

A vertical border on the left side of the page, composed of a repeating pattern of small, line-art icons. These icons represent various educational fields: science (rocket, microscope, planet, atom, beaker), mathematics (compass, ruler, pie chart, bar graph), arts (paint palette, musical notes, lightbulb), and general education (books, graduation cap, apple, pencil, paper plane).

SEPTEMBER 2016

School Ministry Mailing



SEPTEMBER 2016

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Alight



FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS

Welcome Back

THOSE OF YOU WHO are old enough may remember watching the television show “Welcome Back, Kotter.” It was a comedy about an urban public school. It had a catchy theme song that still sometimes plays in my mind. As I considered what to write for this first issue of *Alight* for the school year, that theme song began to replay, and the opening words “welcome back, your dreams were your ticket out” came to mind. What are your dreams as you begin the new school year?

Back in the day, watching “Welcome Back, Kotter” provided me with a few laughs, but starting a new school year is certainly no laughing matter. If you are a new teacher, you may hope to make it through that first day, then that first week, first month, first quarter and then until Christmas break. You will face many challenges and opportunities as you progress through this year. We pray for you that your dream to successfully complete a first school year will be accomplished through God’s grace and supply. Throughout this year, your prayers will be filled with petitions for wisdom and discernment. May God grant it.

Veteran teachers bring a different understanding of the pacing and opportunities presented by a new school year. Their experiences with students, families and co-workers have prepared them for what is to come. They know to expect surprises and the unexpected challenges that will arise. As a veteran teacher, what do you pray about? How are your prayers manifested in your dreams for the new school year?

Lutheran teachers receive wisdom and comfort from God’s Word. The Old Testament book of Joel (only three chapters in all) calls for the people of that day to fast and repent for a difficult time that is coming. The book is filled with graphic details about coming punishments, including a plague of locusts and a coming battle. (I hope that there are no plagues of locusts that invade your classroom this year, although you know there



will be battles.) At the end of Joel 2, the people of Judah are comforted by these words, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.”

My dream and my prayer for you this year relates to the promise contained in Joel 2:28. I pray that God will pour out His Spirit on you as you work with His children. He will empower you to complete your work and provide you with patience, wisdom and discernment. He will pray for you in the presence of God the Father. He will point your children to Jesus in their most difficult situations and help them cling to His cross for a full measure of grace, mercy and forgiveness.

Welcome back, teachers. May the Spirit of our living God fall fresh on you.

Terry L. Schmidt
Director of School Ministry
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Alight

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September 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				National Honey Month (Sept. 1-30)	Christa McAuliffe born, 1948	Fredrick Douglass's escape to freedom, 1838
				1	2	3
First Electric Lighting, 1882	First Labor Day Observance, 1882	First radio broadcast of a prizefight, 1920	Google founded, 1998	Miss America first crowned, 1921 (95th Anniversary)	Welcome Back Kotter TV premiere, 1975	Swap Ideas Day
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Patriot Day	Jesse Owens born, 1913	Roald Dahl born, 1916 (100th Birth Anniversary)	Holy Cross Day	Agatha Christie born, 1890	Constitution Day	Locate an Old Friend Day
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Tolkien Week (Sept. 18-24)	International Talk Like a Pirate Day	Sophia Loren born, 1934	St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist	Dear Diary Day	Lewis and Clark Expedition Returns, 1806	National Punctuation Day
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
National One-hit Wonder Day	Johnny Appleseed born, 1774	Samuel Adams born, 1722	National Women's Health and Fitness Day	St. Michael and All Angels	<i>Little Women</i> Published, 1868	
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Visit lcms.org/worship to find resources and information connected to the church year.



Computer File



The Challenge of Technology: Acceptable Use Policies

Welcome to the beginning of a new school year! New teachers and veterans alike know the challenges and joys of walking into a classroom filled with new students for the first time. Each year, there is something new and exciting. However, there also are unforeseen challenges and struggles. Interestingly enough, a new classroom or school year is not unlike working with technology in education. New technologies present exciting opportunities to cultivate student learning, but they also present challenges around implementation, acceptance and effective use.

In Computer File this year, we will be focusing on the theme of “The Challenge of Technology” and addressing topics specific to the challenges and opportunities of using technology in an educational setting. Each month will take a deeper look at topics that represent pressing concerns for many teachers and administrators at all levels of instruction. Hopefully, each article will help you better approach one or more of the challenges of technology to further your educational ministry!

UPCOMING TOPICS

OCTOBER — Social Media
NOVEMBER — Prepared for Class
DECEMBER — Cyber Bullying
JANUARY — Plagiarism
FEBRUARY — Technology Outside of the School Day
MARCH — How Do You Pick a Device?
APRIL — What About Cell Phones?
MAY — Will It Really Help My Student Learn?



Acceptable Use Policies — What Are They?

Acceptable use policies, or AUP, are a set of rules and guidelines established by a business or organization to govern the use of certain aspects of the technology services they provide. In the case of a school, an AUP most often establishes the policies that students, teachers and parents are held to in relation to network or internet access, school device use and personal device use. However, the most important element of an AUP is a “code of conduct,” which informs the user about the level of responsibility to which their actions online are being held. For educational institutions, especially religious-based schools, this last piece is essential as it ties directly into the educational curriculum around a student’s ethical and moral use of the technology in their learning.

Most acceptable use policies are written for one of two reasons. One, schools are looking to be proactive and help their students know the acceptable use of their technology and grow in a positive manner as a result of these policies. Or two, there has been an event in the past with students, parents or teachers that has necessitated the development of an AUP in order to address the issue. Whatever the case, AUPs establish the “ground rules” when it comes to the expectations of students, staff and parents and their use of school-supplied technology and resources. For many schools, an AUP is also tied directly to student discipline policies and “digital citizenship” curriculum. One final rationale for the creation of an AUP, especially one that addresses students, staff and parents alike, is that if the correct wording is included, it offers an organization some legal protection in relation to many of the federal educational regulations and rulings such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Yes and no. From a completely legalistic view, yes, an acceptable use policy can be viewed as “limiting” and “restrictive” when it comes to student use of technology. However, in a positive manner, an AUP that is well developed and correctly integrated into a school’s curriculum helps students navigate the technology-rich world around them in an effective and God-pleasing manner. Thus, it is extremely important for everyone to understand the rationale behind the establishment and implementation of an AUP at your school.

As mentioned earlier, acceptable use policies are developed for various reasons and by institutions of every shape and size, so every one will be different. That being said, there

- A statement on who the AUP is developed for;
- A rationale for the development and implementation of the AUP;
- The services and technologies covered by the AUP;
- A “code of conduct” expectation for each service and technology listed;
- The consequences for violating the AUP; and
- A spot for acceptance (usually a signature) indicating agreement to the AUP.

The most important thing to remember when developing an acceptable use policy for your school is that you are not the first school to develop or implement one! Connect with other Lutheran or Christian schools in your area, as they may already have an established AUP in place. Additionally, reaching out through Lutheran Education Association (lea.org) listservs or directly to your LCMS district office may produce examples of established AUPs from other schools. Finally, a simple internet search for “acceptable use policy” will bring up countless examples of policies from schools and other organizations that can be adapted for use in your ministry.

Once you have a starting point, it is essential to make it your own and bring representatives of your school constituency into the conversation to develop the final policy. Only through this process will the policy be embraced and fully implemented by all members of your ministry staff. Be sure to run your finished AUP through the appropriate legal and administrative procedures at your location, and then strategically implement it with your students, parents and staff. Whatever your process, keep working at it in order to positively affect your school and the families you serve!



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Early Childhood DEVOTIONS



FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

LIFE TOGETHER

FOCUS: GOD ACTS AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

God Acts through Joseph

GENESIS 41–45

BEFORE YOU TEACH

In *Not in God's Name*, author Jonathan Sacks proposes that sibling rivalry is the cause for all the violence in the Old Testament. The Joseph narrative is a prime example of that. Joseph is not only the victim of violence, but he also is its cause. The biblical text plainly states that Jacob, Joseph's father, loved him more than the other 11 sons. It implies that Joseph knew and flaunted his father's favoritism. Sold into slavery, Joseph cannot get out on his own. But God sends a series of events that, coming at the right time — God's time — provides ways for Joseph to be rescued. What began as a sibling rivalry ends with forgiveness and reconciliation. That is not the way of the world, but it is the way God's children are free to live under His rule. Joseph ends up ruling Egypt with wisdom, compassion and forgiveness. We, the children of God, are privileged to live under the glorious and gentle rule of Jesus, the Son of God. Sharing the love and forgiveness of Christ is not something that has to wait. Jesus has made it clear that the time for such kingdom living is now. It is our calling and our privilege.

Greeting

Welcome each child into the classroom every day. Example: "Good morning, child of God, I am so happy you are here today!" The importance of this greeting ought not to be underestimated. **Research indicates that the first five seconds set the tone for the day!**

Gathering

Establish a worship center (a table with an altar, cross, Bible, image of Jesus, candle, etc.) in your classroom. Routinely gather children in or around the center, using a familiar song, chant or signal.

Tell the Story

You will need a clock face cut from tag board. Print the words "God's Time" on the clock. Draw a cross in place of the number 12. Add numbers 1-11 around the circle. Cut clock hands and attach with a brad to the clock face as moveable parts. You also will need the songbook *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)* from Concordia Publishing House.

Tell the story, moving the clock hands to correspond with the numbers as the story unfolds. God acts at just the right time!

1) The Bible tells us that a young man named Joseph had been captured by his brothers because they were angry that he was their father's favorite son. They sent him away from home to the country of Egypt. But God loved Joseph and was with him. **2)** Joseph was sold as a slave to a man named Potiphar. God blessed Joseph. Soon people saw that Joseph was good at everything he did! **3)** Then one day, Potiphar's wife told a lie about Joseph, which got him into serious trouble. Joseph was sent to prison. **4)** Joseph knew God was with him. Soon he was put in charge of everyone

Note: Throughout the year, you will need the songbooks *Little Ones Sing Praise* and *Songs of God's Love*, both available from Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVOTIONS • Vol. 21 • No. 1 • September 2016

PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO, GETTY IMAGES

in the prison and all that happened there. **5)** Two years later, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had two strange dreams that worried him. No one could tell him what the dreams meant. **6)** A man who had been in prison with Joseph remembered that Joseph had explained the meaning of a dream, which then came true. That man told Pharaoh about Joseph. **7)** Pharaoh had Joseph brought to him. He learned what God had made known to Joseph about the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams. There would be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of no water and no food — a famine. **8)** Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of gathering and storing food and water. There would be more than enough for everyone. **9)** Then the famine came. In Egypt, according to God's plan, the people had plenty of food and water to drink. But there was no food and water where Joseph's family lived. They heard that they could get food and water in Egypt. **10)** So Joseph's brothers journeyed to Egypt to get what they needed, but they did not recognize their brother Joseph. And Joseph did not tell them who he was. Later, the brothers made their second trip. Joseph, who had forgiven his brothers, told them who he was and the many ways God had cared for him. **11)** **At just the right time**, God acted through Joseph to provide food for the people of Egypt and for his own family. At just the right time, God led Joseph to forgive his brothers. **At just the right time**, God saved His people from starvation and brought Joseph and his family together again. **12)** **At just the right time**, God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from our sin. **God sent Jesus to save us at just the right time!**

PRAY: Dear God, Your time is right for me. Jesus died upon a tree. Your love has set me free, to live forever with Thee. Thank You!



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K and Grades 1 & 2: "Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock" (Is. 26:4).

Activities

CREATE: "God's Time" Clocks (See storytelling directions.)

Encourage the children to use the clocks to retell the biblical narrative. Remind children that God takes action for His people at just the right time.

SING: "I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus" (LOSP, P. 24)

DO:

- 1) Fill pans with various whole, dry grains: beans, corn, rice, oats, etc. (Caution: Be aware of children's allergies!) Provide magnifiers. *While closely supervising*, invite exploration of each. How are they alike? Different? How/where are they grown? Talk about the importance of food to life, pointing out that even today some people in the world do not have enough food or water. God can work through us, just as He worked through Joseph, to provide food for others.
- 2) Gather food to distribute through a local food pantry or to give to a family in need.

Live the Story

God loved and rescued His people through Joseph. God loves and rescues us through Jesus. God sent Joseph at just the right time to save His people from hunger. God sent Jesus at just the right time to rescue us from our sin. Gather children together in a circle. Practice speaking God's love to one another: "God loves and rescues me! God loves and rescues you!" As the words are spoken, encourage each child to point to another. Repeat, with children pointing to someone different with each repetition.

Sending

As children depart, remind them of God's rescue of His people. Encourage them to tell others this good news.

Early Childhood Devotions

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Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

Upon This Rock: The Rock of Trust

TRUST IS HARD TO COME BY THESE DAYS.

It used to be that you could trust any number of things — well-known organizations, small businesses, big companies, government at all levels and, most certainly, the church. We were told that you could also trust certain public figures — teachers, the police, government officials, people in the medical field and, of course, your neighbors.

About the only thing we were told not to trust were strangers. But we were encouraged to get know people in our communities, to build relationships, so that we could then establish trust.

WHAT HAPPENED?

In short, trust was broken. In some instances, it was lost a little bit at a time — it eroded over the years a little bit here and a little bit there. Small things occurred, perhaps over and over, causing us to no longer give our trust to a group, organization or individual. On other occasions, it was a singular event — an epic fail — and we concluded that our trust was no longer warranted.

This is both confusing and sad, as we want to raise children to become trustworthy individuals. One of the first steps in raising a healthy child is working through issues of trust versus mistrust. If there is no trust toward others, then it will be a hard road ahead for a child. To build trust in children, we as parents need to find ways of placing our children into trusting environments for trust building in their lives.

Some of these environments can include:

- A strong and loving home;
- Healthy connections with extended family;

- Positive experiences in the local community; and
- A church that will help build a strong faith foundation.

So, what is trust? Trust can be defined as a firm belief in the reliability, surety and strength of someone or something. We want our children to trust their parents, family members, teachers, coaches, neighbors and other key individuals in their lives. Through these effective trusting relationships, they become trustworthy individuals as they grow toward adulthood.



How is this accomplished? Trust is something that happens through experiences. Kids need to be supported by trusting parents in the home; experience trust through ongoing contact with extended family members; and have positive associations with communities, organizations and individuals.

Healthy trust with those around is a good thing for children, but it will have limitations in this world. To experience a trust that is completely reliable, children need to be nurtured in the Christian faith, so that they “trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock” (Is. 26:4). To do this, parents, please bring them to God’s house on a regular basis to hear God’s Word taught, to worship and sing praises to the Lord, to be taught how to pray, to experience service to others in the name of Jesus. Then take this message of the Good News that Jesus died for our sins back to your homes, discuss it and share God’s love with your children so that they can grow in trust within their family and in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Gather the family together for a time of Bible study and interaction following the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER: Have the oldest person share an opening prayer.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Experiencing Trust Activity 1: Blindfold Walk

Obtain a long, narrow piece of dark cloth that can serve as a blindfold. Have someone volunteer to be blindfolded, and then ask someone in the family to lead them around the home with verbal commands or by the hand. Repeat this several times so that each person has the chance to be blindfolded and to be the one to lead the person around the house.

Experiencing Trust Activity 2: Trust Fall

Have a parent or teenage sibling serve as the “catcher,” and then have a younger child stand up and simply fall back into the arms of the other person who will catch them before they hit the ground. Do this several times so that several people get to be the one falling or the one catching.

Talking It Through:

- 1) How did it feel to be led around the room blindfolded?
- 2) What was it like to be the one guiding the blindfolded person around?
- 3) How did it feel to be the person who was falling?
- 4) What was it like to be the person catching the person falling?
- 5) How do you know that you can trust these family members not to let you get hurt?

FAMILY STUDY TIME:

Open a Bible to Is. 26:4 and have an adult or older person read the verse. Then discuss the following questions:

- 1) Who does it say we can trust? (*The Lord*)
- 2) For how long will His trust last toward us? (*Forever*)
- 3) What strong object is God described as in this verse? (*A rock*)
- 4) How is the object of a rock a good example for trust? (*It is strong and reliable.*)

FAMILY CHANT:

Have the younger children chant the first part of the Bible verse listed below, and then have the parents and older siblings chant the second part, with everyone saying the verse reference. Do this five times, getting louder and louder each time.

Children: Trust in the LORD forever,

Adults: for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.

All: Isaiah 26:4.

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Have an adult or older sibling read the prayer below, sentence by sentence, with the rest of the family echoing each phrase.

Dear Father in heaven, thank You for Jesus. Thank You that He died for our sins. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit. May the Spirit guide us to trust Jesus more and more every day. *Amen.*



Family Matters

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Growing in Governing



GROWTH TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS

A Strong Start

A new school year has begun. How would you define a “strong start” for your school board? It should always begin with taking to heart the task and privilege of serving the Lord. The Synod’s theme for our schools for the 2016-2017 year is “Upon This Rock.” Our Rock is Jesus Christ! There is no greater strength than our Savior, who died and rose for each one of us. With that perspective, there is great strength. “Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock” (Is. 26:4).

Priority

Your Christ-centered mission should be discussed first. Look for mutual understanding. Agree that it needs to be front and center, and revisit it often. It should be on every agenda as a reminder about its significance.

Orientation

In many church/school situations, the board of Christian education has elected members. Have they been formally trained to serve on a board? In many cases, the answer is no. Every first gathering of a new board should provide an opportunity for instruction. Have a formalized orientation. Ask your district education executive for resources, which might include PowerPoint presentations, webinars and people. Make sure you save time for Q&A at this meeting. Your administrator should work with your board chair to determine how this training will take place, and it should be done in a way that gives the board confidence in its most important role.

Job Description

If each person on the board knows what his individual role is, and if the entire board knows its collective role, then the meetings will run more smoothly and decisions/actions will become more comfortable and confident. The desired

results of your board governance can now be more fully realized with this most important understanding.

Vision and Policy

There are many components to leading and governing. The board’s crucial roles are casting vision and creating policy. The former lends itself to keeping an eye on the big picture; the latter allows the administrator to have the proper tools to carry out day-to-day operations.

Prayer and Spirit-Led Opportunities

We have the amazing privilege of prayer in our Lutheran schools! Pray often, pray specifically and thank God for the blessings and the challenges. We praise God for the ability to serve, and we thank Him for teaching us through each challenge. Stop and pray often. Make it the foundation of the good work He has placed in front of you. Make it your rock-solid foundation.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- EBA accreditation manuals
- District education executives
- Governing board manual for Lutheran schools



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Insights & Ideas

FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

Creation

Children love to create things. As a parent, there are numerous occasions where one of my children proudly hands me their latest portrait, picture or other creation. Of course, especially in their younger years, these works of art are often indistinguishable to anyone else. But once my children narrate the imaginative works of their artistic hands, they tell of all sorts of scenes — our family swimming at the pool, dogs, trees, swinging at a park. The motivation for each creation is simply this: love. We've heard that phrase before, perhaps even used it a time or two. Regardless of what others may be able to decipher in these works, I value them because I know they are made with love.

As children of God, we could all use a constant reminder that we, too, were made with love. It all started back in Genesis, at the loving work of our heavenly Father's creative hand: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our

image, after our likeness.' ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:26–27). Much more than any piece of artwork created by children or gifted professionals, we are God's carefully crafted masterpieces. Each one of us is unique and different. Each one of us has different gifts, talents and attributes. But regardless of what others think or see, God sees us as special treasures made with love.

In all honesty, not all of my children's artwork makes it on the refrigerator. Some pieces are very carefully sorted and filed into a big green container that gets taken to the curb once a week. It is never this way with God; we will always have a place in His heavenly display. "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well" (Ps. 139:14).

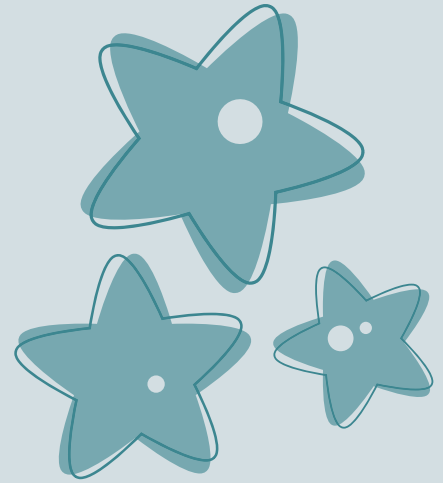
“ But regardless of what others think or see, God sees us as special treasures made with love. ”



Communication Arts

Create a colorful creation book. Find clip art pictures of a person, ladybug, rainbow, rock, flower, sun, grass, cloud and so on. Place the pictures in a document side by side (landscape view). The words in the book should read: "God made you," "God made a RED ladybug" and so on, changing the color to fit the picture.

Create a front cover that reads "God Made a Colorful World." Print the pages front to back and staple in the middle to create a book.



Spiritual and Social Living

In a children's Bible, read Genesis 1–2.

The creation story teaches us that God not only made the earth and everything in it, He made man ... US! This month, we celebrate how God made us along with the rocks, animals and earth.

Expressive Arts

Create a circle and neck shape made out of flesh-colored paper. Place these shapes together to create a head and neck, and glue them onto a piece of paper. Laminate the paper, or glue it to the inside of a plastic zip lock bag.

Create different sets of eyes and mouths depicting different emotions. Allow the students to create "sad" faces or "happy" faces. Also provide a dry-erase marker to allow their own emotions.

Discovering the World

Go for a nature walk. Encourage children to collect as many different shapes and sizes of rocks as you and your classroom can handle. (Save them; we will use rocks all year.)

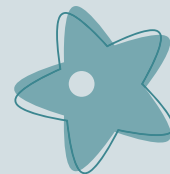
When you return to the classroom, give each child a small bowl of water, paper towels and toothpicks to use in cleaning the rocks.

Allow the students plenty of time to examine their rocks.

Wellness

Play Rock Pile

Divide the class into two teams. Each team will spread out on their half of the room. Spread newspapers crumpled up to look like rocks around the whole room. The students must gather their rocks and place them in a pile or basket. The first team to gather all their rocks wins. To make it more challenging, have a pretend windstorm blow the piles over.





MEATBALLS

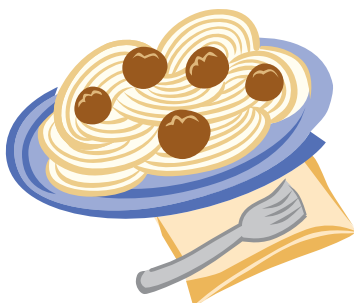
1 lb. ground beef
 ½ cup Italian-style breadcrumbs
 ¼ cup milk
 ½ tsp. salt
 ½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
 ¼ tsp pepper
 1 small onion, finely chopped
 1 egg

DIRECTIONS:

Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Line a 13-by-9-inch pan with foil, then spray with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, mix all ingredients. Shape mixture into 20 to 24 meatballs. Place them 1 inch apart in pan.

Bake uncovered 18 to 22 minutes, or until no longer pink in the center.



Book of the Month

God Made It for You!: The Creation Story | by Charles Lehmann

From beginning to end, God has a perfect plan for His creation. Whether He was creating light, plants, animals, or man and woman, He did it knowing that His highest creation would need a Savior. *God Made It for You!* ties the creation and salvation stories together, helping children see how God prepared a perfect place for them so long ago and, when mankind disobeyed and sinned, He had a plan to offer His own Son as Savior — a Savior to lead the perfect life and be the perfect sacrifice.



Words of Affirmation

These are words that children desire to hear multiple times a day — words that lift them up instead of breaking them down.

- “For I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14).
- “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

Insights & Ideas

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NLSA POWERFUL PRACTICES



First Immanuel Lutheran School, Cedarburg, Wis.

Where to Begin: Implementing Differentiated Learning Strategies in Reading and Math

Change can be nerve-racking, especially for teachers who have done things the same way for many years. Over the last few years, First Immanuel Lutheran School (FILS) in Cedarburg, Wis., has made some changes that make our classrooms look quite a bit different from years past. Two of the most significant changes we've made are the implementation of guided reading and math talks in our elementary classrooms. This article will provide an overview of how we implemented these programs in our classrooms. The programs have increased the discourse between students and their teachers, and they allow students to gain a deeper understanding in the areas of reading and math.

Guided Reading

At FILS, we strive to stay current when it comes to educating our students by reviewing curriculum on a rotating annual basis. For the 2010-11 school year, it was time to review our language arts curriculum. On our staff at that time were two teachers with recently completed master's degrees in reading. Those teachers suggested that we explore the best practice of "guided reading."

Guided reading is part of a balanced literacy program. It allows a teacher to create groups of readers who read at the same level or who need support in the same reading strategy. As principal, I worked with these two teachers on researching the concept. We met with Dr. Steven Witt and Cheryl Cario, two professors from Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW), and we observed guided reading in action in a local public school classroom. It seemed obvious that this was a necessary change for our curriculum, as it would allow us to truly differentiate instruction for our readers and meet each student where they are in their reading development. Moving to this type of program would

also allow our teachers to have common language in the classroom that would carry over from year to year.

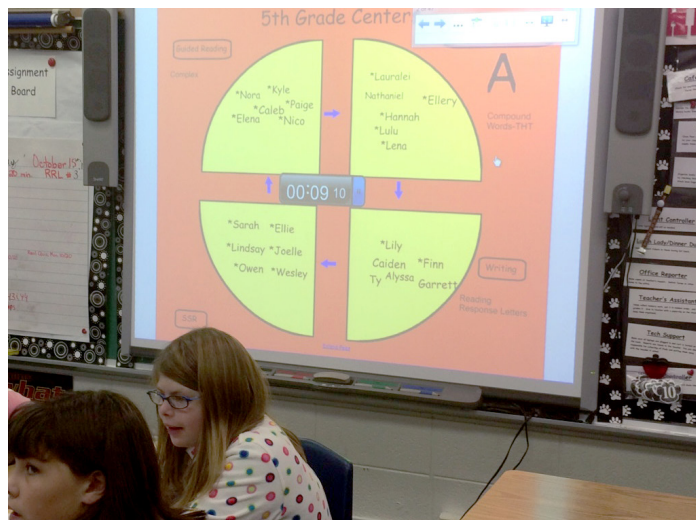
We chose to purchase the Good Habits Great Readers (GHGR) program for use in our classrooms. It is a comprehensive, balanced literacy program that provided our teachers with the structure to support literacy learning through whole-group (shared) and small-group (guided) instruction.

As this was a significant change from using a basal reading program, there were several significant steps we needed to take to begin a balanced literacy program:

1. **Professional development** was a must! We were blessed to have teachers on our staff who had established connections in this area. Several teachers visited a public school classroom to watch guided reading in action. We brought in Dr. Witt and Professor Cario to work with our staff in the summer and throughout our first



▲ Reading Group



▲ Center examples



▲ Guided reading library

year of implementation. Having a few teachers on staff with master's degrees in reading was also very helpful to the integration. In addition, we provided the following resources to our teachers:

- *The Next Step in Guided Reading* by Jan Richardson;
- *Strategies That Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis; and
- *The Café Book* and *The Daily 5* by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser.

2. **Reading blocks** were set up in each classroom. A minimum of 1.5 hours is needed at the K through third-grade levels, and additional time may need to be set aside for the writing workshops that go with the GHGR program. At the fourth- and fifth-grade levels, the reading block is one hour, since there is an additional block of time for language arts in our schedule. We set our reading blocks before 10 a.m. During these reading blocks, students are placed into “centers” while a reading group meets with the teacher (Figure 2).

3. The **Good Habits Great Readers** program was purchased. This program came with guided reading books. In addition, we also purchased a Scholastic library of fiction guided readers for use in our classroom (Figure 3). We were blessed to be able to make these purchases through monies received at our annual dinner auction.

4. **Classroom libraries** were developed as teachers enhanced their classrooms with more books for the students to use during reading time. Books were leveled

using the Mackin online database.

5. **Assessments** of our readers are done three times a year using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Two assessment kits were purchased for our teachers to use.

6. A **record-keeping and grading system** was the final piece of the program that our kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers needed to decide on. Each teacher chose a record-keeping system and created a grading rubric to be shared with their students and their parents.

This change has been very beneficial. It is wonderful to see the growth students are making at each testing interval, and to be able to document this is very rewarding. Here are some comments from our teachers about the change:

- “I have more ‘one-on-one’ time with students!”
- “I am tailoring my lessons to their needs and interests.”
- “I feel the low readers are getting more reading time.”
- “I was pleased to see the progress at testing time.”
- “A parent shared that their child wanted to read at night for the reading log this year. The parent also was pleased that their child could find appropriate level books to read by himself.”
- “It has been rewarding to have multiple parents tell me that their child all of a sudden loves to read and they can’t put books down.”
- “Hearing the kids beg me for reading groups is a reward in itself.”

Math Talks

As a school, we have also been trying to boost our students' math achievement. Recently, we began using federal Title I funds to send several teachers to the Wisconsin Math Council's Teacher Conference each May. As a math staff, we have also been attending math conferences hosted at nearby CUW. These conferences have focused on the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' (NCTM) Effective Mathematics Teaching Practices. One of these practices is to "build procedural fluency from conceptual understanding" that allows a student to be "skillful in using procedures as they solve mathematical problems."

At the Wisconsin Math Council's Teacher Conference, we learned the importance of letting students talk more when it comes to math instruction. This goes along with a second NCTM principle: "Facilitate meaningful mathematical discourse." I was also blessed to attend a session on number talks. It was led by Karen Reiss, a former teacher and Mathematics Education Consultant. I was intrigued by her session and could see that this practice would be beneficial in our classrooms. By chance, I ran into Ms. Reiss when I took my son to his senior picture session. I approached her and asked if she would consider presenting this topic to my teachers. She agreed!

So in 2015-16, we implemented number talks in our K-5 classrooms. Number talks allow students to build their "number sense," which "refers to a student's fluidity and flexibility with numbers, a sense of what numbers mean, [understanding] their relationship to one another, ... [performing] mental math, [understanding] symbolic representation, and ... [using] those numbers in real work situations" (Gersten and Chard, 2001). In her book *Number Sense Routines*, Jessica Shumway states that "with strong number sense, children become more apt to attempt problems and make sense of mathematics. It is the key to understanding all math." Also called "math talks," number talks are "conversations that elicit mathematical thinking students use for problem solving, composed of purposefully crafted computation problems that are solved mentally."

A math talk is simply a routine that happens in the classroom each day. It lasts for a short amount of time. The teacher and the students gather in an area of the room where they are away from writing materials and the teacher can write on the whiteboard. The teacher provides a problem to solve, a counting routine or a dot card to count quickly. From there, the students have signals to show that they are thinking or have a solution. Once the teacher sees most students are ready, discourse begins! The teacher will call on a student and ask for their solution.

▼ A math talk



This solution will be written on the board. The teacher will ask to see if others are in agreement, and then the student who offered the solution will describe how he or she arrived at it. Other solutions are shared and explained.

Ms. Reiss' in-service for my teachers greatly prepared them to implement math talks. We had the opportunity to watch videos of math talks in action. She suggested, and we purchased, the following resources for our teachers:

- *Number Sense Routines* by Jessica Shumway;
- *Number Talks* by Sherry Parrish; and
- *Making Number Talks Matter* by Cathy Humphreys and Ruth Parker.

She also provided my teachers with items like dot cards to use during the math talks. After the school year, we brought Ms. Reiss back to talk with the teachers so she could answer questions and talk to them further on the topic.

Unlike guided reading, there aren't levels to show you how students have improved. But there are many anecdotal examples of increased understanding. I observed a number talk where the students were in a circle counting by tenths. I witnessed a "light-bulb moment" when the student who said "ten-tenths" realized that she should have said "one." The look on the student's face was priceless. I'm not sure that learning moment would have happened had the teacher been doing all of the talking!

Teachers have noticed the following:

- "If we are running behind schedule, the students beg not to skip math talks!"
- "Students are eager to share the way their mind worked to figure it out. They aren't afraid to express themselves since there is not a wrong way to get the answer."
- "You can see when the student is struggling to think of the answer."
- "Math talks have benefited my students because they realize that anyone and everyone will be responsible for sharing their thought process in explaining how they solved their problem."

You can see from these comments that the change has been beneficial for our students and our teachers. We look forward to seeing how our students' number sense develops over the years!

Preparation Is the Key!

New practices like these are a significant departure from traditional teaching methods, and it can be daunting for many teachers to try something so different and new. That is why good preparation is so critical. We believe the implementation of these reading and math practices was successful for the following reasons:

- Teachers were ready and willing to implement these best practices;
- We researched and observed these practices in action;
- We had access to experts who guided our professional development;
- Professional development was ongoing; and
- Teachers share their success!

When implemented well — with appropriate resources and training provided to teachers in advance and on an ongoing basis — differentiation strategies like guided reading and math talks can have a profound impact on how students learn and succeed.

▼ A kindergarten math talk



Preparing a Digital Self-Study Document

By Dawn Walker

“Where to start?” is a thought that probably crosses every principal’s mind as he or she works to conquer the task of accreditation. It certainly was one that crossed my mind quite shortly after becoming principal of FILS.

After being blessed to participate in two NLSA visit teams that were piloting the new evidence-based accreditation process, I determined it would be best for us to tackle accreditation using technology. FILS had already been using Google Apps for Education for several years before beginning our accreditation document in 2014. We were successfully sharing files in our classrooms, so I was confident this platform would work for our self-study process as well.

The journey began. As principal, I created an NLSA folder in my Google Drive. Within that folder, subfolders for each accreditation standard were created (Figure 1). I then uploaded the NLSA Self-Study Report document to the folder. Each standard section was copied into a new document and placed into the appropriate standard subfolder. For example, I copied “Section 2: Relationships” and created a new document with that content in the

“Relationships” folder. This document could then be shared with and edited by Relationships Committee members.

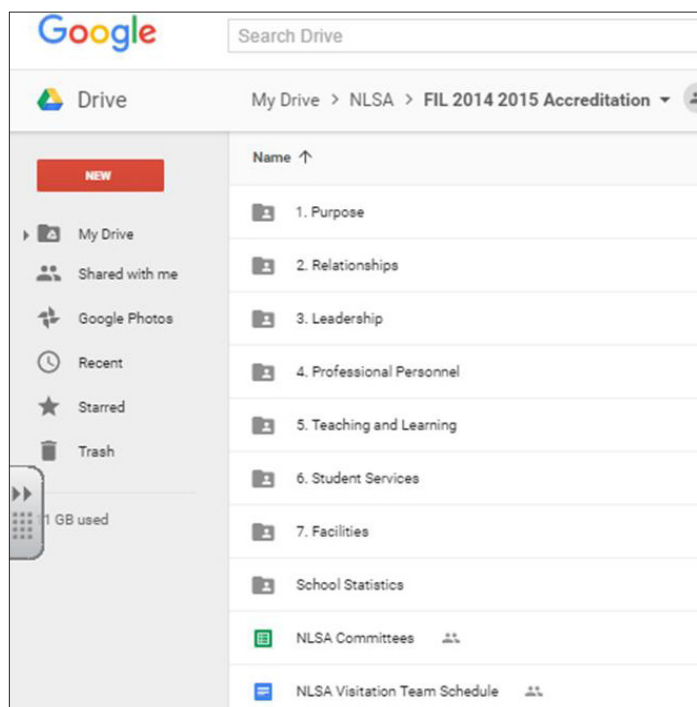
Within each standard subfolder, another subfolder was created for each indicator, so evidence could be easily organized to show how we met each indicator’s requirements (Figure 2). We were able to upload and organize many diverse types of evidence into these subfolders, including documents like manuals and handbooks, pictures, videos and links to websites and wikis. (If you are not familiar with how to do this, the following link can walk you through the steps: support.google.com/drive/answer/2424384?hl=en).

The biggest benefit of creating the self-study document in Google Drive was the ability to share information and collaborate with others. When the information was shared and permission given for others to edit, collaboration occurred and individuals and committees generated answers and evidence for everyone to access. Information could be easily reviewed, updated, added to and improved by everyone on a committee. Once each committee completed its work, the steering committee met and reviewed the document on a

▼ 2 Folders for evidence

5:01 Schedules and Christian Faith
5:02
5:03 Student Learning
5:04 Written Curriculum
5:05 Service Learning
5:06 Communicate and Collaborate
5:07 Technology
5:08
5:08 Assessment Examples
5:08 Curriculum Reviews
5:08 Grad/Exit Survey Results
NLSA Report
Parent/Teacher Conference Materials
Photos of Small Group Instruction
Student Work
suncatcher pictures
Balanced Literacy

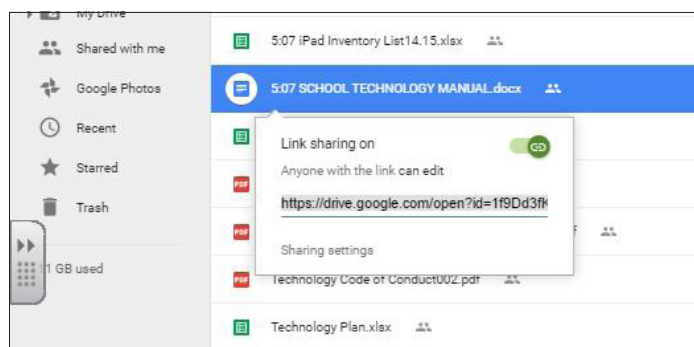
▼ 1 FILS subfolders in Google Drive



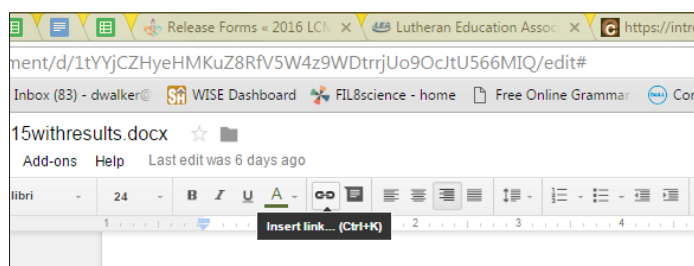
projector. Committee members were able to edit the document and evidence as they went through it.

Once the document was created and evidence was gathered in the correct folders, “links” were created from the document to the evidence so the visit team could immediately access the evidence while reading the response to each question. This linking was done by right clicking on the file in Google Drive, selecting “get sharable link” (Figure 3), and placing that link into the self-study document by using the “insert link” feature (Figure 4).

▼ 3 Creating a link



▼ 4 Insert Link Feature

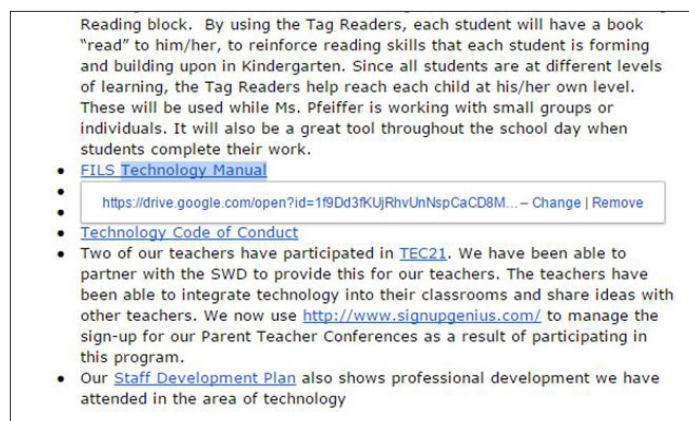


You can see what this looks like in Figure 5. The text that appears in blue links back to the evidence in our Google folders. When the visit team clicked on a link, the evidence could be seen online. The final document was downloaded as a PDF and shared with our team captain.

Benefits of the digital self-study process were many. Evidence was easy to manage within folders, and it was in a common location. Paper copies were not needed. Committee members were able to write, edit and review information prior to meetings, since they had access to all of the information online. This saved committees a lot of time and also resulted in fewer meetings. Teacher leaders were able to answer the self-study questions within the Google document from home or school. The digital document and digital evidence also allowed the visit team to come to FILS more prepared for their visit, with a clear idea of what they needed to see and who they needed to speak with while here at our school.

And the final benefit: We are well on our way for our next accreditation in five years. We are updating our evidence folders regularly, copying updated and new documents, pictures and links as we look ahead. Teachers are sharing evidence items with me on a yearly basis to be placed in the appropriate locations. Our action plan is even stored in Google Docs, with files linked to show our progress. It has truly become a living document.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at dwalker@fils.org or 262-377-6610.



▲ 5 FILS example

NLSA Powerful Practices

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

UPON THIS ROCK:

The Foundation of Teaching Children

“Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock” (Is. 26:4).

For Christian parents in today’s world, this verse provides a comforting theme. Our primary goal is to teach our children the faith so that they live a life built on the everlasting rock. We can only accomplish this through the power of God and His Word.

Martin Luther understood the importance of parents teaching children. Prior to the Reformation, faith learning was haphazard at best. The Bible was read in Latin, and parents were not equipped to do more than explain the stories depicted in the cathedral windows. Luther’s Small Catechism, designed to help parents teach the Bible to their children, was the new technology of the day — a sort of Reformation app for teaching the faith.

The foundation of teaching children is seen in small bits of conversation that developmental psychologists refer to as “serve and return.” This is the heart of parent-child interaction. “Serve and return” begins in infancy when parents melt in front of their newborns to instinctively indulge in baby talk. The smallest response, wiggling arms or the start of a smile, encourages parents to continue. From this interaction, the infant learns of the importance of communication. Early brain connections are formed. These brain connections are the foundation of all future language, social and academic learning. As parents, we do not even realize what is happening. We simply delight in the give-and-take of gurgles and grins. The infant, however, is experiencing the first lesson of faith: trust. Faith, a belief and trust in the promise of God in Christ Jesus, is a gift from God. An infant is born into an alien world. When parents interact and respond in a consistent manner, the infant begins to identify patterns in behavior. Parents are teaching that God did not simply create us

and leave us to fend for ourselves. His love is interactive and personal to our needs.

The teaching involved in “serve and return” continues as the infant grows and develops language skills. The young child asks a question, and the parents provide the answer, often returning a

question to the child. These seemingly simple interactions are important to the way a child organizes and checks learning. Children asking “why?” are trying to make sense of what they see and hear. They want to know how to understand new information so they can apply it in new situations. These small faith conversations are essential, because they help the child



to see the world through the Word of God. Through these interactions, parents are teaching that the wisdom of God orders our world.

Even though adolescents have fully developed language skills and have moved into new, sophisticated uses of the brain, parent-child interaction is still an important part of brain and faith development. Children in middle and high school understand the world in a new way. They are learning how to use abstract reasoning skills, and they frequently make mistakes. At this age of brain development, the interaction involved in “serve and return” provides the child with corrective feedback. Teens feel they know everything, but parents realize that their children lack the life experience necessary to make carefully considered decisions. Frequent conversations between parents and teens help to lay the foundation for discernment. While young children want to please their parents, adolescents want to define themselves in relation to their parents. This is a vulnerable time for parents and their children. Young adults who have walked the path of faith with their parents will have healthy models for making decisions as they navigate their complex world. At this stage, parents need to be ready and willing to participate in conversation when the adolescent requires it. And children need to learn that correction is learning, not condemnation. These interactions teach that God is the founder and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

God designed the parent-child relationship to naturally follow the plan of “serve and return.” We do not need to teach ourselves how to do it, but we do need to take care that it is happening. What habits in your family life detract from this kind of interaction? Be sure to examine your family’s use of technology to ensure that you are not using it to avoid conversation. Take care with your phone use while you are with your children. Brain-building interaction rarely happens on social media.

As a parent, how can you increase the opportunities for faith conversations in the day-to-day life of your family? Family devotions, even once a week, will increase faith interaction. What about a faith question of the day offered by parent or child? Perhaps you could create a tradition of discussing church and Sunday school during Sunday lunch. The more questions you ask and discuss, the more you will change your child’s brain to strengthen thinking about faith. As you bring the Scriptures to bear and teach of Christ and His salvation, God will bless your faith conversations with your children.

For Further Study

Note the “serve and return” design of Luther’s Small Catechism: catechism.cph.org/10-commandments.html.



Parent Pages

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Professionally Speaking



UPON THIS ROCK: *"Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock" (Is. 26:4).*

Focus on Fundamentals



With the Pro Football Hall of Fame induction of long-time player Brett Favre, the Green Bay Packers have recently captured my attention. While perusing Packers.com not too long ago, I read these words: "If you focus your team on fundamentals early in the season, you can open the playbook late in the season and go to a higher level. Blocking and tackling first, scheme second. That's how you peak as a team."

Does the notion of focusing on fundamentals resonate with you? What are the fundamentals that are part and parcel of your school? As you and your staff sat down for those beginning-of-the-year meetings, what were your "have to's"? Did they include selfless love for one another? Respect for adults and classmates? Hard work that creates strong character? What are the fundamentals of your parenting? Of your personal life? Of your marriage?

Our schools start at a different point than public education.

Many pundits in the education world promote the idea of fundamentally centering school programming around the needs of children. However, Dr. Tim Elmore, founder of Growing Leaders, cautions parents about various pitfalls, including making kids the center of attention (growingleaders.com/blog/?s=pitfalls+of+parenting). While the two notions may not be the same (meeting the needs of children vs. children being the center of attention), might this question of fundamentals demand our attention at Lutheran schools? If we don't take the time to discuss, study and determine our fundamentals, someone else will do it for us.

Consider this: Our schools start at a different point than public education. The tenets of John Dewey are the foundation of American education, but as Lutheran Christians we are not secular humanists. His starting point in teaching kids is fundamentally different than ours.



If we define “fundamentals” as something essential for life, may I suggest the following five for our schools and teaching?

1. Life in Christ has a reality and impact that permeates all that one does and thinks.

Paul writes, “For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace” (ROM. 6:7-14). Being Christian is all about denial of self. We die so we can live. This is not just a setting aside of our wants and desires. It’s about killing off these wants and desires, our sinful self, and enjoying the resuscitation of life in Christ. This is baptismal life — and it drastically sets us apart.

2. What God has shared in the Bible provides peace and understanding in a confused, sin-sick world.

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (PHIL. 4:7). Our schools must be places where there is not just a period of the day set aside for “Jesus time.” Yes, we need worship, we need prayer, we need study of the Word. However, God’s Word finds its impact in all we teach in our schools — subject matter, discipline, classroom management and more. Why? Because through God’s Word, we see Christ, and with Christ comes peace.

3. Always wear “eternal perspective” glasses.

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’ — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that’” (JAMES 4:13-15). Because our eyes look to the hope of heaven, the trials of this world are not devastating and hopeless. Our failures in the classroom, in sports or in relationships need not be doomsday. Having an eternal perspective reminds us that life on earth is just the blink of an eye compared to the eternal life we will enjoy with our Lord.

4. Christ's love for me, demonstrated on the cross, calls me to love my neighbor in both word and action.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (LUKE 10:27). Mission projects and servant events are wonderful ways for students and staff to enact love for their fellow man. They get us out of our comfort zone and challenge us to think beyond our community. However, this love also challenges us to love those we try to avoid. Loving our neighbor challenges students to care for one another — no cliques, no avoidance of kids who are "different." Loving our neighbor means staff members look out for each other, not excusing, but encouraging and supporting. Loving our neighbor is a tall task — one that finds its resolve in knowing that Christ shows love to us first.



You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself

(Luke 10:27)



5. If I am to be the "temple" that is described in the Bible, I need to stay connected to Christ through His Word, His Sacraments and prayer. I need to take care of myself: body, mind and spirit.

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own" (1 COR. 6:19). Recognizing that Christians are temples of the Holy Spirit is very important. God is insistent on telling us who we are, not what we should do. Taking care of myself is good stewardship. It's making myself ready to serve. But this fundamental keeps a perspective that avoids trying to earn a holy life by one's own efforts. Rather, keeping our temple clean is a God thing (sanctification), and it's done through the means He has offered — His Word and Sacraments. It's not about a personal fight against self. It's about killing oneself daily, as we remember whose we are and what He continues to do for us every day.

There you go! Five fundamentals for you and your school. How do your actions reflect these fundamentals? God's blessings to you as you share Christ, our everlasting rock.

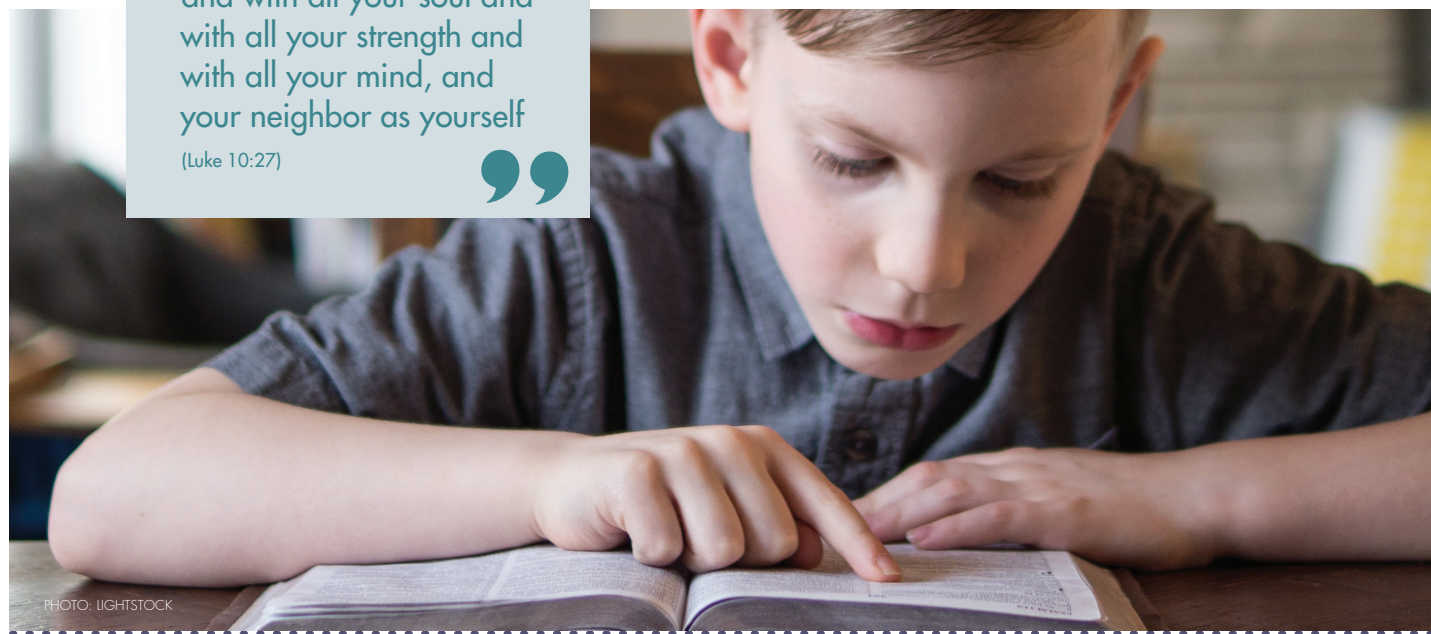


PHOTO: LIGHTSTOCK

Professionally Speaking

September 2016

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Rattles & Prattles



A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS

At Just the Right Time

Bible Story: God chooses Joseph to save his family

(GEN. 41:41–45:7; 45:5–7)

Before Teaching:

It's September and the beginning of a new school year for you, the children and their families. As you get to know these little ones and their families, together you will become part of another family — the school family. And as a faith-based early childhood center, we pray you, the children and their families are or will become part of God's family through faith in Jesus as Savior and the Sacrament of Baptism.

Why the focus on families?

The Bible story for this month is about Joseph and his family. Although Psalm 27 was written by David many years later, it beautifully expresses the strong trust Joseph had in God. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (PS. 27:1).

When you read the story in Genesis 37 and 39–45, especially Gen. 41:41–45:7 and 45:5–7, there were many times Joseph had reason to doubt. Joseph's older brothers hated him; he was their father's favorite and he had dreams about them bowing down to him. They sold him to slave traders who were on their way to Egypt. There, Potiphar's wife falsely accused him, and he ended up in prison where he met the Pharaoh's cupbearer. When the cupbearer told him about a dream, Joseph said it meant he would return to his job. Joseph asked him to remember him, but he didn't until two years later.

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

– Ps. 27:1



Pharaoh had dreams no one could explain. The cupbearer told Pharaoh about Joseph, so Joseph was summoned. With God's help, Joseph said both dreams foretold of seven years when crops would grow abundantly. These would be followed by seven years of famine. Joseph suggested that Pharaoh appoint someone to be in charge of collecting and storing 20 percent of the crops and then distributing them to the people during the seven years of famine.

Pharaoh was so impressed that he gave Joseph the job. God blessed Joseph's work, and storehouses were built throughout Egypt that were filled with food.

Back in Canaan, Joseph's family was affected by the famine. Father Jacob instructed Joseph's older brothers to travel to Egypt to purchase grain. When they arrived, they bowed in respect to Joseph and asked for food. Joseph recognized his brothers and recalled the dream he had as a child in which his brothers' sheaves of grain bowed to his.

Scripture tells us Joseph did a number of things to find out if his brothers were still mean and vindictive. When he realized they had changed, he revealed himself and forgave them. Then Pharaoh decided Joseph's family should move to Egypt to live. Joseph realized that all the events in his life were part of God's plan to save his family.

Joseph's story proves God is trustworthy. He revealed His plan for Joseph at just the right time.

Curricular Materials

Jesus' Time

Getting Prepared

- Set up a worship center: Set a small, low table with rounded edges against a wall or the back of a shelving unit. Place a children's picture Bible on top. Tape a picture of Jesus above it.
- Optional: Add an altar covering, either cloth or laminated colored construction paper; a small wooden cross (only use this during Jesus' Time, as children may use it inappropriately); and two candles (e.g., cardboard tubes covered with laminated paper and pieces of red tissue for flames).
- Prepare visuals: Use the patterns on the reproducible. Color the figures. Cut out, laminate and cut out again. Tape to cardboard tubes for tube puppets, or use them with a magnetic board or feltboard.
- Songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)* from Concordia Publishing House, 1989

Getting Ready:

- Invite the children to Jesus' Time by singing: **"Walking quietly, come and gather near. Walking quietly, Jesus' Time is here"** (*LOSP*, P. 8). Encourage mobile children to come and sit; caregivers carry and sit with non-mobile infants.
- Sing a welcome song using the melody of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."
**Hello, hello, how are you; I'm so glad to see you too.
We will listen, sing and pray, learn of Jesus' love today.**
(Repeat first line)
- Point to the picture of Jesus, and sing a "Jesus Loves Me" song (*LOSP*, PP. 41-42).
- Show the Bible, and chant or sing this song using the melody of "A Tisket, a Tasket."
**A story, a story; it's time to hear a story.
It's from God's book; we know it's true.
God gives these stories to me and you.**

Telling the Story and Application:

- Show Joseph #1. Say: **The Bible tells of Joseph, who lived in Egypt land. God loved and cared for him. And God had a special plan.**

- Show Pharaoh and Joseph #2. **Joseph became Pharaoh's helper; he had lots of work to do. Saving grain, lots of grain — for Pharaoh, himself and all the people too.**
- Show saving grain. **Then no rain fell, no food grew, everyone knew what to do. Go see Joseph and he would give — them yummy food so they could live.**
- Remove grain and add the brothers. **Joseph's hungry brothers came, traveled from far away. They bowed down and asked for grain. "Please give us some; we'll pay."**

They didn't know it was Joseph, their brother they treated bad. Joseph knew who there were, and remembering made him sad.

But Joseph wasn't mean to them. God helped him to forgive. Then Joseph said, "Go back, get Dad — then come here to live."

God helped Joseph to be kind, help and forgive his family too. God gives us families, mommies, daddies, sisters, brothers too.

God gave us Jesus, His own Son, who died and came alive. Jesus is with us every day. He helps us love and forgive.

Song/Prayer:

Use the melody "Praise Him, Praise Him" (*LOSP*, P. 68) and sing: **Thank You, thank You, thank You, God, for mommy.* She loves me. I love her. Thank You, thank You, thank You, God, for mommy. She loves me. I love her.*** (Change to other family members and end with Jesus.)

Closing and Benediction:

Jesus' Time is almost over. Before we end, let's sing a goodbye song. Sing "Goodbye, Goodbye" (*LOSP*, P. 40). Encourage children to wave goodbye, "extinguish" candle flames and put away the cross.

Remember, God loves you. When He looks at you, He smiles. He promises to care for you and helps you be kind and forgiving. Amen.



Curricular Materials

Integrating the Theme



Literacy Activities:

■ Books to Read:

- Ask parents for family pictures and label them (e.g., Naomi's family). Include staff members' family and Joseph's family. (See the reproducible page.) Place in a small, durable photo album.
- The Talk-About-Book series (e.g., *My Mom, My Dad, My Family*) by Debbie Bailey. These have actual photographs and are written for I/T.
- *The Little Red Hen*, a good story about preparing bread and helping each other.
- *Bread, Bread, Bread* by Ann Morris, an excellent book with photographs of breads from all around the world.

- **Nursery Rhyme:** "There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe." Enlarge the picture on the reproducible. Change the last two lines to "...she gave them some soup with buttered bread, prayed with them softly and put them to bed."

Art and Music:

- **Arts and Crafts:** Put diluted brown tempera paint into a spray bottle. Invite older infants and toddlers to spray coffee filters. When dry, cut into the shape of foods that are brown (e.g., slices of bread, potatoes). Glue on 8½-by-11-inch sheets of paper and post with the title "Thank You, God, for food."

■ Songs:

- "Thank You, Loving Father" (LOSP, P. 71). Verse 3 includes families.
- "The Lord Is Good to Me" (LOSP, P. 16). Note: This is a good mealtime prayer.

Math, Science and Social Studies:

- **Math:** Count the number of people in each child's family. With toddlers, make a chart and print numerals.
- **Science:** Use various kinds of seeds in the sensory table (e.g., grains, beans). Talk about size, color and texture. Put different ones in small, clear, covered plastic containers; shake and listen to the different sounds.
- **Social Studies:** God gives us families. Name members of the family (e.g., father, mother, sister, brother). Use the classroom family book.

Health, Safety, Nutrition and Large-Motor Activities:

- **Snacks:** Serve Teddy Grahams. Pretend they are members of a family. Serve a Bible story related snack: Spread butter on toasted whole wheat bread. Help older infants and toddlers sprinkle on cinnamon sugar. Pray before eating. As always, when serving snacks, check for any allergies.
- **Large Motor:** Pretend to be Joseph's brothers walking to Egypt. Set up a road using carpet pieces on top of a balance board for hills, use a chair covered with a blanket for a rock to walk around, and so on. Or perhaps they rode donkeys. Change the words to the nursery rhyme "This Is the Way the Ladies Ride" to family members riding donkeys. Caregivers can "bounce" infants on their knees.





Connecting with Families

Make a copy of this letter for each family in your class. Take time to personally sign it and, if possible, add a personal comment.

Dear Parents,

We are blessed to have you and your child in our center. As a faith-based center, we not only have the responsibility to love and care for your child, but also to share the wonderful story of God's love for them. God created each one and gave them to you to love and care for. God loves you and them so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior from sin (all the wrong choices you and I and the children make, as well as their consequences) when He suffered and died. He came alive again and returned to heaven. He promises to be with us, love us and help us to live in a loving, forgiving relationship.

That's why God gives us families — to love, care for, help and forgive one another. To help the children learn this, we shared the story of Joseph. Joseph's father, Jacob, definitely loved and care for his family, but he loved Joseph more than his other sons. That, along with Joseph's dreams about them bowing down to him, made them very angry. When Joseph was a teenager, they sold him to slave traders bound for Egypt.

In Egypt, Joseph experienced many ups and downs in his life, but he continued to trust God. When Joseph interpreted the Pharaoh's dreams about the coming famine, the Pharaoh chose him to be in charge of storing grain so all in Egypt would survive.

Joseph's family members were also affected by the famine and came to Egypt, where they "bowed down" and asked him for grain. Joseph immediately recognized them. When he learned they had changed and were no longer mean and vindictive, he forgave them. He asked them and his father to come and live in Egypt.

God was at work in Joseph's life for and with his family. We pray God is at work in your family — loving, caring for, forgiving and helping each other. As parents, we can start now to instill these values in our children. Here are some ways we can make this happen:

- Pray each day, asking God to help as you raise your child.
- At bedtime, thank God for the good things that happened, and ask God for forgiveness for the not-so-good things and for help to live as His child.

- Model and involve children in:
 - Helping to pick up toys;
 - Putting dirty clothes in the laundry basket;
 - Helping to clean up spills;
 - Putting silverware in the dishwasher;
 - Throwing away trash;
 - Helping to feed pets;
 - Fetching a specific item;
 - Hanging clothes on hooks; or
 - Helping to set the table.

We have God's promise that He will be with and help us.

Your child's teacher

Rattles and Prattles

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SEPTEMBER 2016

Rattles&Prattles

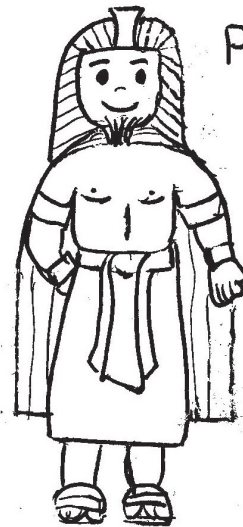
Use the patterns on this page and the next to prepare visuals to tell the Bible story and permeate God's story throughout the day.



Joseph
#1



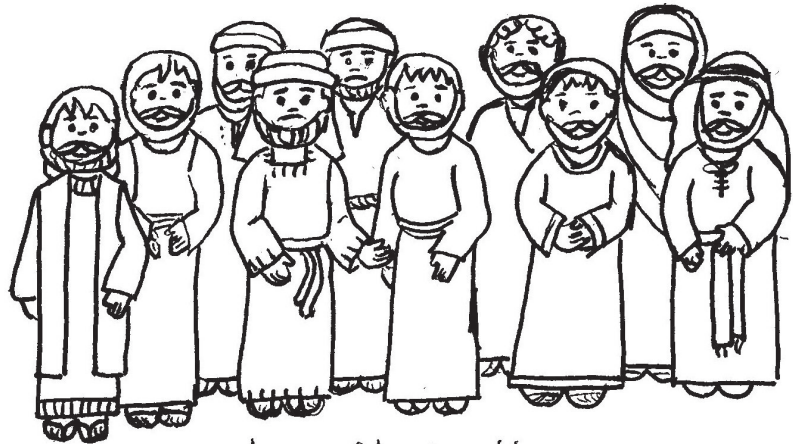
Joseph
#2



Pharaoh



saving grain



Joseph's brothers



Joseph's Family



Nursery Rhyme



School Shepherd



TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS

ROCK-SOLID SHEPHERDS **Learn**

“Upon This Rock” — our theme for the school year — focuses the mission and ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and particularly that of our Lutheran schools. The weekly chapel time of Lutheran schools gives school shepherds the opportunity to share the Rock, Jesus Christ. To share the Rock, Lutheran school shepherds must be ROCK solid. The personal and professional life of the shepherd finds its foundation on the Rock. This school year’s *School Shepherd* series will explore various aspects of rock-solid ministry.

‘Let Me Learn of Jesus’

This Lenten children’s song (in *Songs of God’s Love* from Concordia Publishing House) expresses the prayer of children: “Let me learn of Jesus; He is kind to me; Once He died to save me; Nailed upon the

tree.” Children in Lutheran schools learn of Jesus every day in every season.

If school shepherds are to faithfully teach and preach Jesus, they must continue to learn of Jesus. Pastors learn of Jesus in the formal learning times of sermon, confirmation, Bible study and other preparations. Just as important are the personal Bible reading and meditation times where the shepherd learns of the Jesus who died to save him by being nailed to the tree of the cross.

Reflection: When and how do you “learn of Jesus”? (Personal devotions, Bible study, etc.) Are you delving in depth on a particular book of the Bible or confession of the church? Have you signed up for an ongoing education class through one of the seminaries?

Let’s Learn Together

School shepherds new to a ministry setting will want to emphasize that “I’m here to learn about the culture and ministry of this setting.” A wise mentor advised, “Make sure you learn their history before you write your own.” The pastor comes as God’s called and ordained teacher of the faith to the school setting. The truths of Scripture are taught in the unique context of the Lutheran church and school. While the pastor is never bound to the local traditions of the past, a wise shepherd-learner asks, “How have you done that before? Do you have any suggestions for our worship times, confirmation classes and other instructional settings?”

A healthy school staff learns together. The staff learns from God’s Word. The staff learns about



the uniqueness of Lutheran education. The staff learns about trends in education. The staff learns the benefits and challenges of technology. Staff meetings are often information-sharing sessions. The pastor and principal may want to explore topics, tools and resources that invite the staff to learn together.

While the responsibilities of the parish pastor are many and varied and time is precious, the school shepherd should strive to join the faculty at a district educators' conference, a Lutheran Education Association conference or another professional educational gathering. In addition to learning together, relationships are strengthened.

Learning together can include conversations with fellow ministry servants at monthly circuit discussions. It also may include conversations with other pastors of Lutheran schools. Burdens are shared confidentially and prayerfully. Effective parenting programs, outreach strategies and other topics can be discussed.

Reflection: How is your school modeling "learning together"? How are staff meetings designed to include a time to learn? What books, resources or speakers might encourage learning together?

For the Love of Learning

Parents rightfully expect that their children will learn through the curriculum of the Lutheran school. For children to learn, teachers have to learn so that they can meet the ongoing accreditation standards of the state or National Lutheran School Accreditation. Teachers learn new technological skills and curriculum improvements so that they can teach them to children.

PRAYER

*Thank You, Jesus, for the gift of learning
Your Word and Your works. Amen.*

Healthy shepherds explore God's world beyond the walls of the office and sanctuary and the grounds of the church and school. The love of learning may include explorations of God's creation or historical places. Love of learning may include a hobby. Love of learning may include reading on a variety of topics. Love of learning may take the shepherd to museums and concerts.

Reflection: What would you like to learn about? What fascinating places have you seen or would you like to see? What books are in your personal library or would you like to add to your library?

The Good Shepherd was a teacher (a topic that will be explored next month). The all-knowing Good Shepherd was certainly a learner as a child in Nazareth. The Good Shepherd was a learner of the psalms and prophets, as well as a learner from His creation ("consider the lilies of the field" from Matt. 6:28). The school shepherd learns from the Good Shepherd and is blessed to lead the Lutheran school in learning.

"Your hands have made and fashioned me;
give me understanding that I may learn your
commandments" (Ps. 119:73).

School Shepherd

September 2016

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Time Out for Directors



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS

Home-School Relationships and Communication in the Early Childhood Setting

.....

It's August, which means it's the new school year! Where did summer go? As I prepare to meet and greet as many as 130 parents at the door each day, I wonder how this year will unfold for our community at Zion Lutheran School in St. Charles, Mo. Will parents feel welcome and engaged in their child's early school experience? Will parents accept our invitations to participate in our school events? Will our programming meet their diverse family needs? And how is my staff feeling about communicating and working with parents? My last question is the one that speaks to my heart and soul the most: Do we, as a staff, possess the tools necessary for communicating and working with our early childhood parents in a collaborative way that enhances the educational journey of our young students?

It has been said that the basic building block of good communication is the feeling that every human being is unique and of value. Parent-school cooperation is the result of bringing the strengths of the home and the expertise of the school into a successful working relationship. Successful relationships include a warm school climate, welcoming school personnel and open invitations for parents to participate in school and community programming. Are we prepared to promote these attributes of successful school relationships? And how will we measure the success of our family engagement practices?

All too often, effective home-school relationships can be torn apart with one fallen word. Miscommunication, misunderstood visual messages or body language, and lack of written communication are proven barriers to positive parent-teacher relationships. Parents exhibit traits that often hinder relationship-building opportunities too. Parents or guardians may be overbearing, feel inadequate or indifferent, or have work schedules that do not allow for parent-teacher interactions on a daily or weekly basis.

In order for children's school experiences to be successful, parents must be informed and involved; in order for our parents to be informed and involved, they must feel welcome and know that their participation is valued by the school staff.

Of equal importance to the school are effective strategies to enhance teacher-family communications. We are responsible for developing an awareness of our inherent power of verbal, written and implied methods of communication with our school families. An awareness of our practices will lay the foundation for healthy, effective parent partnerships. Professional reflection is an essential part of formulating, refining and, ultimately, improving our teacher-family communication strategies.

The following questions from *Parents as Partners in Education: Families and Schools Working Together* by E.H. Berger and M. Riojas-Cortez can assist our teachers in assessing how they feel about collaboration with parents. The survey can promote an understanding of what practices have worked well in the school setting and what strategies could be improved upon for the upcoming year. Based on the outcomes of the assessment, directors and teachers can formulate schoolwide goals to promote change in the school climate to enhance parent engagement in future programming opportunities.

As a staff considers ways to build confidence in establishing strong parent-school relationships, directors can provide leadership that helps staff members feel positive and secure in their work with children and parents. Back-to-school questionnaires are one way to begin developing relationships with parents. Teachers can be encouraged to send home a questionnaire that is directed at building a partnership with parents to support their student's learning. Elena

As a Teach I ...

	HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF		HOW YOU WISH YOU WERE	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Feel that parents are more work than help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Feel tense when parents enter my room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Prefer to work alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Compare brothers and sisters from the same family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Feel threatened by parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. View parents as a great resource.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Believe that low-income children have parents who do not care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Enjoy working with several outside persons in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Have prejudiced feelings about certain groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Feel that parents let children watch too much television.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Feel that parents are not interested in their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Work better with social distance between the parent and myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Believe parents who let their children come to school in inappropriate clothing are irresponsible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Feel that a close working relationship with parents is necessary for optimal student growth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Am pleased when all the parents are gone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Anticipate parent conferences with pleasure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Feel that parents have abdicated the parental role.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Enjoy working with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Value my students' funds of knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Work with parents of inclusion children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Berger, E.H., and Riojas-Cortez, M. *Parents as Partners in Education: Families and Schools Working Together*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2012.

Aguilar offers the following questions on the Edutopia website as a start to a potential questionnaire:

1. What do you see as your child's greatest strengths or skills? Tell me about a time when you saw your child demonstrating these skills.
2. Next June, what do you hope your child says about his/her experience in school this year? What's the story you hope he/she would tell?
3. What are your fears or concerns about your child in this year of school?

4. How would you like to be involved in your child's class this year? Are there days/times that work best for you?

These questions can open the door to meaningful teacher-parent relationships. Our end-goal is to create positive, caring relationships between the home and the school, ultimately enhancing the education of the young child.

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11).

Time Out for Directors

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