesome beyond my understanding. You planned for me. You redeemed me. You chose me to serve You in this time and place. Please be with me and empower me to share Your story with the children, whom You chose before You created the world. In Your Son's name, we are bold to pray. 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 Tuesday below); Children's Bible (see Wednesday below); figures for sharing the Bible Story (search the internet).

Gather for Jesus' Time

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

Introduction: 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 our God: what will we learn today?"**

Monday Presentation: "When David was a baby small, he couldn't help at home at all. But, he grew bigger, like you and me. Then he helped his fa-mi-ly. He took care of his daddy's sheep. He showed them water to drink and grass to eat; and, watched them when they went to sleep. As David watched the sheep run around, he wrote songs; his harp made a beautiful sound."

Tuesday Presentation: Continue the story: "David grew bigger, just as you will do. God chose David to be king of all His people, too. God helped David save them from bad guys and a mean, giant man. It was all part of God's plan. David liked to write and sing new songs. He asked his people to join him and sing along. God loves and cares for us each-and-every day. One day, He'll send His Son; let's praise God and shout 'Hooray.'"

Wednesday Presentation: Create a poster for the week and "post it" in the worship center. Find a picture on the internet of David anointed as king; or use *Little Lambs Student Pages* (CPH, 2001) #8. If possible, find and post a picture of David being anointed king. Display the pictures and review the story using the rhyme from Monday and Tuesday.



Thursday Presentation: Display the posters and read the story from a children's Bible: *The Beginner's Bible* (Questar Publishers, 1989 (pp. 174–177; 192–195)); *Holy Bible (International Children's Bible)*, Tommy Nelson Pub., 2015 (p. 275)); read: 1 Samuel 16: 11b–13a.

Friday Presentation: Invite the pastor to come and retell the Bible narrative, keeping in mind the presentation rhyme and the focus from the "Central Focus," "Think," and "What the Narrative Teaches." Encourage him to make it personal and maybe sing "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" with the children.

What the Narrative Teaches: God chose David to care for his dad's sheep and to be king of God's people. God chooses us to share and show His love with everyone we see. God chose Jesus, His very own Son who came to live, suffer, die, & come alive for everyone.

Songs to Sing: "God Chose Me" (*LOSP*, p. 107); "Two Little Eyes" (*LOSP*, p. 36)

Time to Pray

Sing (Melody: "Are You Sleeping?"): Thank You, God. (repeat). You chose David (repeat) To be Your shepherd king. (repeat) Amen! (repeat) Thank You God. (repeat) For choosing me (repeat) To be a special helper. (repeat) Amen! (repeat).

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."**

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

S Science, Nutrition & Large Motor:

- **Science:** Sheep's skin is covered with wool. Show wool (or cotton balls if wool is unavailable). Invite the children to feel it; talk about how it feels. Talk about skin covering of other animals, (e.g., fur, feathers, scales); and/or share various textures to feel, name and talk about.
- **Nutrition:** Sheep eat grass; we eat grass, too — the seeds from grass. Serve cooked rice (brown, white, wild) with butter; rice cakes; various breakfast cereals (shredded wheat).
- **Large Motor:** Sheep like to run around and play. We like to run around and play, too. Run around the play area — slow, fast, stop, go.



T Technology

Search and share YouTube videos with the children on shepherds, cowboys, veterinarians, shearing sheep, making yarn, the song “I am Jesus’ Little Lamb,” and so forth.

R Reading and Language Arts

- **Books:** *Pat the Bunny* (Touch and Feel) by Dorothy Kunhardt; *See, Touch, Feel: A First Sensory Book* by Roger Priddy; *Noisy Baby Animals* by Patricia Hegarty & Tiger Tales.
- **Rhyme/Poem:** *Little Bo Peep*; *Mary Had a Little Lamb*.

E Engineering

- Make a tent for David to sleep in while he takes care of his dad's sheep; use a blanket (made from wool, if possible). You may want to read a book, have a snack ... in David's tent.
- Challenge the children to make a pasture in the sand table.

A Arts (art, music)

- **Art:** Wool from sheep is used to make yarn that is used to make clothing, blankets. Dip a piece of yarn in tempera paint and lay it on a piece of paper. Fold the paper and press; open it up and see the design. Carefully pick up the yarn and toss onto the paper. Make a collage with pieces of different colors and thicknesses of yarn.
- **Music:** David took care of sheep, Jesus takes care of us — just like a shepherd. He calls Himself the Good Shepherd. Sing “I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb” (find on the internet, if necessary); sing: “Jesus is my Shepherd, Shepherd, Shepherd. Jesus is my Shepherd; He takes good care of me.” Verse two: “Jesus is my Savior ... He lived, died and came alive for me.”

M Mathematics

Display several replicas/stuffed sheep. Encourage children to sort black and white, big and little, and count them.

S Social Studies

People who care for sheep are called shepherds; others who care for sheep and other animals are called veterinarians. People who care for cattle are cowboys. Use these concepts as you plan centers and activities.



INVOLVING THE HOME

via personal contact/newsletter (electronic or paper)

Affirm parents in their parenting role and what an awesome privilege and responsibility it is. Remind them that God planned for them and their children before He created the world (see “Central Focus” and “Think” above).



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



Making Disciples for Life

Teaching Families

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them” (MATT. 28:19).

“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you” (LUKE 8:39).

Jesus’ healing of the demon-possessed man has many dramatic details. The man, possessed by a legion of demons, had lived naked among the tombs. Jesus drives the demons from the man and sends them into a large herd of pigs. The pigs rush down an embankment and are drowned in a lake. Experiencing Jesus’ miracle, the man begs to go with Jesus to give testimony to Jesus’ power. Rather than engaging the man as a traveling “missionary,” Jesus directs the man to “declare how much God has done for you,” in the context of his home.

The story is another testament to the importance of bringing the Good News of Jesus to the family. Paul and Silas have similar experiences. When the jailer at Philippi hears the message of salvation, “He rejoiced with his entire household that he had believed in God” (ACTS 16:34). When business-woman Lydia has her heart opened to the Gospel, “She was baptized, and her household as well” (ACTS 16:15). Jesus’ Great Commission of Matthew 28 invites us to “Go and make disciples” of the members of our family.

Each of the six chief parts of Luther’s Small Catechism includes the introduction: “As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household.” Luther’s encouragement supports the Scriptural directive, “Fathers, ... bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (EPH. 6:4).



Lutheran schools teach children (January “School Shepherd”). Lutheran schools also teach families who partner with them in teaching children about Jesus. Ideally, the faith nurtured in the Lutheran school supports the parents in their instruction. However, as more and more families are inactive in church life or even unchurched, the Lutheran school provides primary biblical and doctrinal instruction to the children. The Lutheran school also becomes the means of teaching and helping parents to acknowledge their responsibility to “train up a child in the way he should go” (PROV. 22:6).

The school shepherd is a leader in teaching families about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The shepherd then encourages and instructs the family in living and sharing the Good News in the home.

An unfortunate dynamic in some school ministry contexts is the designations of “school family” and “church

family.” The “school family” may have children enrolled in the school but may not have a membership in or connection with the supporting congregation or the “church family.” Lutheran school ministry is always an integral part of the ministry of the supporting congregation(s). The school shepherd and the school staff seek ways to share the blessings of Baptism with the family, to involve the family in the Divine Service, to gather at the Lord’s Table and to participate in other ways in the life of the church.



- ▶ **PROVIDE** family life enrichment opportunities: marriage enrichment, parenting classes and support for single parent settings.
- ▶ **OFFER** pastoral care in family crises. Teachers and other school staff are encouraged to share family needs with the pastoral staff so that there may be opportunities for prayer and family care.
- ▶ **SHARE** resources of Christian professional counselors and therapists (Lutheran Family Services and other family ministry partners).

Basics of ministry to and with families may include:

- ▶ **INVITE** families to worship services. Families may be invited to special services of the season and other occasions that provide an entry into more formal worship together. Families are welcomed to the services and introduced to the “routine” of worship.
- ▶ **INVOLVE** families in the weekly school chapel services.
- ▶ **MAKE** devotional resources available to the family and encourage them on the “how to” of family devotional times.
- ▶ **SEEK** routine interactions with families: greetings in the school parking lot before and after school; conversations at “back to school” night or other family events; presence at school activities where families are present.

The Great Commission calls us to make disciples of “all nations.” We “go” into our communities and into the world (see the March and April issues of “School Shepherd”). Like the demon-possessed man (Luke 8) our first “field” of mission may be families. Lutheran schools are blessed to have the connections and relationships to bring the Good News of Jesus to homes.

FOR PERSONAL OR STAFF REFLECTION:

- ▶ How are families in your Lutheran school being introduced to and connected with the congregation? What resources are you providing for introducing families to a family devotional routine?
- ▶ What family enrichment opportunities (parenting, marriage, etc.) could you provide for families in the school and community?

prayer

“In Christian homes, Lord, let them be Your blessing to their family;
Let Christian schools Your work extend
In living truth as You intend.
That caring parents, gracious Lord,
And faithful teachers find reward
In leading these, to whom You call,
To find in Christ their all in all.”

(LSB 866:2–3)



School Shepherd

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



Educator Well-Being:

Managing Balance at Work

Note: February's *Time Out for Directors* is a continuation from January's topic of educator well-being. If you have not yet read the January article, you might find additional helpful ideas by doing so.

Be well so you can serve well; and, serve well so you can serve Him and make disciples!

One might compare the work of an early childhood educator and leader to that of the life of a squirrel. There are actually many outward similarities! Both early childhood educators and squirrels are busy individuals, always moving from one place to another. Both early childhood educators and squirrels are busy completing tasks for what seems like every moment of the day. Both are also collectors: most early childhood educators collect toilet paper tubes for future art activities, and most squirrels collect nuts, also to be used at a later date. What other similarities might you find amusing, yet also accurate?

You may have had a smile on your face as you just read this teacher-squirrel comparison, perhaps because it might seem true! It is also true that early childhood educators and squirrels need to be mindful of well-being. It's far too easy for a teacher to get burned out and feel "run over"; unfortunately, it's easy for a squirrel to be "run over," too.

Now, that may seem a bit gruesome, but it's reality. As Christian servants and workers of the church, it is important to be mindful of health and well-being. Teachers of young children have a high level of commitment to the profession of education, yet they often feel some of the most stress and anxiety due to pressures



of workload, challenging student behaviors and parent pressures. At the end of the day, some teachers may feel like a squirrel who attempted to cross the street!

The nurturing disposition of teachers is one society values and often celebrates. Teachers show care and love, and lend a listening ear to students who come to school with a myriad of needs and feelings. Teachers are also often those who are the first to celebrate with children when they read their first words, make their first steps or understand the mathematical concept of addition. The lens of an early childhood educator into the lives of her students is a marvelous gift — a gift of servanthood that ultimately serves Jesus Christ.

Teachers and school leaders are busy. They have workloads that never seem to end. Teachers work through the day, often into the evening and weekends, and even on holiday breaks. Again, the servant-mindedness of teachers is to be complimented and celebrated! It is also important to note that sometimes the topic of

well-being needs to be acknowledged and addressed so that burnout does not happen. Teachers cannot “lose their fuel,” because if that happens, it’s unhealthy — for the teacher/leader, and also for the students.

The topic of well-being is not new, but it is one that is sometimes difficult to grasp and fully implement. The January *Time Out for Directors* addressed a few reflective well-being areas of sleep/rest, spiritual health and physical activity. If you’ve read the January edition, how are you doing with implementation? As we learn in the story of *The Tortoise and the Hare*, slow and steady wins the race! Keep working on steps for stronger well-being. You can do it!

The following reflective areas will focus on tips an early childhood teacher might consider regarding workload. From planning activities, preparing classroom environments and doing other school-related responsibilities, it seems like there are never enough hours in the day. Being able to create a healthy work-life balance and maintain it is often a challenge; it’s different for every person. Even when you think you might have found the perfect balance, it can change, and modification is necessary.

Consider if the following ideas might be something for implementation in your quest for better well-being.

Reflection #1

Can you rethink or reimagine your use of technology?

Now, as a Lutheran school educator, you may be thinking, “what does this mean?” Technology has entered into everyone’s life. You likely think it would be hard to live without technology today, and that’s somewhat true! However, some research suggests that the overuse of technology can create stress and anxiety, along with vision problems. Does technology help you with your ministry work, or does it consume more time from other areas of your life?

Consider setting boundaries with your use of, for example, email. If you can, try to set limits and use email only during certain hours, perhaps 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or, perhaps you might try to only reply to emails during specific times, unless it is an emergency. As you read your email, consider if it needs a reply now or later, or perhaps if it needs any reply at all.



Try to limit the number of emails you receive. You can arrange your email inbox to “sort” messages received into different categories for viewing and urgency. Consider, too, removing yourself from email distribution lists that take up space — both in your inbox and in your mind.

Consider, too, the number and types of emails you send. The more emails you send, the more you will likely receive. So ... send mindfully.

Reflection #2

Are you doing it yourself? Can you delegate? Are you a co-creator?

Many leaders and teachers feel that if they are not the person carrying out certain tasks, those tasks might not be done well, or they might not get done at all. Many early childhood educators and leaders feel a strong pressure to perform at a high level — both in and out of the classroom; unfortunately, sometimes this may lead to burnout, or to accepting more duties than one can really effectively carry out.



Think about the tasks that you do each day. Are there some that can be done by a teaching assistant or volunteer you may have access to? How can you make a volunteer successful in carrying out plans and preparations in a way that you are satisfied with the results? Ponder for a moment what your feelings are when you relinquish control over something. Are you nervous? Worried? Feel a loss of control? Talk about these feelings with a trusted colleague who might help you see the value in co-creation. Co-creation is a collaborative method of allowing others to contribute to a task or project; you may still have connections, but through co-creation you have given some ownership to another colleague. Try being a co-creator for a small task and reflect on how you did with the process. Did the task meet your expectations? Did you find more trust in the colleague or volunteer you gave some “control” to? Were you able to “build up” the person/people helping so that you can co-create with them on another task or project?

When life’s tasks and activities take up more time than you have available, pray that God would lead you to perhaps sometimes say “no” so that you can create a better work-life balance. Saying “no” to something does

not make you a bad employee or lazy; it lets others know you are working hard to be well so you can serve well.

Reflection #3

Try to “chunk” your work throughout the week.

Do you find your time before school is busy? Your school day with students is likely busy, too. Do you find your time after school, as well as evenings and weekends, are sometimes filled with school activities as well? Some experts recommend “chunking” tasks into smaller projects and blocks of time that are more manageable throughout the week, rather than spending a large block of time on something.

For example, if you have a weekly newsletter to create and it usually takes you one hour to complete, consider working in four different blocks of 15 minutes through the week. You might be surprised at how much you can get done when you focus on a task for just 15 minutes. If you find four different blocks of 15 minutes through the week, you will find that the usual larger block of one hour is now free for another use. Give it a try and see how you can make it work.

Another example is organizing your classroom environment. As an early childhood educator, your classroom is filled with learning centers and a multitude of materials that are available for students to use. Many early childhood teachers spend large amounts of time “refreshing” or “rotating” learning centers. Consider focusing on one or two learning centers each week, and



continue that routine through the month. Ask your students to help, too! Children can empty sand from the sensory table into a larger bin and then later fill the sensory table back up with noodles. What would have typically taken your time is now part of the learning process for your students — they are engaged as stakeholders — and they enjoy being helpers, while saving you some time.

It is normal for people to worry, especially teachers. Often, teachers worry about their students. Are they learning? Are they making the progress that is expected? What do parents think? How does my supervisor or administrator feel I am doing in my work? It is important to be well-planned and organized, but not at the expense of your overall well-being. Matthew gives a tremendous reminder in chapter 6, verse 34 where he shares, “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” Always remember that God is right next to you; when you need reassurance and help, reach out to Him.

Again, it is important for you to be well so you can serve well. And, by serving well, you are able to make disciples — a significant role of why Lutheran schools exist! Improving well-being and maintaining it well is a journey for many. When the days get too busy and you feel overwhelmed, look to Christ Jesus! Rely on Christ Jesus for energy, rest and rejuvenation when you feel overwhelmed. Christ is your rock — your firm foundation!

You are well into the new year of 2023. How are you doing? What changes have you made to your work-life balance and well-being? How have you included Christ in your daily self-care?



Dear Lord, Guide and direct me each day so that I can better serve You through my work at school. May my time with students and parents be fruitful and may the work I do with colleagues be a blessing to them – all with the purpose of praising You. Give me rest, rejuvenation and energy when I need it most. Help me be well so I can serve well in all I do. In Your name I pray, Amen.

Time Out for Directors

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Drew Gerdes Designer: Frank Kohn

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