

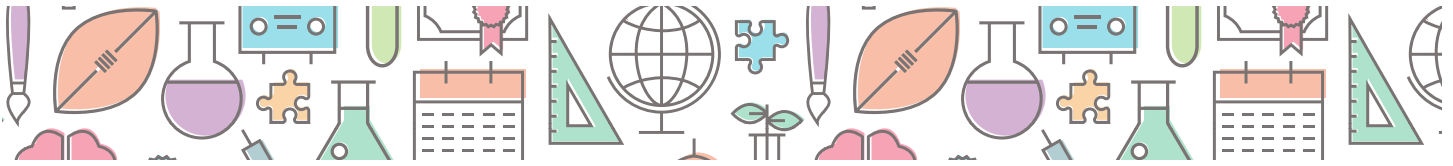


MARCH 2023

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing





MARCH 2023

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Laying a Foundation

Dear Cherished Educators,

Thank you for your faithfulness and dedication in laying a foundation for the faith and life of God’s precious children!

This foundation was certainly important to the founders of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. When they sailed from Germany to the United States in 1838, their emigration code stated that “during the voyage the children shall receive necessary instruction.”¹

When these Lutherans settled in the U.S., Lutheran education was so important that they built school buildings before they built churches. They gathered for Sunday service in the school building until they could construct a church.

Why was Lutheran education *so important* to these pastors and teachers, moms and dads, grandmothers and grandfathers? Thomas Korcok writes, “Although they were members of the holy kingdom, children remained sinners in whom the devil would teach ‘all the evils so that they forsake the Christian faith and bond made at Baptism.’ Herein lay the necessity of education.”² Because of sin, death and the devil, our children need the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. We want them to know Jesus.

¹ William C. Rietschel, *An Introduction to the Foundations of Lutheran Education* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 31.

² Thomas Korcok, *Lutheran Education from Wittenberg to the Future* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 45.

St. Paul writes, “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a *foundation*, and someone else is building upon it. ... For no one can lay a *foundation* other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 COR. 3:10-11, emphasis added).

You, dear teachers, are laying the foundation of Christ in the children you teach every day. You daily lay the foundation of Christ’s death and resurrection in your beloved students. You lay the foundation of their eternal salvation. This is why teaching the Bible in the classroom is so important. This is why learning Luther’s Small Catechism by heart is not in vain. This is why singing the church’s liturgy and hymns in chapel is so vital.

When I would visit the sick and elderly in their homes or at the hospital, these dear people knew Bible passages, the Catechism, and prayers and hymns by heart. When I asked them how they knew these, they would often say, “from my Lutheran teacher.” The foundation you lay goes deep in the life and soul of your students, even to the grave and resurrection with so many you taught and loved — in whom you laid a firm foundation.

Rev. Dr. James Baneck

Executive Director of LCMS Pastoral Education

Community & Enrollment



ARTICLE 7: Social Media and Storytelling



Hill rabbits. My grandpa loved to tell the story about hill rabbits, and I loved to hear him tell it. It's a short story and goes something like this: In days gone by there used to be hill rabbits. Those rabbits lived on a hill and over time had come to have one leg that was longer than the other. This allowed them to run along the hill at fast speeds. Unfortunately, it also made them easy to hunt. You see, once you chased them off the hill and onto flat ground, they ran in circles. That is why there are no more hill rabbits.

¹ "Storytelling for Nonprofits," YouTube video, uploaded by Canva, accessed February 12, 2023, youtu.be/aVZsktNWMfY.

² Jeff Nussbaum, *Undelivered: The Never-Heard Speeches That Would Have Rewritten History* (New York: Flatiron Books, 2022), 250.

Just thinking about hill rabbits makes me feel happy and nostalgic for my grandpa's booming laugh and his big bear hugs. It's not really the hill rabbits that give me those feelings. It's not really the story either. Rather, it's the storytelling itself. It's the memories of being loved enough for someone to sit and share. The meaningless stories made way for the meaningful. The space for storytelling created space for histories to be shared, current situations to be discussed and future dreams to come to light.

We are a people of stories. Stories create culture, pass along culture and sustain culture. Stories can also create impact in a school and show impact resulting from the work of the school.¹ Stories help us remember information and can change our behavior. Stories even activate mirror neurons so we can better feel and understand what another person is experiencing.

The power of stories stems from their ability to evoke emotions. Emotions move people in ways that facts and statistics cannot. Speechwriter Jeff Nussbaum says "humans are not thinking machines that feel but rather feeling machines that think" and that we are "inordinately moved by emotion."² In order to take advantage of the power of stories to move people within our school communities, we must learn the art of storytelling.

The best way to become a storyteller is to start telling stories. Stories don't have to be complicated or long. Actually, the simpler the better. They might go something like this:

There was a not-yet-Christian mom who brought her children to open gym. There they received a children's Bible. Five years later, after many more interactions with the school's Christian community, that mom shares she is reading that children's Bible to learn about Jesus for the very first time.

Or maybe ... There was a teacher who had been a Christian for close to 20 years but had never been baptized. After seeing the joy and testimony in her students who were baptized, she decided to be baptized. She praises God for His gifts and promises to her.

Or this one ... There was a parent who taught in a public school but was ready to give up on teaching altogether. One day he drove his son home from a (LCMS) school field trip. When the students got back to school they circled up and prayed for and with each other. That day the Spirit started nudging this man's heart. He now teaches at the Lutheran school and praises God to be at a place where he can gather in Christian community daily.

These stories are not fancy, but they are true. This is where storytelling for kingdom impact starts. What are

the true stories from your school that tell of the work God is doing in and through His people? Good stories involve one, relatable "character." The story should start with the real place, the "ordinary world" of this character. The middle progresses to show how your school — the community — helped to guide the person to new things with the Spirit of God working through the Body of Christ. The story should end by showing how the person is different because of the journey they took as a part of your school community. This is a modified "Hero's Journey" of storytelling.³

Simple stories like these can generate excitement about a school. They can be shared easily on social media through words, pictures or video. Stories that, like the Gospel, involve both the heart and the mind carry power that moves people. When you translate the work God is doing into stories instead of just facts or statistics, it is more likely that the word will spread. Facts don't tug at heartstrings. Numbers aren't easily remembered. But stories of people like you; stories of God working transformation in peoples' lives, are stories worth telling.



³ David Safford, "The Hero's Journey: 12 Steps That Make Up the Universal Structure of Great Stories," *The Write Practice*, accessed February 13, 2023, thewritepractice.com/heros-journey/.

Community & Enrollment

VOL. 2, NO. 7 // MARCH 2023

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 Timothy

ACTS 16:1–3; 2 TIMOTHY 1:1–5 & 3:14–16

Before You Teach

God is at work in the world through His people — including children. Timothy is a prime example. Nurtured from infancy in a home that knew and confessed Jesus (even though the dad may not have been a believer), he was prepared to join the apostle Paul in his mission and to carry on Paul’s work. The children in our classes may one day serve as pastors, teachers, DCEs, deaconesses or in other ministries near and far — even in our own churches, teaching our children and grandchildren. Or, just as importantly, they will work in a myriad of homes and occupations outside the walls of the church. May God bless and strengthen us as we prepare the little “Timothys” that the Holy Spirit places before us, to SHINE the love of Jesus!

Greeting

Continue to set time aside to welcome each child upon arrival. These few minutes are very important for establishing a child’s positive outlook for the day.

Gathering

SING: “Gathering Song,” (*LOSP*, p. 8), signaling children to transition into your worship area. **NOTE:** The words of this song can be easily adapted to achieve orderly transitions throughout the day. **EXAMPLE:** “Tip-toe quietly, worship time is near.”



Telling the Story

YOU WILL NEED: A flashlight and an image of Jesus.

DO: Shine the flashlight on the image of Jesus where each capitalized word appears in the narrative.

God sent Paul to see the follower of Jesus named Timothy. God chose Timothy to go with Paul, traveling to different cities to visit churches, and to meet with the church leaders. They did this so the people in the churches could learn more about Jesus, our Savior. They told the people about the forgiving LOVE of Jesus. Jesus gave His life to rescue us and all people from our sins. Sins are all the things we know and learn are wrong to do. Paul and Timothy reminded the people to use God’s gifts of power, love and self-control. They urged the people to go and TELL others about Jesus, to SHINE the love of Jesus in all they do and say, to FORGIVE others as Jesus did and to GIVE as Jesus did to those in need. God was always with Paul and Timothy. We also are to use the gifts God gives us to SHINE the love of Jesus on others. God chooses us to TELL about Jesus, sharing His LOVE with others. (“I forgive you because Jesus forgives me.” “I love you because Jesus loves me.”)

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)

ASK, “What can you do or say to **SHINE** the love of Jesus on others? **LIST CHILDREN’S IDEAS**, applying them to student behaviors (“I forgive you because Jesus forgives me.” “I love you because Jesus loves me.”), acts of service or by incorporating them into “Camp Serve” activities.

Praying Together

Guide children to prayerfully repeat each phrase after you.

**PRAY: God our Father,
Thank You for Your gifts to me.
Help me show my love for Thee,
Serving others so they see
Jesus’ love shining through me. Amen.**

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “Serve the LORD with gladness” (PSALM 100:2).

Grades 1 & 2: “We are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (EPH. 2:10).



Activities

CREATE: : SON-shine. **YOU WILL NEED:** Image of the face of Jesus (one per child), markers, crayons or tempera paint, and paper. **DO:** Guide children to draw/paint and cut out large suns. Adhere the face of Jesus in the center of each sun. Talk about ways the love of Jesus shines on us and through each of us to others.

DO. “SON-Shine” Bulletin Board. **YOU WILL NEED:** A photo of each child’s face, precut construction paper suns (one per child). Adhere photos to sun centers. **DISPLAY WITH THE WORDS**, “Jesus’ Love Shines Through Me.”

SING. “Rise and Shine,” (LOSP, p. 66); “This Little Gospel Light of Mine,” (LOSP, p. 103).

FUNDAY FRIDAY. Flashlight Fun. Search online: “Flashlight Fun for Kids.” Provide, or have each child bring, a flashlight.

NOTE: Advise parents to insert NEW batteries prior to sending flashlights, and have extra new batteries on hand. Name classroom items, or areas on which children shine their lights. Sing “Rise and Shine” and “This Little Gospel Light” while shining flashlights in a darkened room.

EXPLORE: Use flashlights for discovery in and outdoors.

CAMP SERVE. Son-Shine Greetings. Send child-created cards and messages, which share the love of Jesus, to shut-ins or others in need of encouragement.

Sending

YOU WILL NEED: A precut sun.

Gather children in your sending circle. Review highlights of the day. Pray together, inviting children to pray as the sun is passed and received, or to silently pass it along. Dismiss saying to each upon exiting, “**Be a shining light for Jesus.**”

Live the Story

Let’s shine! Take to heart and put into practice Paul’s words to Timothy, applicable to us today: “[Preach] the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction” (2 TIM. 4:2 NIV).

Early Childhood Devotions

VOL. 27, NO. 7 // MARCH 2023

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 ... Serve Joyfully



We live in a very self-centered society.

As a result, it seems that there is a lot of emphasis in making sure that people get all out of life they can, and especially what they feel they deserve. It seems that we live in a culture of entitlement.

This can be a challenge for Christian parents who want to raise their children to put God and their faith first, and service to others ahead of themselves. It's very hard for children (who are naturally self-centered) to learn and apply that doing something for someone else ought to occur before you do something for yourself. Children desire to satisfy themselves first, and often have little regard for others.

It takes time for children to grow and mature to become less self-serving, and thus more mindful of others. It is a challenge for today's parents to create

a mindset of service for their children. There are so many things competing for the attention of families — starting from the time they are babies, all the way up to adulthood. But it can be done! Consider the following areas that parents can focus on as they raise their children, which just might shape them to grow up to become joyful servants to others.

EDUCATION - Intentional instruction from parents and other key adults in their life that highlights the value of serving others. Words of reinforcement and support when a child serves another in a selfless and intentional manner. Reading of Bible stories to children that reinforce the idea of serving others.

EXAMPLES - Show children living examples of joyful service within the family, the neighborhood, your church and the community. Expose them to individuals who have a giving spirit and willingness to serve others. Encourage the establishment of long-term connections and ongoing relationships with loving and generous individuals who are service minded.

EXPERIENCE - Give children hands-on activities that are service oriented. Let them participate in serving at soup kitchens, taking meals and gifts to homebound individuals, and picking up litter with others in a community service project. Design special family service projects based out of your home, and take time to talk about these service experiences after they have concluded.

While service is not always a natural response for us due to our sinful nature and naturally inward focus, it can become nurtured in children, starting at an early age. As they grow older, it will become a natural part of their daily walk of faith.

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.

SPRING INTO ACTION

PURPOSE: To engage family members in a fun activity that allows them to think about people they want to help and plan ways to do acts of mercy for them.

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

- › What are some things that you like to do for others?
- › Who are some people you like to help?

FAMILY SPRING SERVICE PROJECT: With the arrival of spring, there are many people who still want to have some “spring cleaning” projects take place in their home.

PLANNING TO SERVE: Think as a family about the kinds of things you can do for others. What skills can you share? What projects can members of your family do? List them in the space below as either inside or outside projects based upon the abilities and interests of your family members. Then, think about people in your family, at your church or in your neighborhood and community who you would like to serve. Think about what you would like to do for them. List the details in the spaces below.

Inside _____

Outside _____

People we can serve:	Things we can do for them:
-----------------------------	-----------------------------------

SERVICE VOUCHER DEVELOPMENT AND

DELIVERY: Make several copies of the voucher printed on the following page and cut them so that they are in “ticket form.” As a family, using the information above, fill out several vouchers that reflect the kind of service projects that you want to do for others. Have each member of the family sign them, and then deliver them in person or mail them. Then wait for the calls to come in and schedule the time to serve others!

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: Dear Jesus, thank You for being a servant. Thank You for dying on the cross for our sins, and then rising from the dead to give us the gift of eternal life. Help us to be joyful servants toward others, as we serve them in Your name. Amen.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



VOUCHER

PRESENTED TO _____

FOR _____

BY THE _____ FAMILY

DATED _____

REDEEM BY CALLING _____ TO SET AN APPOINTMENT.

SIGNED BY: _____



VOUCHER

PRESENTED TO _____

FOR _____

BY THE _____ FAMILY

DATED _____

REDEEM BY CALLING _____ TO SET AN APPOINTMENT.

SIGNED BY: _____



VOUCHER

PRESENTED TO _____

FOR _____

BY THE _____ FAMILY

DATED _____

REDEEM BY CALLING _____ TO SET AN APPOINTMENT.

SIGNED BY: _____



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



The First Three Phases of Behavior Escalation



Last month, the acting-out cycle was described in general terms to begin to understand the steps a child may move through as his or her behavior escalates. We'll continue that idea here by looking at the first three phases of the cycle: the calm phase, the trigger phase and the agitation phase.

The calm phase is fairly straightforward. However, understand that "calm" may look different for different students. Our idea of calm may not hold true for all of our students, so make note of a student's behavior and demeanor when they are focused and behaving in an expected way to help differentiate this from phases further up the acting-out cycle. **The trigger phase** may happen

suddenly following the calm phase and may be in response to something that happened in another part of the building or outside of school, so you may not even notice what triggers the behavior. This phase is a result of an unmet need creating a problem for the student. This could be academic in nature. For example, a trigger for a student struggling in reading could be a task that requires reading out loud during a classroom activity. It could also be related to a certain time of day. A trigger could also be sensory related, such as a loud noise or students moving around the classroom, or there could be a particular student or type of interaction that moves a student to this phase. If you can identify some of these triggers over time and see why one of them occurs or will occur in the future, be prepared with strategies to intervene so that the behavior does not escalate. Don't leave it to chance that the student will return to the calm phase after a trigger occurs. You may not notice the signs in a whole classroom if you are unaware that something has happened, but look for changes in the student's demeanor, such as becoming more restless, anxious or frustrated. Have a conversation with the student to help identify potential triggers when you have difficulty narrowing them down. A student may be able to share exactly what his or her triggers are, and he or she may be able to describe situations in a way that helps you narrow things down to specific times, activities or people.

A conversation with the student is also helpful to brainstorm ideas about how to manage triggers so that the behavior doesn't escalate. This may involve adjusting the classroom environment to help the student or using role play and precorrection before the behavior occurs. Be sensitive to precorrection strategies that single out a student in the classroom, rather you and the student can



come to an agreement on some type of non-verbal cue or visual prompt that you and the student share. When given this signal, the student knows to try one of the strategies that can help him or her return to the calm phase. You can also reinforce expectations for the whole class as a precorrection approach, which doesn't single out the student. The child may need a minute away from the current setting to regroup and return to calm after a trigger. Successful management at the trigger phase makes it less likely that the behavior will escalate to the agitation phase.

The agitation phase may seem similar to the trigger phase at first read, but behaviors in this phase may be more evident as the student disconnects more from the learning environment and becomes increasingly off-task, anxious or withdrawn. Some behaviors like fidgeting and pacing may increase, while other behaviors decrease as a student avoids work, stares off into space or puts his or her head down. The agitation phase may last for a while, but once you notice signs, use a strategy that is effective for the student as soon as possible. Slight tweaks to the environment can get the student back on track at this point, although it's recommended to use different strategies here than you would for behavior that has further escalated.

Show empathy to the student during this phase and use supportive language. Acknowledge, rather than judge, how the student is feeling and ask if there is anything you can do

to help or if he or she needs a quick break. Some students may also respond well to breathing exercises at their desk or using a stress or fidget tool. It may also help to give the student the option of completing the task in a different part of the room or in alternative ways (work with a partner, complete the assignment on the computer, etc.). Come up with other ideas in collaboration with the student for what would help the student return to calm when the agitation phase is reached.

Next month, we'll talk more about the acceleration and peak phases of the escalation cycle. Understanding this process and how each child progresses through it takes time and patience, but it will be worth it!



Remember to 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!

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made VOL. 6, NO. 7 // MARCH 2023

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



GUIDING YOUR CHILDREN through Grief



Children, and adults, experience grief over a variety of events.

Children grieve over losing a family member, a beloved pet and other types of loss, such as a friend moving away. Children may grieve in a way we expect, and other times we worry that the loss overly impacts them. We might be equally worried when a child seems to avoid grieving altogether. It is not unusual for children to express their grief in unconventional ways. For instance, when I taught young children, I learned to recognize some meltdowns as an expression of grief. It didn't mean I excused the behavior, but understanding it helped me to respond with effective methods rather than making the situation worse with an unproductive response.



Children give hints about their grief if we know how to recognize them. For instance, meltdowns are a factor of what we might call roller-coaster emotions. These are emotions that can feel extreme and change quickly. When a child is working to process or understand a loss, they may lose some of their ability to self-regulate for a while. This reasoning explains the classroom meltdowns I saw in my kindergartners. The meltdowns weren't about the issue at hand but were a reaction due to sensitivity. Therefore, it worked best for me to help the child to calm down first, and wait to talk until later. When I gave the children alternatives to a meltdown, I taught them to cope with strong emotions.

Staying calm with a child is essential when grief gets them stuck in a particular emotion or line of thinking. I have seen children deal with grief by becoming extremely clingy, as if they cannot tolerate another loss. I learned to allow a certain amount of clinginess, but to follow it with encouragement that they could venture out because of God's protection. Older children might react to grief by isolating themselves with screen activities. Similarly,



you can support this behavior in small doses because it relieves the intensity of grief. However, frequently encourage the child to break away from isolation. Isolation is not a healthy long-term strategy, as it is likely to make grief worse in the long run.

Because grief is such an intense emotion, it is common for children to move from that emotion to another more tolerable one. For instance, intense sadness may become anger, guilt or fear. Moving to different emotions is a protective action our brains do to help us deal with an extreme situation that is complicated to process. The challenge with these emotions, called secondary emotions, is that they rarely fit the situation. For instance, if a family member dies, a survivor might feel guilt, but guilt is rarely appropriate and is not likely to make the situation better.

God has a more effective method for dealing with the intensity of grief. We call it lament. Lament allows us to give our strong emotions to God through a process of describing them. If you read Psalm 13, for example, you will see how David describes his fear in great detail. He gives his fear to God when he asks God to save him, and then he finishes the psalm with praise. We can use this model to create a discussion and prayer for our children dealing with grief. Ask them to write or draw about how their grief makes them feel. Then encourage them to connect these intense emotions with praise for what God does for them. In addition to using their faith, this process

relieves them from the intensity of grief while reminding them of God's steadfast love.

Another activity that helps with grief is to spend time in gratitude memories regarding the loss. Creating a book about what the child enjoyed doing with their lost loved one can be a way to both be thankful for the relationship and to ease the suffering of grief. Combining sadness with gratitude is a way to help your child to process grief in small bites. It also helps the child to realize that grieving is normal. It is part of God's plan to help us adjust to the loss and look forward to a heavenly reunion.

Most children struggling with grief benefit from counseling. The value of counseling is that an expert on processing feelings can walk that road with you and your child. In addition, counseling is critical when you are also grieving. Seek advice from your pastor and ask him to recommend a trusted Christian therapist if this level of counseling is not within his gifts. God can and does bring good out of our suffering, and grief is no exception.

Declaring victory shortly before His death, Jesus comforts us with these words:

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (JOHN 16:33).

Grieving is part of the experience we expect in this world. Yet, we take comfort in knowing that Jesus is victorious over the world's tribulations. His comfort and peace are healing for both parent and child.



Professionally Speaking



Complacency – The Slow Road to Disappearing

It's nice to have things just the way you like them. You know what to expect. It doesn't take much effort to know what to do. I can think of many examples when keeping things "as is" may be smart:

- Arriving home, I always hang my keys up in their place. I don't lose my keys.
- Underwear in the top drawer, socks in the second. Shirts in one location, pants in another, shorts in a third. Sweaters have their own place (a more seasonal location). Getting dressed is not a hide and seek for me.
- The remote control goes on the coffee table or in its drawer. Nowhere else. Occasionally, my wife puts her own spin on that. That's when we go hunting before turning on the TV. Sigh ...

Sticking with what we know can be positive for routines of home life, but by so doing you can miss out. Might there be a better location for my keys? Could clothing be better organized, a more useful system? Do we actually need the remote control? (The answer is no — voice commands work.)

Unless you are open to trying something new, you miss out on discovering better ways. As in the home, so in your school ministry. Even more so! What we know about student learning continues to grow. Technology that may support student learning keeps improving. Students are changing, with different life experiences,

which impacts how they receive instruction. What has worked in the past is not guaranteed for future success.

In fact, I'd argue the opposite. Do what you've always done, and eventually you won't have to change because there won't be a school anymore. *This has happened to some Lutheran schools that no longer exist.* A sad reality: Some LCMS schools saw enrollment decline over the past couple of decades and responded primarily by doing what they'd always done even more strongly. They did so as long as they could, despite dwindling resources, but eventually ran out of funds. When enrollment declines, it may be due to changing demographics, but it may also be that families are looking for something other than what you offer. You can't do much about demographics, but you can innovate!



- *“I’ve always done it this way, and it’s been fine.”*
- *“If it’s not broke, no need to fix it.”*
- *“I’ve taught without technology all these years. No reason to change now.”*

Comments like these have been uttered by many teachers. They aren’t about what’s best for students — this is about what’s best for the teacher. Change can be hard. It takes more work than to stick with what you know. It can also be frustrating, as improvement is never guaranteed. You may implement new curricular materials, new instructional techniques, a new classroom management style, only to find the results lacking, leading to MORE change. Will it never end?

That’s really it, though. Change shouldn’t end. It’s about that catchphrase many of us claim, that our schools create “life-long learners.” As Lutheran school educators we must practice what we preach. Effective educators will be on the lookout for new practices, materials and resources to help students grow spiritually, academically, and in social and emotional development. This doesn’t mean what we do now doesn’t work. But we may be able to do better. Failing to try new things means we never discover a better approach.

One last word about rejecting complacency: As a parochial school system, we offer an education as a tool to make disciples. We can’t do that if we don’t attract students. If we are going to expect people to pay for an education they can get elsewhere for free, we must cultivate the perception that we are worth it. I knew a Lutheran school with great teachers and a long history of success that was experiencing steady enrollment decline. I found excellent educators using textbooks that were 15–20 years old, literally falling apart — as was the building, which was suffering from deferred maintenance. It didn’t matter that the education being delivered was superb — community perception was this school wasn’t delivering quality.



Perception matters. That school is still around, doing well. New materials, new carpet and paint, technology upgrades and some new marketing approaches saw families enrolling again. Some of the same teachers are still there, doing a wonderful job as before, but with some innovative changes and an appearance that matches the excellence. If the school remained complacent, changing nothing, I expect they’d be closed. Our mission in Lutheran school ministry is TOO important to stand for that; that’s why we must never be complacent. Embrace change, adapt to student needs and do whatever you can to help them succeed in learning the faith, the three R’s and all the other aspects of your well-rounded program.

Professionally Speaking // MARCH 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 Timothy.

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



BIBLE NARRATIVE

Timothy is taught God’s Word as a child and is chosen to be a pastor.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

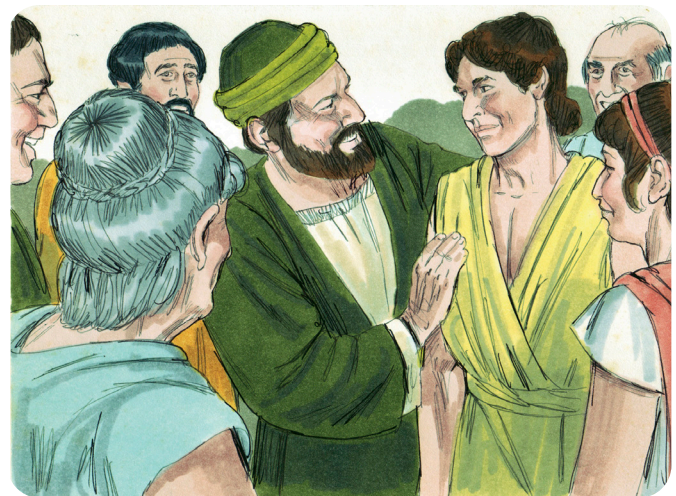
2 Timothy 1:1–5; 3:14–17;
Acts 16:1–3

CENTRAL FOCUS

God chose Timothy to serve as a pastor. Timothy’s mother, grandmother and Paul shared God’s Word with him, which prepared him for his ministry.

Prepare to Teach

- › **Read** the narrative in several versions of the Bible and, if possible, a study Bible.
- › **Think:** God chose each of us before He created the world to serve Him in a unique way. He puts people in our lives who teach us God’s Word. They tell us what God has done and how He sends us His Spirit.
- › **Pray:** Dear loving, heavenly Father, help me as I share the story of Timothy and how he learned of You through his mom and grandma, who shared stories of how You have shown Your love and care since the beginning of time. Send Your Holy Spirit to fill these children with a love for You, especially what You did through the work of Your Son, Jesus, and move them to share this with others through their words and actions. 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?"

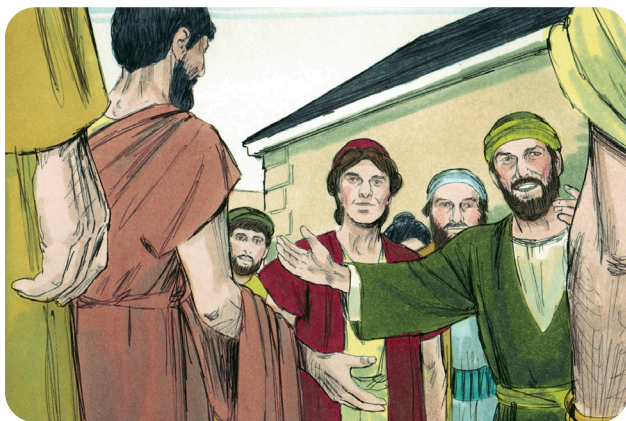
Invocation

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: (Place figures of Lois, Eunice and boy Timothy on the felt board.) "I see Mommy Lois, so happy with her small boy, Timothy. She told him lots of stories, too — of God's love for me and you. Grandma Eunice taught him how to pray — to God in heaven every day. Happy family; 1, 2, 3: Mommy, Grandma, Timothy."

(Exchange little boy Timothy with young man, Timothy; add Paul.) "Timothy grew bigger, you will, too. He helped his mom and grandma, too. Look, here's Paul! He came to say 'Jesus loves you every day. He was hurt and died for you. Then he came alive again; yes, it's true. Timothy, please come with me. We'll share God's love with all we see.'

Timothy was happy, as happy as can be. He left with Paul joyfully. 'Goodbye, Mom, Grandma, too. I'll see you soon; remember I love you.' Paul and Timothy went on their way — sharing Jesus every day. Jesus loves you; yes, it's true. He's your Helper, Friend, and Savior, too."

Tuesday Presentation: Reuse the poem from above, displaying a Bible story poster. Find one on the internet; or use a picture from a children's Bible story book (i.e. *My Good Shepherd Bible Story Book*, p.174. It's no longer in print; but still available online).

Wednesday Presentation: Read the Bible story from a children's Bible: *Holy Bible (International Children's Bible)*, p. 1199 (2 Timothy 1:5–8) and p. 1201 (2 Timothy 3:14–16), or your favorite Bible.

Thursday Presentation: Invite the pastor to come and retell the story; lead the children in a song and prayer. Be sure to share a copy of your lesson plan prior to his visit to help him prepare. You might ask him to show the children his favorite Bible and what his favorite story is.

Friday Presentation: Reuse a favorite presentation of the week; or have a sing-a-long of favorite Jesus songs. Include "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know" (*LOSP*, p. 42). For others, see Music below.

What We Learned: God gives us people who share the story of Jesus. Most often they are family members, teachers and pastors. God chooses us to share His love with others, too.

Songs to Sing: Sing (Melody: "If You're Happy and ..."): "I can tell Jesus loves you; I can tell." (clap twice); repeat. "Jesus loves you and me and our whole family. I can tell Jesus loves you, I can tell." At the end, cup hands around mouth and say, "Jesus loves you."

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)

Science, Nutrition & Large Motor:

- › **Science:** Timothy grew bigger. We're growing, too. Encourage families to share pictures of children when they were newborns; take current pictures. Show that they've grown.
- › **Nutrition:** We need good food to grow. Serve a nutritious snack (e.g. pieces of fruit, cheese and crackers, pieces of hard-boiled eggs, etc.).
- › **Large Motor:** Play with "Happy bubbles." We're happy knowing Jesus loves us. Use a commercial bubble solution or make your own (1 c. water, ½ c. dishwashing soap, 2 tbsp. corn syrup). Mix. Make bubbles: dip a bubble ring or the handles of scissors.



Reading and Language Arts

- › **Books:** *I'm Growing* by Aiki.
- › **Rhyme/Poem:** Make up actions to the poem, "Reach to the sky and touch your toes. Reach to the sky and touch your toes. Reach to the sky and touch your toes. Reach to see how tall you'll grow" (source unknown).

INVOLVING THE HOME

via personal contact/newsletter (electronic or paper)

Share a summary of the Bible story with the families and encourage them to take time each day to share a Bible story and pray with their child. You may want to make a display of Bible story books, or make some available for loan.

Arts (art, music)

- › **Music:** "Jesus Loves the Little Ones" (*LOSP*, p. 41); "The Best Book of All" (*LOSP*, 49).

Mathematics

Lead the children in a Finger Play: Here are 5 children who need to know Jesus our Savior loves them so (hold up one hand, fingers extended).

Social Studies

Talk about: people who tell us about God's love and that Jesus is our best Friend, Helper and Savior; people we can tell about Jesus (e.g., family, relatives, friends).

Paul and Timothy often walked or rode on a ship to other places to tell others of Jesus' love. How do we travel?



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Rattles & Prattles VOL. 26, NO. 7 // MARCH 2023

Writer: Mrs. Judy Williams Designer: Lisa Moeller

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School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



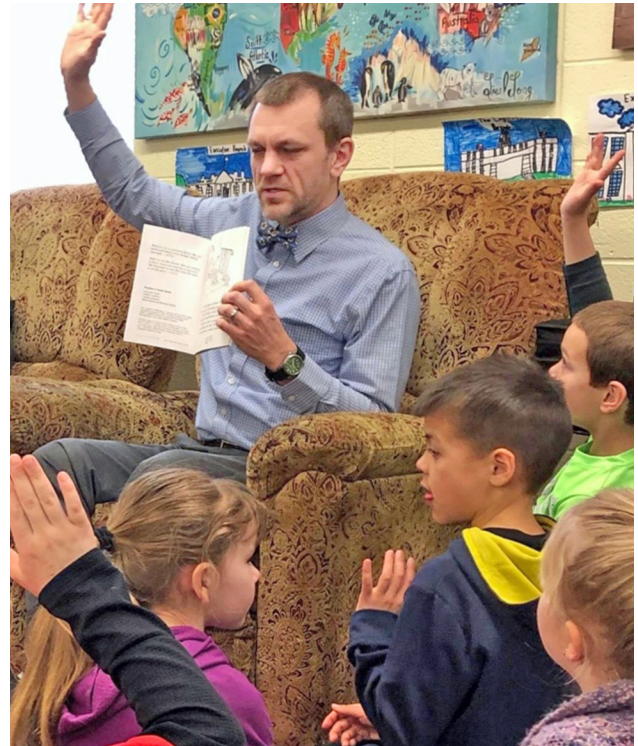
MAKING DISCIPLES *in Our Communities*

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

Many visualize the “all nations” of the Great Commission to be global destinations: crowded cities of India, jungles of Africa, isolated regions of New Guinea and other far-away mission fields. Praise God for the past and present world mission vision of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The school shepherd’s and Lutheran school’s response to world missions will be the focus of the April edition of *School Shepherd*.

In today’s Lutheran schools, the “mission field” walks into the school building every school day, and every community is a mission field. Increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse students are enrolled in Lutheran schools. At one time the diversity of Lutheran schools included mainly schools in inner-city communities. Today’s reality is much broader: Lutheran schools are in Hispanic, Asian, Haitian or other communities. Even Lutheran schools in rural and small-town communities enroll students of other cultures who are part of the community labor force.

Jesus, who welcomed and blessed little children, sees all the children of our communities. Jesus’ response to children is summarized in the children’s song, “Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world. Ev’ry child in every land, Jesus holds them in His hand. Jesus loves the little children of the world” (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, CPH, 1989, p. 94). Jesus sees every child in every classroom. Jesus sees every culture, color and need. Jesus died for every child. The Lutheran school is in the center of the mission field.



Rev. Joel Haak, associate pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Rochester, Minn., gives a lesson to students of Rochester Central Lutheran School.

Rev. Keith Haney, Assistant to the President for Missions in LCMS Iowa District West, shares his personal experience and professional perspective in an article titled, “Are Schools the New Church Plant” (*IDW Messenger*, September 2022). Lutheran childcare ministries, preschools, elementary schools, high schools and universities welcome unbelieving and unchurched children and share the Good News of Jesus’ sacrifice for sin and His victorious resurrection.

In addition to students of other cultures, Lutheran schools enroll students of various academic abilities and social, emotional and physical needs.

The school shepherd's response to children of the community:

- ▶ **FOCUS ON SHARING GOD'S TRUTH** for all. Reaching out to other cultures does not mean changing or compromising the truth of God's Word.
- ▶ **CELEBRATE GOD'S TIMING.** God has placed His schools and His servants in contexts that grow His kingdom.
- ▶ **BECOME A STUDENT** of other cultures. A wise churchman once encouraged new pastors, "Get to know their history before you write your own." Customs and routines in other cultures vary. Provide staff orientation in cross-cultural ministry. While Lutheran school teachers and staff are growing up in a multicultural world, they may not be prepared for the unique challenges of this ministry. Invite community members and others with cross-cultural or multicultural experiences to share differences in cultures and how best to witness to unique groups or settings. In those settings the school shepherd is a learner with the school staff.
- ▶ **PROVIDE MISSION VISION** and leadership in ministry transitions to the supporting congregation.
- ▶ **GET INVOLVED** in the community. Attend community festivals. Visit neighborhoods.

The classroom and school enrollment of the Lutheran school ministry of the present and future may not look like the Lutheran school of the past. While congregations may have routinely stated, "the school is a mission of the congregation," that statement may take on new meaning

and implications. New and different faces in the community may truly be a mission field. Congregations may consider providing financial support for students from other cultures or income levels.

Mission education may include a demographics study of the community. The supporting districts of Lutheran schools can assist in providing demographic information resources. A demographic report can help the church and school in better targeting resources and mission focus.

Outreach to the community is not limited to the Lutheran school setting. Church and school, pastor, school staff and other partners may explore further opportunities for witness to the community:

- ▶ **INVITE** new community children to summer vacation Bible school.
- ▶ **OFFER** an English as a second language class.
- ▶ **CONSIDER** an additional worship service or Bible study reaching another language or culture.
- ▶ **SUPPORT** refugee resettlement with resources and personal involvement.

FOR PERSONAL OR STAFF REFLECTION:

- ▶ What mission opportunities has God brought to your community? How are your church and school responding to those opportunities?
- ▶ What resources can your district or other partners provide in mission exploration and transition?

prayer

Christ, who in dying won for us salvation, Lives now the first-born of the new creation; To win disciples out of ev'ry nation, We are His witnesses.

Christ in all His splendor, all dominion gaining, Christ with His people evermore remaining,

Christ to all ages gloriously reigning, We are His witnesses.

(LSB 840:3-4)





Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



In Song and Praise:

The Importance of Music and Movement in the Young Years

*Praise Him, Praise Him, all ye little children
God is love! God is love!
Praise Him, Praise Him, all ye little children
God is love! God is love!*

Most children are natural singers; they value the joy and happiness that the gift of music provides. Music is an amazing teaching tool, too. From singing the alphabet, to a song about washing hands, to a song about a girl who had a little lamb, music provides children with opportunities to explore the world around them, to use their imaginations and to learn concepts.

*March a long, Sing a song
Keep time to the music
1-2-3, 1-2-3*

Children are naturally filled with movement, too. Have you ever met a toddler, preschooler or kindergartener who was content sitting all day long? No! God made children to be energetic, playful and busy people! From running to climbing to patting a drum, movement provides children with opportunities to physically grow, engage in the world around them and enjoy socializations with peers.

Early childhood educators and leaders are often skilled in their use of music and movement activities throughout the day with students. Today, an intentional combination of music and movement is gaining momentum as researchers highlight the value it brings to children's early learning, growth and development.

Children naturally love to engage with music. It could be a lively tune or a soothing melody; no matter the type, children feel music emotionally and physically. Young children are learning about their bodies and what they can do with the bodies God gave them. These children are also learning that movement can be used to communicate messages and represent actions. With their strong creativity and imagination, children are able to recognize and perform pantomimed actions, such as baking cookies, swimming or playing a musical instrument.

A majority of children are comfortable with movement; that's good because they need movement! As an educator and leader in Lutheran schools, you have the priceless opportunity of using both music and movement in your role of making disciples! As the psalmist writes in Psalm 98:4a, "make a joyful noise to the LORD." And, as the psalmist continues in Psalm 98:8a, "let the rivers clap their hands." Yes, even the psalmist knew the importance of incorporating music and movement together — for the purpose of praising God! The psalmist is an excellent example of using his God-given gifts of music and movement, and sharing that talent with others.

Why such great value?

If you are a toddler teacher, you know that children can communicate with their bodies before they may be able to communicate with their words. Body movement is not just fun, it's a great way for children to attempt

to solve problems on their own. When questions are presented to children that require a verbal response with words, some may struggle. However, when questions call for movement as a potential response, children have more freedom and ability to respond. Movement problems challenge children in different and appropriate ways and help caregivers learn about the problem-solving and creative abilities of children who have fewer verbal abilities. For example, if you ask a child, “what color is this block?,” he may have difficulty answering if he does not yet know colors. But, if you share, “can you show me how a cat climbs a tree?,” he may have opportunity to show in a creative and unique way. God made all children unique, and they mature and develop in different stages and timeframes. How can you phrase questions that offer a variety of ways for students to respond? How can you incorporate gestures and big-body movements as options for student responses to the questions they receive?

Transitions are often challenging, and sometimes quite difficult, for young children. Songs can help make transitions, such as clean-up or gathering together for a group activity, smoother, calmer and more enjoyable. Music also helps set a mood, too. The use of quiet, soothing music can help children self-regulate and relax, while a lively and quick tune can provide energy for clean-up. Through the use of music and movement, children can better feel included in a group because they have more choice for participation.

Skill Development

Engaging in music and movement activities at the same time brings much value to the classroom and learning environment for young students. As they grow in their appreciation of the beauty of music and movements, help them understand that they can use these gifts to praise and glorify God, too. Include music and dance movements in your daily Jesus Time lessons and activities. Students who are gifted in music and movement will appreciate the use of these skills God has given them.

In addition to joy, participation in music and movement helps children develop:

- ▶ Group participation and inclusion for children, especially those who may be shy or needing support in peer engagements
- ▶ Social skills as they find safety and security in their participation with others
- ▶ Opportunities to freely and creatively express their emotions
- ▶ Refined listening skills by noticing changes in tempo, pitch, volume, etc.
- ▶ Awareness of body movements and positions, as well as respect for personal space
- ▶ A listening ear for new vocabulary and an opportunity to repeat new words in a safe space
- ▶ Large or gross motor skills via use of jumping, dancing, tossing, skipping, etc.
- ▶ Fine motor skills via the use of finger plays and musical instruments
- ▶ Balance, coordination and rhythm
- ▶ Spiritual growth as they sing about Jesus, Bible characters and God’s love

As you continue your ministry work in making disciples, reflect on the honor you have to help children use their God-given gifts. They, too, can use their God-given gifts to make disciples. Sharing songs of praise with their family and friends, and doing so excitedly, is a wonderful example of being able to “shout for joy in the LORD,” as David again writes in Psalm 33:1.

Interested in more research on the value of incorporating music and movement into the early childhood learning environment? Check out the Early Childhood Music & Movement Association website at ecmma.org for more resources. Access to the professional journal might be a valuable tool. As you view the ideas and content, reflect on how you can incorporate Christian faith and values into the ideas. As a Lutheran school educator, you have a wonderful opportunity to combine music and movement into your Jesus Time lessons; let these opportunities be of great value for you and your students as you make disciples!