



APRIL 2023

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing





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SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Resurrection Resilience

S*et Apart to Serve* is The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod church work recruitment initiative. The focus of a recent meeting was encouraging youth and adults to consider being a Lutheran teacher. The discussion quickly moved to the difficulties of being a Lutheran schoolteacher.

The buzzword that addresses how we respond to life's difficulties is *resilience*. One definition of *resilience* is “the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties.”

Church work, and life in general, is filled with difficulties, hardships and hurdles. My wife has been a Lutheran schoolteacher for many years. Each of us, in our church work vocations, have gone through difficult issues, such as church and school budget shortfalls,

COVID, relationship issues and more. Resilience comes into play even after such things as a natural disaster, the completion of a building project, the birth of a child, a death in the family and other major issues and events in life.

Through all of life, my wife and I, and the congregations and schools where we served, had come to talk about “a new normal,” and yet, nothing ever becomes normal. Nothing returns as it was, and nothing will ever become perfect. As Christians, we deal with a world and circumstances immersed in sin and death.

There is much being written these days on resilience. Some is very good, practical advice. Various articles discuss self-reflection, processing with others, setting boundaries, prioritizing, being a learner and celebrating successes.

“In Christ, we have resurrection resilience. Our new life in Christ is our strength and hope.”



Remember when Martha was upset with Mary for not helping to prepare the meal for Jesus? Jesus said, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but *one thing is necessary*” (LUKE 10:41–42, **emphasis added**). That *one thing* is Jesus Christ. Jesus is our resilience!

Remember Mary Magdalene at the tomb on Easter morning? Mary was experiencing a great crisis — Jesus was crucified and died a brutal death. And now, the tomb was empty and she was sure someone had stolen the body. Jesus comes to her and speaks her name, “Mary.” Here was Mary’s resilience! Here was Mary’s peace! Here was Mary’s salvation! Would she ever face difficulties again in her life? Of course. But, her Lord has risen and in Him, she has new life, and comfort, and peace, and joy, and salvation in all circumstances.

Jesus is your resilience too. He is your strength, and peace, and joy — even in the middle of cruddy circumstances. Even in the difficulties of being a Lutheran schoolteacher. In Christ, we have resurrection resilience. Our new life in Christ is our strength and hope. As His baptized children we are given new life in Him now (even in the classroom!) and for eternity.

Rev. Dr. James Baneck

Executive Director of LCMS Pastoral Education



Community & Enrollment



ARTICLE 8: Community vs. Individualism



It's a parent's worst nightmare, a lost toddler at a busy sports stadium. Security is contacted; the child's picture is shared among venue staff, maybe even posted on the jumbotron. The frantic mother is describing her child over and over again and calling her name. "She is about 3 feet tall and weighs 25 pounds. She has on a pink shirt and light-up shoes. She has long blond hair and blue eyes. Emily! Emily!"

Soon radios start going off. "She's been found!" The lost has been found; there is nothing sweeter to the parents' ears.

But what if that was the end of the story? Wouldn't it be strange to find the child, and then leave her where she was? Finding the child is not enough to make it a happy ending. The rescue mission is not complete until the child is reunited with her parents. The child belongs in a relationship with her family, and until she is brought back to her community, she isn't really found.

This story should sound familiar. Jesus told it another way:

The meadow is green; the stream is gently flowing; the sun is shining. It is the perfect, quiet afternoon for the shepherd tending his flock. He counts them again, as is his habit. Ninety-nine ... only 99. One is missing! He immediately leaves the 99 (most likely in the care of an undershepherd or a younger child) to go search for the missing one. He backtracks to where the flock grazed that morning, looking in ditches and along waterways for the missing sheep. The shepherd finally sees the sheep caught in a thicket. He reaches the sheep and rejoices that the lost has been found!

This is the familiar Parable of the Lost Sheep from Luke 15. But the story does not end with finding the lost sheep. The shepherd puts the lost sheep onto his shoulders and goes home. Home, where the flock would have been. The shepherd brings the sheep back into the *community* where it belongs, and there he rejoices.

We have been found, saved by Jesus. But living a life of faith alone was never God's intention. We belong in community. We belong to a family. We belong to the Body of Christ.

God is relational and has been since the beginning. In Genesis 1 we see all three members of the Trinity in the



story of creation. God (the Father) spoke the Word (the preincarnate Christ) as the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit) was hovering over the waters (GEN. 1:1-3; JOHN 1:1-13). When God created man he said, “Let *us* make man in *our* image” (GEN. 1:26, emphasis added). God saw that “it is not good that the man should be alone,” so he made a partner for Adam; God made Eve (GEN. 2:18). God has always existed in a three in one relationship. He created man to be like Him, including to be in relationship with other humans, those who were all created in the image of God.

We live in a world where individuality is valued above all else. Phrases like, “You do you,” and “You can do anything you want as long as you don’t hurt anyone else,” drive the idolization of complete autonomy. God’s Word tells us each person is valuable in the unique way God made him (or her) but that we belong to one Body (1 COR. 12). Individuals *are* valued by God, which is why the shepherd will leave the 99 in search of the one. But we cannot live on our own; we are designed to live in Christian community.

For Lutheran schools, each *one* student matters. Enrollment grows one by one. More importantly, each child in our classrooms is a child of God, loved and forgiven by the Father. While we meet individual needs academically and emotionally, we must also lift up the importance of being a part of the family of God. The school community functions as *Christian community* in more than just values and ethics. The family of God, the Body of Christ, is present at Lutheran schools. Being a part of the family of God is the only way to satisfy the human desire to belong.

Keep pouring your love into each individual child at your school. Keep leaning in to community. Remember that our rescue story ends with a heavenly party when the family of God all gather together at the wedding feast of the Lamb (REV. 19:7-9). We belong together.

Community & Enrollment

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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 Jesus to Save Us (Jesus Lives!)

MATTHEW 28:1–10; MARK 16:1–8; LUKE 24:1–11; JOHN 19:1–23, 20:1–18

Before You Teach

The death and resurrection of Jesus is the center of the Christian message. Children need to learn and know this narrative. It is our mission and privilege to present it to them. Both the crucifixion and resurrection are times of celebration, and for young children, Easter alleluias need to be connected quickly to the event at the cross. Then, the joyous alleluias of the Easter season can ring throughout the remaining weeks of the school year. Jesus is alive!

Greeting

Greet each child upon arrival. **“Good morning/afternoon, child of God. Jesus died and rose for YOU!”**

Telling the Story

YOU WILL NEED: A large plastic egg. A small cross. **DO:** Insert cross into the empty egg. (**NOTE:** Crosses can be purchased from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, or other Christian bookstores.)

DO: Dramatically tell the story. Open the large plastic egg to reveal a cross upon concluding the narrative. **OPTION:** Search “resurrection images.” Download images for use when telling the narrative.



Jesus died on a cross and was buried in a cave-like tomb. A giant stone covered the entrance, as soldiers stood guard. Early Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and another woman went to the tomb. Seeing the stone rolled away from the entrance, Mary Magdalene ran to disciples Simon Peter and John, telling them, “The body of Jesus has been taken away, and we don’t know where they have laid Him.” Peter and John ran toward the tomb, with John arriving first. Looking inside, John saw the cloths that had covered Jesus, but didn’t go in. Peter came, and seeing the folded cloths entered the tomb with John. They then returned to their homes. Mary Magdalene stayed, crying outside the tomb. An angel asked, “Why are you crying?” She said,

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)

“They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” Turning, she then saw Jesus, but did not recognize Him. Jesus asked, “Why are you crying?” Thinking He was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried Jesus away, tell me where you have laid Him.” Jesus then said, “Mary.” Turning, she recognized Him, saying, “Teacher.” Jesus told her, “Go tell my brothers that I am going up to my father.” Mary then hurried to the disciples announcing, “I have seen the Lord!” **JESUS LIVES!!**

Praying Together

Guide children to prayerfully repeat each phrase after you.

PRAYING TOGETHER:

Dearest Jesus, You saved me. Died and rose so I can be Freed from sin to live with Thee. Thank You, my loving Savior! Amen.

SING: “Say to the Lord, I Love You” (LOSP, p. 18).

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “I know that my Redeemer lives” (JOB 19:25A). “He is not here, for he has risen, as he said” (MATT. 28:6).

Grades 1 & 2: You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here (MARK 16:6A).



Activities

CREATE: Easter Banners. **YOU WILL NEED:** Yarn, dowel rods or tree twigs measuring approximately 6” to 7” in length; 9” x 12” construction paper cut into 12” x 4” strips. **PREPARATION:** Fold over approximately 1” of a 4” edge. Place a thin dowel rod or twig in the fold. Glue the edge to create a pocket. Tie yarn to each end of the rod/twig, creating a “hanger.” **DO:** Children draw Easter symbols on banners (e.g., three crosses, empty tomb, sun, flowers).

CHANT: Alleluia! Shout Hurray! Jesus rose on Easter Day! Jesus lives, our sin forgives. Celebrate, for we are His! Clap, stamp, clap stamp; clap stamp, stamp. Repeat.

(SHOUT!) ALLELUIA! HURRAY!

SING: “Do You Know Who Died for Me” (LOSP, p. 93).

FUNDAY FRIDAY. Spring Mural. Preparation: Precut butcher paper to fit a bulletin board, **DO:** Children paint or draw spring things on butcher paper (e.g., sun, rain, rainbows, grass, flowers, butterflies, bugs). Encourage children and families to periodically add something new to the mural (e.g., a twig, a sunflower seed, a dried flower, a leaf, other items from nature). Challenge children to look for new additions. Keep the mural “growing.”

CAMP SERVE. Make and deliver child-created Easter cards to “shut-ins.”

Sending

YOU WILL NEED: A large, empty plastic egg; small crosses inserted into plastic eggs, one per child (see “Telling the Story”). Children pray as the large egg is passed and received, or silently pass it on. Say “Jesus lives, our sin forgives!” **TOGETHER SHOUT: “ALLELUIA! HURRAY!”** Upon exiting, gift each child with a cross inserted into a plastic egg.

Live the Story

“Every morning is Easter morning from now on,” these words sung in a familiar children’s song, remind us that EVERY day we rise with the Son, God’s Son. His sacrificial love guarantees that EVERY morning we begin anew. Let us give thanks for a “do over” every day, wrapped in the arms of Jesus.

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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IMAGES: LIGHTSTOCK

Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



Lifelong Disciples ... Discern Truth

“It’s a thousand degrees outside,” said the middle school boy as he quickly ran in the door of his air-conditioned house. “Now, I’m pretty sure it’s not a thousand degrees out there,” his mom said. “Perhaps it’s closer to a hundred degrees.”

Young adolescents are particularly prone to exaggeration, so we are not surprised by the above exchange between mother and son. It’s not just children and young people that tend to exaggerate. We can hear it from grown-ups of all ages as well — even us parents.

But, out there in the real world of parenting, it’s hard to know what to believe and who to believe these days. For moms and dads of all ages it can be difficult to find the truth in the workplace, among neighbors, in the community and even within your home.

One of the values held in high esteem while raising children is telling the truth. This is sometimes conveyed to a child in the message, “don’t lie.” As parents we believe that if we teach our children to be honest from early on, this trait will then be present in their adult life. We remind our kids to be honest in the little things as well as the big things. It’s also important that we model it as adults in our homes as well.

A way to help people around us to be honest and truthful, is to be an accurate listener. If we focus our attention on another person, tune in to their words, indicate our interest in their message, then there is a likelihood that they will be more honest and forthcoming; and if not, their inaccuracies can be addressed.

Here is a simple three-part model for listening within the family setting that can help us as parents to become better listeners.

- 1. ATTENTION** – Direct focus of our eyes on the other person. Our body positioned in close proximity to them. A non-judgmental expression on our face, while avoiding distractions around us.
- 2. INTENTION** – Minimal words of encouragement welcoming more disclosure. Non-verbal expressions, which also welcome the sharing of details and feelings.
- 3. REFLECTION** – Short rephrasing of key thoughts and feelings shared by the listener allowing the speaker to accurately reflect on the truthfulness of their expression.

It seems that much of our listening in the family setting is done informally, or even on the go. Life moves along at such a quick pace that we don’t always take the time to listen deeply and seek the truth in the lives of those closest to us. Perhaps by making use of the listening model outlined above, we can experience the joy of sharing truth and being honest with each other in our family and home setting.

As the people of God, we know that we won’t always be told the truth or express things honestly ourselves. In those times we can take comfort in confessing our shortcomings to the One who is the way, the truth, and the life — Christ, our Lord. Jesus is always there to guide and direct our thoughts, words and actions, as we seek to live honest and truthful lives.



FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY //

Gather the family together in an area of the home with couches and other comfortable seating, where there are no electronic distractions, to enjoy the family activity outlined below.

COMMUNICATION FUN

PURPOSE: To engage family members in an activity that allows them to express their thoughts and ideas with one another in an honest and truthful manner.

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

- › What are some things that people say that you find funny?
- › What are some things that people say that you find interesting?
- › What are some things that people say that you find confusing?

A MOMENT IN THE WORD: Have a family member read Ephesians 4:14–16 and have another family member read the follow summary about this section of the Bible:

As we grow in our faith, we grow stronger in our understanding of our faith, and are not drawn in by the false teaching of others. We are to speak the truth in love with one another, so that we can all grow closer to Jesus, who connects us with other people in the Christian family, so that we can all continue to grow in love as we daily serve and care for one another.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION GAMES: To have fun together as a family you can choose the game(s) described below which are most appropriate for the ages of your family members.

- › **Telephone Game** – This classic communication game begins with a family member making up a phrase of at least five words, and then whispering it in the ear of the person to his right. This pattern continues all the way around the circle until it gets back to the person who started, who then shares what he heard and compares it to the original saying. Try it several times, with different people starting the game, and even try going in a different direction. (This game works best when there are five or more people playing.)



- › **Guessing Favorites** – This is a game where family members think about a favorite food, game, toy/tool or TV show, and then answer yes or no questions from other family members who are trying to guess the right answer. Count the number of questions that it takes to guess a right answer, and the person with the most questions asked of them wins!

- › **Item Guessing Game** – For this game each family member needs to think about an item in the home that each family member would recognize, and then answers yes or no questions from the rest of the family as they try to guess the household item. The person who gets asked the most questions wins.

- › **Bible Character Guessing Game** – For this game each family member needs to think about a well-known person in the Bible that each family member would easily recognize, and then answers yes or no questions from the rest of the family as they try to guess the name of the Bible character. The person who gets asked the most questions wins.

As a family, close your time together by having an adult or older child read the prayer below, phrase by phrase, with family members repeating each phrase in “echo” fashion.

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Gracious God of wisdom and truth. Thank You for giving us our Savior Jesus to be the way, the truth and the life. Help us to be people who tell the truth, and live out the truth of Your commands. Let us always speak the truth in love to our family and friends. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



When Behavior Has Peaked



The goal with understanding the acting-out cycle is that behaviors do not continue to accelerate or peak, but you probably also know that sometimes you can't prevent them. Hopefully the instances of the student moving into these last phases lessen over time, but you also need to be prepared for what to do, and not do, in these cases. Let's look at the acceleration and peak phases of the escalation cycle. In the acceleration phase, the behaviors become more intense and often are more directed at the teacher or even a particular student. The behaviors interfere more with the classroom environment and instruction. You may start to take the student's behavior personally during this point, as it may seem like the student is trying to provoke you. As difficult as it may be, think back to

how the behavior communicates an unmet need and then separate the emotions you may feel and judgments you may be inclined to make at this point. Otherwise, you'll be engaged in a power struggle that doesn't have a winner!

In the acceleration phase, the student may start arguing, refusing to work, being vocal about something or someone in the classroom and engaging other students in the disruption, or starting some minor destruction, such as ripping up a paper. Responding with anger, annoyance or sarcasm will only reinforce the student's behavior, so it is extremely important to remain calm and neutral in your interactions at this point. If you need to briefly step away until you can respond neutrally, take a minute to do this! Students likely will not respond well to touch or having you in their personal space during the acceleration phase. Give them an individual prompt or redirection in a calm way, and then shift your focus to the rest of the classroom or another student to allow the child time and space to process. This can also prevent a power struggle. The student is likely trying to engage you at this point, but don't let that happen! If the student complies with your prompt or redirection, positively reinforce and praise that behavior right away. If not, continue to address the student calmly and respectfully, and find a strategy that can help the student return to calm. The student may need an option to temporarily escape, but find a strategy or escape that is different from what was used earlier during the trigger or agitation phase.

Further escalation is sometimes unavoidable, but our response to students in the acceleration phase can greatly influence whether a student can return to calm. Also note that you may have to lose a battle to win the war at this point. Focus on the major behavior that you



don't want to see escalate to the peak phase, and to do this, you may need to overlook minor behaviors at this point. If the behavior does move into the peak phase, focus on maintaining safety for all the students and yourself. **Behavior in the peak phase is often very intense but also shorter than other phases.**

Instruction likely needs to be paused in the **peak phase** to address the behavior and prioritize safety. It is critical to have a preestablished plan and know how to implement it. This plan may be something that is used consistently throughout the school, but make sure you are familiar with any policies the school or state has when safety is an issue. Know who to contact for help if needed, what to do with the other students and what needs to be documented afterward. The whole classroom should practice procedures for leaving the room and knowing where to go, so when given the prompt or signal they know what to do. When practicing this with the class, it won't be specific to a student such as "when Johnny flips his desk, we line up and go to Mrs. Smith's room next door." It could be explaining to the class that if ever there is a time when you feel the classroom is unsafe, you'll give a prompt that they understand without having to explain. Teach students to ignore whatever behavior is happening in that moment. This can be an opportunity to talk about the different challenges everyone has at different times and that God

still loves each of them, but we also work together to keep everyone safe.

As the other students carry out the plan and are safe, give the student who is in peak phase some physical space and avoid interacting at this point. This may be difficult to do! If the individual child's safety is in jeopardy during peak phase, follow the school guidelines or have someone on call to help. Seclusion and restraint are always last resorts, but know the parameters and guidelines for this at your school ahead of time. After the peak phase, de-escalation and recovery will happen, which will be covered next month.



In the meantime, contact us at LSEM at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at luthsped.org and let us know how we can help support your work with students and families!

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

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Writer: Dr. Kara Bratton Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



TEACHING CHILDREN to Be Helpers



No matter the child's age, it tugs at a parent's heart to see your son or daughter express a willingness to serve. This feeling is true, whether we see an infant generously sharing a half-eaten snack or a high schooler taking out the garbage unasked. In psychology, this trait is called conscientiousness and promotes many good outcomes, such as success in school, work and relationships. In our faith world, raising children to watch for and take advantage of opportunities to serve is a part of how we show gratitude to God for the gifts He has given us.

Learning how to be a helper is not learned in a Sunday school lesson or through an elaborate chore chart. Children understand the concept of serving by interacting in the world. We don't want children helping because they are striving to earn something, such as a reward or praise. Helping others should not be about the law but our response to grace. This understanding means we do not want to make a competition out of helping, nor do we want to develop a sense of obligation. Reward and punishment techniques might help children to complete their chores, but are not likely to produce a desire to help.

To teach our children to serve others, we want to take advantage of three aspects of the brain: family, frequency, and faith. Actions within these categories tell the brain this activity is essential, which encourages the brain to strengthen neural pathways that make helping others a part of a child's life and practice.

Family

A child's brain pays attention to what the family values. Interacting with family members is how we learn the essential things in life. A family that does chores together with each member having their place is a family that is teaching children how to help. The challenge of this technique is finding a part for each family member, regardless of age or ability. Younger children are still developing their ability to help, and older children may begin to question the need for their help. Parents must approach both situations with patience and persistence, remembering that children move through different stages, but the family expectation to work together stays the same. The best practice has parents accepting the efforts of the youngest and gently teaching older children how to evaluate and improve their work. Children of every age need to see how their contributions make a difference. The result of the family tackling big projects, such as yard work, house cleaning or meals together, is that they develop a sense of belonging.



Helping within your family should not be a burden, nor should it be rewarded with praise. It should simply be what the family does because each member is loved and has the opportunity to help. Rather than highlighting the work of a child with a compliment, teach your children to thank each other. When we serve from a healthy motivation, we are not only grateful for the help but also thankful for the opportunity to serve. Practice and model what you want to see in your children the same way Jesus modeled serving for us.

Frequency

In addition to focusing on family activity, the brain is also concerned with the frequency of an action. If helping is done often and in different settings, the brain realizes this is a necessary life skill. Each time a child helps, the brain makes new connections encoding that memory, whether a small task or a more involved one. As a family, look for small ways to serve in the community, school and church, in addition to helping family members. Children will learn that they can be an essential part of their world.

As you discuss the service opportunities, let your children see how their actions would be missed by those who have received help. And help them to see that those they are helping have dignity. Often people in greatest need are the quickest to serve others, in spite of their lack of resources.

Faith

“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth” (JOB 19:25).

While the secular world might set about developing desired characteristics in children, as people of faith, we have a different view of the idea of helping. We don't serve out of a sense of community obligation. Neither do we serve to get something in return. We don't see helping others as a burden but as a joy. We serve because Jesus first saved us.

Being helpers in our family or our community is part of our vocation. Our vocation can be any work that shares God's love and blessings with others. Because we are justified by faith and not by works, our motivation to serve comes from the joy of our salvation. **We are not bound to serve others; we are bound to our faith, which frees us to serve.**

Parent Pages

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Writer: Dr. Kim Marxhausen Designer: Erica Schwan

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Professionally Speaking



Accreditation? What's the Big Deal?

Many of your schools are accredited, either by National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) or one of the other recognized accreditation agencies for educational entities: Cognia, Middle States, Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC), Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education (CCLE), Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), etc. Some are even accredited by more than one of these, such as both NLSA and Cognia. Earning accreditation is work, involving a comprehensive self-study of your school ministry, comparing policies, practices, materials and facilities against nationally recognized standards of excellence. You earn accredited status if you can prove, with verifiable evidence, that you sufficiently align with accreditation standards.

Nearly half of LCMS school ministries are accredited, including early childhood programs, elementary schools and high schools. Why only half? Why wouldn't all our schools be accredited? Great question!

Schools pursue accreditation for many reasons. In some states only accredited private schools are allowed to access federal and state resources allotted for students. Accreditation helps with Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) approval, allowing schools to host international students. Accreditation helps our high schools assure students and parents that the school's diploma and transcript will be accepted by universities and scholarship organizations. In some states educators have had difficulty with state teaching licensure unless they serve in an accredited school.



That's only where it starts. Accreditation can serve as a marketing tool. One of the strengths of accreditation is that an outside entity reviews your school and validates your quality. It's one thing to tell parents you offer a high-quality Lutheran education; it's more powerful and affirming if an accrediting organization validates that quality. You aren't just *saying* you are a high-quality school, you've *proved* it with data and evidence to another agency.

These are valid reasons schools pursue accreditation. In some cases, teachers, school boards and perhaps even directors and principals may believe some of these are the *primary* reasons for being accredited. However, I believe the most significant reason for earning and maintaining accreditation is the ongoing improvement that results. Accreditation, when properly understood, is not a one-time process. It begins with an initial Self-Study process and a visit by representatives of the accrediting body to earn accreditation. Every five or six years (depending on the accrediting agency) the Self-Study process is repeated and

another visit ensues, so that the school's accreditation may be renewed. But the greatest accreditation benefit is the Action Plan resulting from a Self-Study process. Not all accrediting agencies handle this the same — I've found NLSA to be among the best. The Self-Study process results in the creation of a five-year action plan, identifying strategies that the school will implement over time to improve in each area the Self-Study revealed as a growth area. To maintain accredited status, schools report annually to District Accreditation Commissions on their Action Plan progress, being held accountable to these improvement plans. Accredited schools improve tremendously over time through the focus these plans provide.

I'm a huge fan of the Action Plans. I think every accredited school should make it known loud and clear that it has such a plan, trumpeting the improvements as it works the plan. Why? It demonstrates to families that the school isn't just good, or even great, but rather it is a school committed to constant improvement. No matter how well the school is already performing, being accredited means dedication to always doing better. That's the kind of school our children deserve. That's the sort of school families tell their friends about.

We operate Lutheran schools to teach and spread the Gospel to children and their families, both those of our congregations and throughout our communities. We want to attract more families to make disciples of increasingly greater numbers of people. Excellent schools attract more families than otherwise. It's really that simple.

So why wouldn't ALL schools pursue accreditation? There are a few reasons that come to mind:

- A lack of understanding regarding the significance of accreditation.
- The cost of accreditation. Accreditation comes with an annual fee; NLSA's current fee is \$700, one of the least expensive. Some don't value accreditation enough to budget for that.



- Accreditation is one more thing to do, and some feel they can't give it the time, believing they already have too much on their plates.
- Some think they are too small to be accredited. [There is no size requirement.]
- Some just don't think it's necessary, believing they are already doing well enough.

This article is not intended to badger anyone into pursuing accreditation. I merely hope to give you information and food for thought. If you ARE accredited, don't lose touch with the value this has earned you. Maximize the benefits, especially that Action Plan! If you have questions about becoming accredited, reach out to your district office and education executive. You will find answers and support!

Professionally Speaking // APRIL 2023

Writer: Mr. Jim Scriven Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



God Chose Jesus, His Son, to be The/Our Savior.

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



BIBLE NARRATIVE

Jesus suffers, dies and comes alive again.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Matthew 26:47–28:15;

Mark 14:43–16:14;

Luke 22:47–24:12;

John 18:1–20:31

CENTRAL FOCUS

In the references we read about how Jesus finished the work God gave Him. He lived, suffered, died and came alive again for each of us. These narratives are pivotal in Scripture. All previous Scripture points to them; and all Scripture following focuses on God wanting everyone to know and believe in what Jesus did.

Prepare to Teach

- › **Read** the narrative in several versions of the Bible, and a study Bible.
- › **Think:** The Bible references focus on Jesus completing the work God gave Him. It wasn't easy; it was excruciatingly painful. In Hebrews 12:2, we read that despite the pain and sadness, Jesus did it with joy. Why? He did it so we could be part of God's family.
- › **Pray:** Dear God, fill us with joy knowing Jesus loved us so much He was willing to suffer and die for us. He wants us to be part of Your family. In His name. Amen.



JESUS' TIME AND BIBLE NARRATIVE PRESENTATION

You will need

- Resources: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)* (CPH, 1989); *Fingers Tell the Story (FTTS)* (CPH, 1989)
- Worship Center: small table, laminated picture of Jesus [search the internet or use an 8" x 10" picture from CPH (\$6.99)] mounted on the wall; poster (see Tuesday below); Children's Bible (see Wednesday below); figures for sharing the Bible Story and related curricular activities, available here: <https://files.lcms.org/f/0C8C3E64-35AC-4385-B30D-6883D63D7B67>

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

Duplicate the four figures from the reproducible. Laminate and cut them out. Use them to present the story (e.g. felt board, magnetic board, stick puppets).

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: (Show figure of Jesus) Jesus grew up to be a man; you will grow up, too. He served His heavenly Father and knew what He had to do (**add picture of Jesus on a cross**). Jesus was hurt and died upon a wooden cross. He did it for you and me — for all of us (**exchange cross for empty tomb**). Jesus' friends carefully put Him in a grave that was in a little cave (**show figure of risen Jesus**). In three days, Jesus came alive again; it's true! Jesus came alive for everyone — moms, dads and kids, too.

Song to Sing: (use melody "Farmer in the Dell"): "Oh, Jesus died for you. Oh, Jesus died for me. Jesus died for you and me. Oh, Jesus died for me." Additional verses: "Oh, Jesus came alive." "Oh, Jesus loves me so." (From *Rattles and Prattles*, 2016.)

Echo Prayer: "Dear Jesus (repeat). We are glad (repeat). You love us so much (repeat). You were hurt and died (repeat). And came alive (repeat). Amen (repeat)."

Tuesday Presentation: Show a Bible story poster (find one on the internet or use a picture from Little Lambs Reproducible (CPH, 2001, #26); a children's Bible story book, such as *My Good Shepherd Bible Story Book*, p. 149 or 150 (it's no longer in print; but still available online). Reuse the figures from the story presentation.

Wednesday Presentation: Refer to the picture on the poster and read the story from a Bible, such as *The Beginner's Bible* (Questar Publishers, 1989 (p. 485)); select verses from *Holy Bible (International Children's Bible, Tommy Nelson Publishers, 2015)*; or a Bible of your choice. Reuse song and prayer.

Thursday Presentation: Use Action Poem (see rhyme/poem below). Reuse song and prayer.

Friday Presentation: Review the story; have a sing-along of favorite Jesus' songs, or invite the pastor to show crosses he wears. Crucifixes remind us that Jesus died for us. Empty crosses help us remember Jesus came alive again and is still alive today. Reuse song and prayer.

What the Narrative Teaches: Jesus is God's Son, who lived, suffered, died and came alive again for all of us. Because of what Jesus did, we can be God's loved and forgiven children and be part of God's family forever.

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:** Create a display of small crosses (wooden, plastic, wax, etc). Jesus died on a wooden cross. Invite children to find crosses made of wood.
- **Nutrition:** Serve hot cross buns, or add cheese crosses to half a dinner roll.
- **Large Motor:** Sing and make up actions: “Clap, clap, clap for joy; Jesus loves each girl and boy. Clap, clap, clap up high. Jesus came from heaven to die. Clap, clap and clap; do a little jive. On Easter Day He came alive.” (Extra Activity: change “clap” to other actions).

T Technology and Engineering

- The cross on which Jesus died was made from wood. Look around the room. What’s made from wood? Ask how they think the various items were made and tools that might have been used. Provide simple tools, wooden blocks and lots of tree cookies of various sizes and invite them to “make something.” *Note:* You might set out commercial pounding toys for children. **Caution:** remind children do not hammer anything except the toy/wood.

R Reading and Language Arts

- **Books:** *My Very First Easter* by Juliet David; *Jesus Rose for Me: The True Story of Easter* by Jared Kennedy; *The Toolbox* by Anne and Harlow Rockwell.
- **Rhyme/Poem:** “When Jesus died, they buried Him inside an empty grave (crouch down). Then Easter came and happy day, My Jesus came alive (stand up slowly and raise hands in praise).” (Adapted from *Fingers Tell the Story*, CPH, 1989, p. 30).



A Arts (art, music)

- **Art:** Put cross shapes made from white contact paper on a piece of paper. Invite children to use “happy colors” to color on the whole page. When dry, pull off the contact paper to review a Happy Easter Cross.
- **Music:** Use the melody of “I’m as Happy as Can Be” (*LOSP*, p. 25). Sing: “I’m as happy as can be; Jesus died and-came alive for me.” Verse 2: “You can be that happy, too. Jesus died and-came alive for you.” (Adapted from *Rattles and Prattles*, March 2016.)

M Mathematics

- Look at the crosses on the science table. Count the number of wooden, metal, plastic, crucifixes, Easter crosses and so forth.

S Social Studies

Look at, name and talk about the many feelings exhibited in the Bible story (e.g., anger that people would hurt Jesus, sadness at Jesus’ death, happiness and joy at Jesus’ resurrection). Talk about appropriate ways to react when we have these feelings.

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

Give families a copy of the reproducible figures and story outline. Encourage them to retell the “real” Easter story at home. Invite them to attend Easter services. Ask pastor to include a song, children’s message or Easter take-home. Check CTA Publishers (ctainc.com) for activity ideas. Help children follow along at the Easter Vigil Divine Service with the coloring book found here: resources.lcms.org/worship-planning/easter-vigil-childrens-coloring-book/.



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



MAKING DISCIPLES of All Nations

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”

(MATT. 28:19).

Physical eyesight is limited in width and depth. Mission “eyesight” is also limited. It is limited by our sinful nature, which sees our own situations, needs and interests. It is limited by our experiences and our “comfort zone.” Oftentimes our mission vision is limited to the “fields” in our sight.

Jesus directed His disciples, “Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest” (JOHN 4:35). The Lord of the harvest field is the Lord who provided the Seed for the harvest. Jesus’ cross was planted on Calvary’s hill. Jesus’ sacrifice paid the price for the sins of the whole world. Jesus plants the seed of His Word into hearts so that by believing in Him they may have an eternity with Him.

Jesus Himself demonstrated that His saving grace was for the “world” of the Wise Men from the east, the Samaritan woman, a Roman centurion and a Canaanite woman. The resurrected Jesus appears to a persecutor of Christians named Saul and chooses him to be a witness to the Gentiles. Paul is sent into the world of his day. Jesus commissions His church to go to the world of our day.

While the Lutheran school sees and responds to the immediate mission field of the community (*School Shepherd*, March 2023), as part of the mission church the Lutheran school hears and responds to the Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations.”



The school shepherd along with the school administration and staff is involved in mission education. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Office of International Mission has valuable resources providing information on mission fields and missionaries. International Mission has several mission “arms,” including the military chaplaincy program, as well as outreach to deaf and blind individuals (*photos above*).

“Exploration” of the world mission field is a natural extension of the school’s social studies (geography, history) curriculum. Students of all ages are intrigued by the culture, climate and other aspects of life in other countries.

The world mission field can become very personal through visits (personal or virtual) with missionaries in the mission field. Students might become “pen pals” or schedule “chats” with missionaries and/or their children. Introductions to the people and places of the mission field are always exciting for children.

Mission education leads to mission support. Many Lutheran schools designate their weekly chapel offering to a missionary or mission field. Some districts invite schools and congregations to partner in supporting an “adopted” field. Opportunities for mission adoption can be arranged by contacting Mission Central, Mapleton, Iowa (gary.thies@lcms.org). Missionary Gary facilitates the support of LCMS missionaries through personalized mission adoption opportunities.

Lutheran Hour Ministries (lhm.org) brings “Christ to the Nations” through media ministries and other programs. LHM also provides devotional resources for the church and for families.

Lutheran school shepherds and staff may also explore work in the mission field through short-term (or long-term) mission experiences. This author was blessed to join a group of educators from Iowa District West in a

“mission trip” to Banda Aceh, Indonesia, a year after the devastating tsunami. The staffs of several Lutheran schools were represented on the “mission team.” In addition to the Banda Aceh contacts, Lutheran schools in Jakarta and Hong Kong were visited.

Lutheran school involvement in world missions is always a celebration of the work of the Holy Spirit. God uses the children, staff and families of the Lutheran school to personally share that “God so loved the world that He sent His only Son.” Lutheran schools can make an international difference and more importantly an eternal difference. The Holy Spirit may also plant a “seed” for mission service in the heart of a student. Imagine a missionary in training at your Lutheran school.

The apostle John was blessed to see the vision, “I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people” (REV. 14:6). Lutheran school students are blessed to be part of fulfilling God’s mission vision. What a blessing to envision God’s children from around His world together at His throne.

FOR PERSONAL OR STAFF REFLECTION:

- ▶ What missionaries and mission fields has your church and school been introduced to and supported?
- ▶ How could your school be more intentional in introducing children to international missionaries and mission fields?

prayer

O God of light, Your Word, a lamp un-failing, Shall pierce the darkness of our earthbound way And show Your grace, Your plan for us unveiling, And guide our footsteps to the perfect day.

To all the world Your summons You are sending, Through all the earth, to ev’ry land and race,

That myriad tongues, in one great anthem blending, May praise and celebrate Your gift of grace.

(LSB 836:1, 4)



School Shepherd

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Rev. Robert Riggert Designer: Frank Kohn

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Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



READ, WRITE and SHARE the GOOD NEWS!

Have you ever asked a group of early childhood students their favorite color and received enough responses to color the entire rainbow a few times over? Children love to share and respond; they are full of information, feelings and knowledge that is meaningful to them. The joy of learning that is present in early childhood environments is something to celebrate. The learning that occurs in early childhood classrooms is contagious and should “bubble” up as they mature. The brain of a 5 year old is growing so much, both in size, but also in knowledge. This formative time in a child’s life is part of God’s wonderful creation!

As children mature and grow, and as their cognition grows, educators have the opportunity to help increase their experiences, creativity and interests. Two areas — reading and writing — have significant value in the early years, if done appropriately. There are many different philosophies of reading and writing in the early childhood setting; this article won’t explore all these thoughts, but, rather, will give an overview of how children can use their innate desire to learn, read and write to further the Great Commission and “go and make disciples” (MATT. 28:19-20).

Read, read and read it again!

Children love books and stories, so be sure to look for opportunities to engage in reading with students whenever possible. Depending on the age level of students you work with, there will be differences

in the types of books, length of readings, and whether you are the primary reader, or if the students may engage in some of the reading. No matter what age of children, they all can be readers! There is tremendous value in reading favorite books over and over too. As this happens, children become familiar with the story and begin to tell it from memory. The exposure to print is valuable too, especially as children grow in alphabet recognition and pre-reading skills.

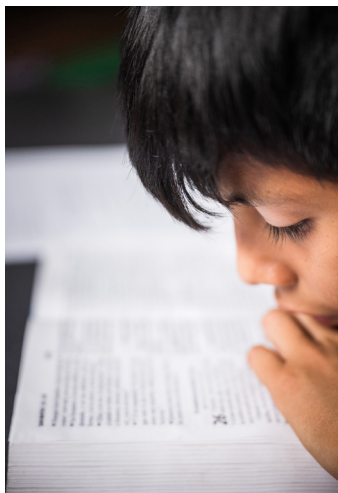
To help encourage children in their reading, with a greater purpose of making disciples, consider the following important early childhood pedagogical practices:

Bibles, Bibles Everywhere!

The Good News of the Gospel is everywhere! Make sure a variety of children’s Bibles and story Bibles are available for student use throughout the classroom. If you have books and materials from your daily “Jesus Time” lessons, consider making them available to students for their use as well. The more opportunities children have to engage with reading and interacting with God’s Word, the more they will return to it and eventually share with peers and family members.

Act It Out!

Children love to be creative and share their imaginations. Encourage students to act out favorite Bible stories. Props can include something as simple as Bible character name tags, or they can be as elaborate as a variety of dress-up clothes in the Dramatic Play Center. You



can also be creative and have children draw their own characters on paper, or find printables online, and glue them to a toilet paper tube for reenacting. Encourage students to use Bibles or Bible storybooks when dramatizing the stories too. Dramatizing Bible stories is a wonderful way for students to understand how powerful God's love, grace, peace, mercy and forgiveness really are!

The Priceless Popsicle Stick

Have you ever shown students a picture, only to be greeted by bored faces or emotionless reactions? Consider providing students with a variety of Bible character pictures to color and glue on popsicle sticks. As children create their own characters and retell the story, they begin to have a deeper value of the content because they made the pictures on their own; they are valuable. Provide zipper-type plastic bags for students to place these retelling characters in for safe keeping and to transport back home.

If You Can Say It — You Can Write It!

Writing is another significant developmental step in the lives of young children. From early use with crayons or markers to a steady hand in handwriting, most children love expressing themselves through the use of written text. When children begin to enhance their writing skills, the writing they do has meaning, such as their names or making a list of favorite foods to purchase at the grocery store.

To help encourage children in their writing, with a greater purpose of making disciples, consider the following important early childhood pedagogical practices:

Let's Write It Together

Just as children need to see others read in order to grow as a reader, the same holds true for writing too. The more children see others write, the more they will grow as a writer. As you read through Bible stories each day, make a list of the characters in each story, and talk out loud about the writing you do. For example, if you were reading the story of Adam and Eve, say, "I want to write their names down. Adam's name begins with an A, then d – a – m. Eve's name begins with an E, then a v and another e." As children watch you write, they learn

some conventions of print. What other ways can you model print that connects to Bible stories? What else can you do to encourage students to write words from the Bible on their own?

The Power of Prayer

Young children know the value of prayer. They are often eager to listen to, as well as engage in, classroom prayers. Your students may have already memorized a collection of popular classroom prayers too. Include a prayer box in your classroom that allows children to write prayer requests. This prayer box could be as simple as a decorated shoebox and small pieces of paper, or as elaborate as a real mailbox, complete with paper and envelopes. The use of a Word Wall could be a great resource for students who are beginning to develop their independent writing skills. Words or phrases, such as "Dear Jesus," "Amen" and "I want to pray for ..." are possible ideas for such Word Walls. As a class, work together to develop additional prompts for students to use.

You Write the Story!

As children become more familiar with Bible stories and memorize some details, encourage them to be "authors" and "illustrators" as they re-create their own Bible storybooks. Provide students with a continuous supply of paper or already-made small booklets. Encourage children to draw and write details of different Bible stories, and include these student-made books in your classroom library. Some students may also enjoy creating a digital storybook on an iPad or other technology device.

Being a teacher and leader in a Lutheran school is an opportunity to make disciples, but also equip others to make disciples too. As you provide students with modeling and materials that they can use independently, you are equipping them with tools to use for reading and writing, but also for sharing the Good News. Be sure to talk about the importance of telling others about Jesus; the world is in need of His love. God's love is not a secret, it's for sharing — sharing for the purpose of making disciples!

Oh, you can't keep Jesus' love in a box, love in a box, love in a box

Oh, you can't keep Jesus' love in a box, cause His love will come bubbling through!

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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