

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

JANUARY 2018

# School Ministry Mailing



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# Alight



FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS

## Blue Ribbon Task Force Update

As we enter a new year, it is important to bring everyone up-to-date on the progress of the Blue-Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on Lutheran Schools. The BRTF was established by the 2016 Synod convention to support the quality and sustainability of Lutheran schools. The task force was charged with the following:

- ▶ **IDENTIFY** the reasons for decline in the number of schools and in total student enrollment;
- ▶ **ASSESS** the current compensation of pastors and teachers in congregations with Lutheran schools and its effect on Lutheran schools and workers;
- ▶ **SUGGEST** pilot projects that may produce creative solutions related to the challenges faced by our schools;
- ▶ **EXPLORE** and communicate creative options for enhancing the quality of our schools;
- ▶ **IDENTIFY** alternative models for funding Lutheran schools with an emphasis on making schools affordable for all families;
- ▶ **RECOMMEND** strategies for our Lutheran schools to serve our immigrant neighbors;
- ▶ **IDENTIFY, CELEBRATE** and **SHARE** some examples of Lutheran schools actively engaged in the mission of Christ in their respective communities;
- ▶ **EXPLORE** the role of Lutheran schools in planting new churches and revitalizing existing churches; and
- ▶ **ADDRESS** the significant need for a new generation of Lutheran educators.

The charges assigned to the task force are very broad and diverse. They address a myriad of issues related to our schools. Over the past year, the task force has met in St. Louis on four occasions. Apart from those meetings, task force members have spent countless hours gathering information that will be useful as we assemble a final written report as directed by the convention.

It is our hope and prayer that the information that has already been gathered will prove to be impactful. The task force has assembled a massive amount of data and information, and the preparation of the

final report to Synod will fall to the School Ministry staff. It is our intent to assemble a working draft of that report by the beginning of March 2018.

We intend for the work of this task force to have both an immediate and a long-term effect related to the work of our schools. To that end, we plan to move forward with the impact of the information this task force has assembled in two important ways:

- 1 A written report will provide a baseline of information that is required by resolution of the Synod. The findings in the written report will also lend themselves to any long-term strategic planning that is undertaken by LCMS school ministry.
- 2 We have already met with LCMS Communications department to develop an on-going communication plan regarding the importance of Lutheran education and illustrating the value and importance of our schools to the overall good of our Synod. Stories that illustrate how God is at work in our schools will comprise the heart of this effort. Watch for this information to be shared in upcoming editions of *The Lutheran Witness*, *Reporter*, *Lutherans Engage the World* and other periodicals that are produced by our Synod. In addition, we will conduct many interviews on KFUP radio illustrating the powerful impact our schools are having.

This two-pronged approach, the written report and an immediate and intentional communication plan, will continue until our next Synod convention in 2019.

We pray that our efforts will not be in vain. Our schools continue to serve our national church body as the front line of the North American mission field today. Lutheran schools connect our congregations to their communities. As the Holy Spirit continues His work in our schools, lives will be transformed and people will be brought to Christ. We believe that our efforts will provide evidence that the success of our national church body is closely aligned with the work that is being done in our schools.

Terry L. Schmidt • Director of School Ministry

## Alight

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# January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	New Year's Day <b>1</b>	Happy Mew Year For Cats Day <b>2</b>	Drinking straw patented, 1888 <b>3</b>	Isaac Newton born, 1643 <b>4</b>	Twelfth Night <b>5</b>	Epiphany <b>6</b>
International Programmers' Day <b>7</b>	National Thank God It's Monday! Day <b>8</b>	Poetry at Work Day <b>9</b>	First United Nations General Assembly, 1946 <b>10</b>	U.S. Surgeon General declares cigarettes hazardous, 1964 <b>11</b>	National Hot Tea Day <b>12</b>	First radio broadcast, 1910 <b>13</b>
Healthy Weight Week (Jan. 14-20) <b>14</b>	Martin Luther King Jr. Day <b>15</b>	Religious Freedom Day <b>16</b>	Kid Inventors' Day <b>17</b>	Week of Christian Unity (Jan. 18-25) <b>18</b>	National Popcorn Day <b>19</b>	U.S. hostages in Iran released, 1981 <b>20</b>
Celebration of Life Day <b>21</b>	Clean Our Your Inbox Week (Jan. 22-26) <b>22</b>	National Pie Day <b>23</b>	National Compliment Day <b>24</b>	First Winter Olympic Games open, 1924 <b>25</b>	National Preschool Fitness Day <b>26</b>	National Seed Swap Day <b>27</b>
National Pediatrician Day <b>28</b>	William McKinley born, 1843 <b>29</b>	Franklin D. Roosevelt born, 1882 <b>30</b>	First Social Security check issued, 1940 <b>31</b>			

Visit [lcms.org/worship](http://lcms.org/worship) to find resources and information connected to the church year.



# Computer File



## Twitter in the Classroom



*Computer File this year is taking a look at different aspects of social media and will be covering integration in both the overall ministry setting as well as in the classroom. Be sure to check out each article to see how to effectively use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat in your ministries!*

When asked what one app they could not do without, many educational leaders today would almost instantly respond, “Twitter!” While this may seem strange to some, Twitter has been and continues to be a source of community, connections and learning that stretches to all corners of the world. Nowhere else are leaders in education able to learn from everyday classroom teachers, and vice versa. The transference of knowledge is what makes Twitter essential for educators, administrators and students alike.

Thus, it can easily be seen that Twitter needs to have a place in the classroom. What that means, however, is very different for each individual educator, administrator and student. Let’s

dive in to see how 280 characters can impact what you are doing in the classroom today!

### Positives

- 1 From an educator’s standpoint, Twitter use in the classroom by teachers to learn and grow from others around the world is invaluable. There is literally more information than a teacher can ever process shared on Twitter daily about any number of specific topics. Information about a specific focus of education (flexible seating, STEM, reading groups, etc.) can be found through the organizational filter of hashtags, but the most important and impactful power of Twitter is that conversations can be had with the author and creator of the information to gain a better understanding of the content. The barrier to entry is almost non-existent as everyone can connect with everyone else, regardless of their title or status.

- 2 Unlike other social media platforms, Twitter does not require a user to log in to view content, nor do users need to be connected with others to see their posts. Thus, any and all tweets are immediately viewable by everyone. What makes this beneficial is that access is open to all and is shared freely. More importantly, since tweets are immediate and quick, the type of information shared is different than on other platforms. In times of significance or crisis, Twitter has become a place where the conversation coalesces and information can be quickly disseminated. Thus, Twitter has replaced the “news” for many around the world, as they can instantly see what is happening on a global scale while also focusing on what is going on in their city or even on their block. Educators benefit from this as they can quickly tap into an event from around the world and learn alongside their students.

### Negatives

- 1 There is something called the “Firehose Effect,” which can be overwhelming for new users. What this means is that there is so much information flowing through Twitter at any given moment that trying to keep up feels like standing in front of a firehose and trying to get a drink. For an educator with a finite amount of time, this becomes a negative as only



so much information can be gathered in a short amount of time. It can be hard to determine what is important and what is just fluff. Additionally, without using tools such as hashtags and lists, there is an inordinate amount of amazing content that never makes it to the end user who needs it. Ultimately, it is essential for educators to realize that they can't "see it all." It is important to develop a strategy of hyper-focused investigation when it comes to professional learning from Twitter. Otherwise, it can indeed be like standing in front of a firehose.

**2** As with any other social media platform, it is essential to invest time to determine the validity of information. Since there is so much information moving quickly on Twitter, users often take what they see at face value and do not try to verify whether it is true. Thus, with additional volume comes additional room for error, and educators must realize that this is the case on Twitter — perhaps even more so than with other platforms.

## Best Uses

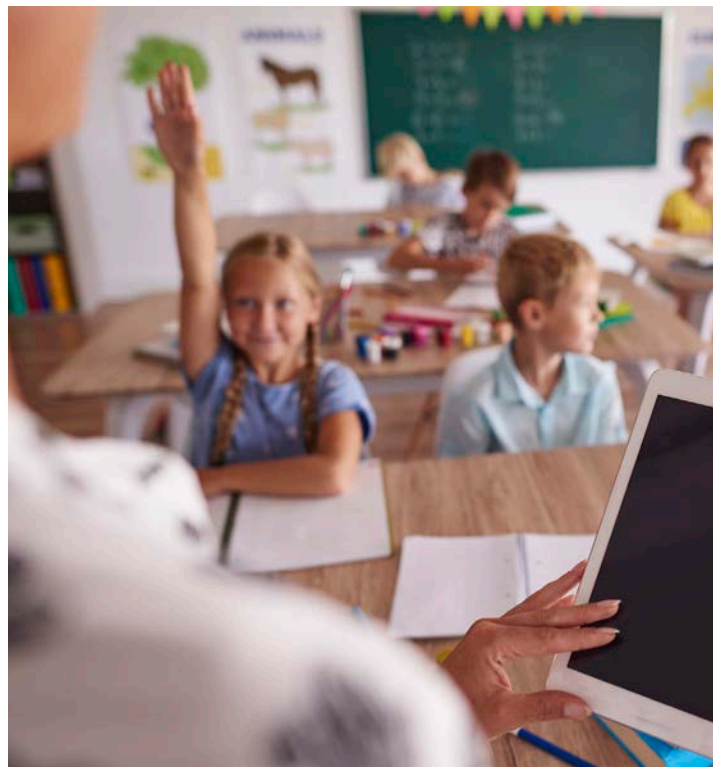
Now that you have a good understanding of the positives and negatives of Twitter, you are probably wondering where to start and how best to implement it in your specific setting. Some best practices are included below, but it is essential to remember that there are innumerable ways to integrate Twitter into your classroom practice. A simple internet search will garner a plethora of additional ideas.

**1** Since there is an overwhelming amount of news and information posted daily on Twitter, many teachers use it to develop a routine for daily news from around the world. This could be based around a specific hashtag, or it could be focused around a certain news account. Whatever the case, this simple use gives students access to information relevant to them to explore from that specific day of the week.

**2** Also, educators looking to grow their professional practice are able to leverage Twitter to create a PLN, or Personal/Professional Learning Network. This network can be cultivated by each educator based on whom he or she follows, thus building a conversation and stream of Tweets based around specific needs and interests. Through this, teachers can quickly see pertinent information and connect with other educators focusing on similar topics.

## Some Tips and Tricks

**1** Don't get overwhelmed. On Twitter, it can start to feel like you need to constantly check in to see what information is being shared. Just like with any other social



media platform, it's OK to focus when you can and just let the information flow past when you can't.

**2** Join a Twitter chat. Some of the most impactful conversations happen during weekly or daily Twitter chats focused around specific topics. Investigate one — and its appropriate hashtag — and see what you can learn about a specific topic in a short amount of time.

Twitter can be overwhelming. But with the right focus and implementation, it can become an amazing tool for educators to use in their professional growth as well as in their professional practice in the classroom.

Next month, we will look at how to leverage the power of Instagram for ministry. Be sure to check back if this is something you want to learn more about. We'll discuss how it can be used to further what you are already doing in your online space.

## Resources

► **#LUTHED TWITTER CHAT** — This Twitter chat takes place every Monday night at 9 p.m. Eastern time during the school year (September to May) around topics related to education. Join in and maybe even moderate a night!

# Computer File

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# Early Childhood DEVOTIONS



FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

## IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT JESUS

FOCUS: WHO IS JESUS?

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).*

### Jesus Is ... Our Teacher

Luke 10:38-42

#### Before You Teach

It's nice to have a student who sits at your feet. Some can be easily distracted, especially at young ages. Adults can also be distracted. In the case of Mary and Martha, we see a problem of focus. There is the temptation to show Mary's focus as good and Martha's as bad. However, study and service are two sides of the same coin. Jesus calls for both when He says to love God and love our neighbor. It's not the activity but the loss of focus that needs to be addressed. Jesus teaches focus as He fulfills His mission to follow the way of the cross. His gift of new life sets us free to teach and model prayer, life-long learning, stewardship and service in His name.

#### Greeting

Welcome each child upon arrival. A warm welcome establishes a positive tone for the day.

#### Gathering

Follow your routine for gathering children in your worship space. Sing: "We Are in God's House Today" vv. 1 & 2 (LOSP, P.12).



#### Tell the Story

**You will need:** A pair of binoculars.

**Directions:** Introduce the biblical narrative by holding up the binoculars and saying: **Binoculars help us focus on certain things, seeing them more clearly. Today we are going to learn about someone who was not seeing, not focused on, what was most important.**

The Bible tells us that one day Jesus went to a village where a woman named Martha (sweeping motion) opened her home to Him. Martha (sweeping) had a sister named Mary (hand behind ear). Mary (hand behind ear) sat at the feet of Jesus, listening carefully to all He said. But Martha (sweeping) was very busy doing chores, getting a place ready for Jesus to sleep and preparing food for Him to eat. Unhappy that her sister Mary (hand behind ear) was not helping with the work, Martha (sweeping) went to Jesus and said, "Lord, don't You care that my sister Mary (hand behind ear) has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" Jesus replied, "Martha, Martha (sweeping) you are very busy, and worried and upset about many things. There is really only one thing that is needed. Your sister Mary

**Note:** You will need the songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)* from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVOTIONS • Vol. 22 • No. 5 • January 2018

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(hand behind ear) **has chosen something better, and it will not be taken away from her.** Ask: **What did Mary focus on that was better?**

Conclude by saying: **Martha didn't do anything wrong; she just didn't focus on the most important.** Ask: **What is most important?**

#### PRAY:

*Children repeat each phrase after you.*

**Savior Jesus, Friend so dear,  
Keep me close, so I can hear  
Of Your love. Then let me do  
What brings others close to You. Amen.**

## Remember the Story

### BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

**PRE-K & K:** "Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation" (PSALM 25:5A).

**GRADES 1 & 2:** "Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long" (PSALM 25:5).

## Activities

**CREATE:** Binoculars. You will need cardboard toilet paper rolls (two per child) and colored adhesive tapes (available online or at office supply and art stores) or masking tape. Guide children to decorate and then use tape to connect two toilet paper rolls, creating binoculars. Have them look through



their "binoculars" to focus on one thing, describing what they see. Review the biblical narrative, reminding the children that both Mary and Martha were doing important things. But Mary chose to focus on the most important: the words of Jesus. Ask: **When/Where do YOU focus on the words of Jesus?**

**SING:** "The B-I-B-L-E" (LOSP, P. 48); "We are in God's House Today" (LOSP, P. 12). Note: If desired, substitute the word "school" for "house."

**DO:** Although their focus was different, both Mary and Martha loved Jesus. Ask: **What are some things you can do and/or say to show your love for Jesus?** Make and post a list of the children's suggestions. Periodically refer back to it. Keep the focus on the main thing!

## Live the Story

As a busy educator, it is easy to lose your focus. Set aside quiet time to sit at the feet of Jesus! Daily dedicate uninterrupted time for Bible study, meditation and prayer.

## Sending

Gather children into a "Blessing Circle." Pass a beanbag, inviting each child to briefly pray when they receive the beanbag. (Children may pass the beanbag without speaking.) Conclude by saying the memory words together. **"Lead me**

**in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation"** [Gr. 1 & 2 continue: **"for you I wait all the day long"**]. As children depart say to each, **"Jesus is with you!"**

# Early Childhood Devotions

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# Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

## It's *Still* All About Jesus — When Things are New

**Change!** Some people welcome it — others try to avoid it. Well — it's January, and we really have no choice but to welcome in a new year. To help us, we get new calendars, which remind us that a new year has begun. We wish people, "Happy New Year!" for about a week at most. We also do our best to try to remember to write the correct number for the year on various documents we send and receive.

There are times when we like things that are new — like a new car and that new car smell. We like new clothes, and new carpet in our home and making new friends.

Other times we don't like things being new — like moving to a new city, getting a new boss or having to learn a new computer program. As much as new things can benefit us, there are times when we like things just the way they are — or the way they were.

We have a Savior who is described in Scripture as the, "same yesterday and today and forever" (**HEB. 13:8**). He is a God who is constantly the same, constantly loving us, constantly forgiving us, constantly blessing us, constantly patient with us and consistent in every way. This is reassuring to us in a world that can bring change in quick and unexpected ways.

Our God is also described by Scripture as One whose "steadfast love ... never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning" (**LAM. 3:22-23**). While we

have an unchanging God, we have One who can also bless us in new ways everyday, who is unafraid of change — in fact, He is the One who can bring change, which can result in new blessings. Our Heavenly Father gave us the greatest blessing in Jesus, who through His death and resurrection has changed us from fallen sinful people to the redeemed and saved people of God.

Change in a family setting can be disturbing. Here are some steps to consider as you encounter change in your home:

- 1) **Acknowledge it.** Admit that something is new and things are different, and try to understand that it will mean adjustments are needed.
- 2) **Don't freak out.** It is easy to react to change only emotionally. While this may feel natural, it is not a helpful place to remain, and it prohibits moving forward and dealing with the change — be it good or bad.
- 3) **Get a game plan.** Outline steps that will be needed to address this change. Communicate a family strategy amongst yourselves, find points of agreement and affirm how things need to be in order to move forward.
- 4) **Give it to God.** Take the stress of "new things" and place it before Him. Unburden yourself to Him, confess your shortcomings and your need to have God be the guiding force as you deal with changes in your life.

Welcome to the new year of our Lord! May we welcome Him daily, walk closely by His side in the days and months ahead and celebrate His mercies that are new every morning.

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

*Gather the family together in a comfortable place for study and discussion using the outline below.*



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

**OPENING PRAYER:** Given by the person who has experienced a big change recently.

**FAMILY DISCUSSION TIME:** *Ask the following questions and invite family members to respond as they are willing and capable.*

- 1) What are some things that you like when they are new? Why?
- 2) What are some things that you don't want to see change? Why?

### CHANGING IT UP!

Open up a Bible to Luke 2:1–20 and read aloud as a family.

*Take a walk around your home and consider some of the changes you might want to make in the coming year (new paint, new decorations, new furniture arrangement, etc.). Write down these ideas here:*

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*Have each person share a change that they would like to make in their life this coming year. Write down their ideas here:*

**DAD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MOM:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILD (1):** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILD (2):** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILD (3):** \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER FAMILY MEMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

### BIBLE READING/MEMORY TIME:

Look up Heb. 13:8 and have a member of the family read it aloud.

Now, do some repetition of this verse, so that everyone can memorize this important promise of Scripture. Choose a leader to read the parts below.

Leader: Jesus Christ      *Family members repeat.*

Leader: is the same      *Family members repeat.*

Leader: yesterday      *Family members repeat.*

Leader: and today      *Family members repeat.*

Leader: and forever.      *Family members repeat.*

Do this 3 or 4 times, saying it louder and louder each time!

**CLOSING ECHO PRAYER:** Have an adult or older sibling read the following prayer, phrase by phrase, with other members of the family repeating as an echo:

Dear God, thank You for the gift of another year. Bless us this year. Keep us safe from harm. Forgive us when we do wrong. Help us to share Your love with others. In Jesus' Name we pray, *Amen.*



## Family Matters

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# Fearfully and Wonderfully Made



TOP NINE CONCERNS ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

## Concern #5: What about the students who are *gifted*?

An abundance of time and resources may be allocated to students who struggle and who have IEPs, but what about students who have high abilities and may qualify as gifted and talented? Do their needs become lost in the efforts to help those who are struggling? And why would the needs of these students be addressed under the umbrella of special education?

The needs of students who qualify as gifted and talented are as unique and individualized as students who have a diagnosed disability and have an IEP. Therefore, many consider the needs of gifted and talented students to fall under the umbrella of exceptional learners or special education. While “gifted and talented” is not a qualifying identification under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), this does not mean that the needs of these students are any less than the needs of students with identified disabilities.

### Gifted students' needs

For example, did you know that 25% of students who are gifted are underachievers? Or that students who are gifted may be at risk for dropping out of high school? If these are the students who are supposed to be overachievers and have cognitive abilities greater than their peers, how does this make sense? The explanation is fairly straightforward: students who are gifted are used to school and other aspects of life being easy for them. Getting an A on that math test? No problem! Memorizing the petitions of the Lord's Prayer with Luther's explanation? Piece of cake! When these students



breeze through elementary and maybe even middle school without difficulty, it is assumed that school will continue to be easy for them. Nothing they may have encountered so far has been extremely challenging, but that may change during middle school, high school or college. Depending on the school and curriculum, that student who is gifted will likely begin to encounter material that is difficult and requires more work to master. In many cases, this is even more challenging for a student who has gone through years of schooling without any difficulty and possibly less effort to earn an A. These students may start to experience frustration because they do not know how to study a new skill for mastery. They may even begin to doubt their abilities, thinking that if they are truly “gifted,” then this should be easy like everything else has been up until that point in their education. Students who do not have the skills to deal with these challenges and difficult material may start to struggle and possibly fail. There are ways to turn this around before a student reaches that point, however.

### Skills to meet new challenges

When students show signs of high ability and giftedness, they need to experience challenge and be pushed beyond what is easy for them. They may be perfectionists, but

“ A commonly held misconception about students who are gifted is that they do not need help and support; they will do fine on their own because of their abilities, so they do not need additional attention or guidance from the teacher.”

they also need to be praised for effort, not just high performance. These students need to learn how to master a new skill, how to study and how to push through obstacles and failure that other students may have experienced more frequently. This helps teach the idea that it is OK to not always know something and not always be able to do things perfectly the first time. This is all part of learning. Praising the effort the student puts forth rather than always praising the result also reinforces this concept.

A commonly held misconception about students who are gifted is that they do not need help and support; they will do fine on their own because of their abilities, so they do not need additional attention or guidance from the teacher. This would be the equivalent of saying that a star athlete does not need a coach to make it to the Olympics; that athlete should be able to train independently! Just like that star athlete, students who are gifted need guidance from well-trained teachers to develop their abilities and challenge them in the classroom. Otherwise, these students will become bored, frustrated and possibly develop behavior issues in the classroom. The content and processes being taught to these students should be more complex, more abstract and more open-ended than



ILLUSTRATION: THINKSTOCK

for other students. Additionally, the products should be varied and multifaceted. Within the classroom, flexible grouping, curriculum compacting, providing choices and orbital studies are just some ways of accommodating for the unique needs of these learners. Students who are gifted may have different classroom needs than students with disabilities, but both groups of exceptional learners have unique needs that are crucial to address in the classroom. All of these students are fearfully and wonderfully made by our Creator, and we have the privilege of serving them all in our Lutheran schools.

If you have more specific questions about students who are gifted and how to work with them in your classroom, please remember that Lutheran Special Education Ministries is here to help! Visit [luthsped.org](http://luthsped.org) or contact [lsem@luthsped.org](mailto:lsem@luthsped.org).

## Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

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# Growing in Governing



GROWTH TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS

## Be a Champion for Your School!

**THE WORD “CHAMPION”** is used often today. Meanings are varied, but the one heard most lately is not the one that relates to sports. The newer meaning, in most cases, is the person in an organization who shows a great amount of loyalty — both in word and in action. He is an advocate. She carries considerable influence, with the spotlight often firmly fixed upon her every move. Words and actions are always weighed carefully.

Every board member needs to be a champion for the school. This is evident as members are wearing name tags, being visible and sharing often that they serve not only with their gifts and abilities, but also with their positive words and actions. Consider a policy that makes a statement about the importance of these actions and words. A sample policy could read:

“Board members shall reflect positively to the general public on any ministry area of the school.”

During His ministry among the people, Jesus taught with authority. He healed the sick, He used Scripture to rebuke and correct and He met people where they were in their lives. Today, He equips us, gives us confidence and directs us as His people. We are champions (advocates) in Christian education as we humbly serve the Lord with gladness. The following passages speak to us as His people. Not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. We should be bold and courageous. We trust, and do not lean on our own understanding.

### **Romans 8:38–39 says:**

*“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

### **Ephesians 3:11–12 says:**

*“This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.”*

### **Proverbs 3:5–6 says:**

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”*

### **A Champion in Action**

Even when there is disagreement, speak the truth in love and work together to make the talk God honoring. During meetings and in conversations, always balance the challenges with encouragement. Actively speak up. Don’t just sit there when the realization hits that speaking up is the right thing to do. Congregational meetings share a perfect opportunity to be that champion.

### **Qualities of Champions**

- **Spiritual:** They worship and pray often and regularly set aside time for devotions and Bible study.
- **Supportive:** They show unwavering support of the school, its staff and the administrator, and seek ways to assist them.
- **Caring:** They care about the students, their families and the staff, exhibiting that concern in their decisions within board meetings.
- **Committed:** They love the school and the children it serves. They enjoy investing time and energy in the leadership of the school and its stakeholders.
- **Willing to Work:** Being a board member necessitates using personal time and energy,

even when that is not an easy task. They give of themselves to do what is necessary to make their school the best possible, within the boundaries of their roles.

- **Open:** They are open to considering facts and opinions of others to reach decisions and to learn innovative ways and methods. As such, they are open to enlisting the help of consultants and of the Synod and district officials.
- **Positive:** Simply, they have a positive attitude toward their school, its staff and the work in which the board is involved.
- **Involved:** They are in the life of their congregation and school!
- **Interested:** They have a vibrant interest in and understanding of Christian education. They desire to know what is happening in and around their school — and take the time to visit.
- **Ethical:** They understand that the board only acts as a whole and when in session. They support the decisions made even when their personal opinions do not agree with the decision. They set aside their personal agendas to serve the best interests of the community. They keep board discussions confidential. They will not take action that is contrary to Scripture or that is unlawful.
- **Relationship Builders:** They work hard to build a strong and trusting relationship with the administrator. They also cultivate a good working relationship with each other.
- **Ministry Minded:** They have a heart for the school and for the ministry team. They accept and support the doctrines and practices of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

- **Mission Minded:** They agree with the school's mission and values. They are dedicated to ensuring that the school continues to be strong and effective and is serving the Lord and His children in the best way possible.

- **Outcome Oriented:** They are concerned about the outcomes of the school program and work to establish policies that help define these outcomes. They refuse to “micromanage,” leaving procedures and daily decisions to the administrator and staff within the boundaries established by board policy.

Being a champion for your Lutheran school will pay great dividends. The community all around the school will see and hear the great love for Christian education. The book *Be Our Guest: Perfecting the Art of Customer Service* (The Disney Institute, 2011) shares the importance of positive and good relations in moving an organization forward. Pray for one another. Work hard at the task placed in front of the board. God will bless the efforts of all involved.

## Resources

- Resources or continued conversations are available by contacting the author at [thomas.wrege@zionwalburg.org](mailto:thomas.wrege@zionwalburg.org).
- *Governing Board Resource for Lutheran Schools: A Resource for Administrators and Boards*, (LCMS, 2017, available at [static1.squarespace.com/static/5122917ce4b08a7615958803/t/58dd2c2a197aeafa01805a51/1490889771293/LCMS\\_Governing\\_Board\\_Resource\\_2017\\_FINAL.PDF](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5122917ce4b08a7615958803/t/58dd2c2a197aeafa01805a51/1490889771293/LCMS_Governing_Board_Resource_2017_FINAL.PDF))
- *Be Our Guest: Perfecting the Art of Customer Service*, by The Disney Institute with Theodore Kinni (2011)

## Growing in Governing

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# Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

## Helping Children Find Grit

**G**rit is a new term in education. Recent research indicates that successful people have both passion and perseverance for long-term goals; this is the definition of grit. This kind of perseverance is one that can survive struggles and challenges. Children with grit are children who do well in school and beyond school. They are learners who do not fade at the first sign of trouble but come back to a problem again and again until the solution is found or the skill is mastered.

If you were to look for examples of grit in the Bible, you would likely turn to David. David was anointed king at a young age and spent a large part of his life bouncing back from adversity. While God's promise assured David of eventual success, every victory was hard fought. We may feel trouble hunts us down, but David knew the true meaning of being hunted by the enemy.

As much as we would like to protect our children from the trials of life, it is in their best interest if instead we teach them how to weather adversity. God gives us the tools to nurture grit in our children.

Each time your children meet with disappointment or challenge, they have an opportunity to develop problem-solving skills. The more problem-solving skills they have, the more confident they are when they face even bigger challenges. When children wilt under pressure it is a good idea to empathize with their struggle, ask them what they plan to do and refrain from fixing things for them. If you show too much sympathy or give suggestions on how to solve the problem, you are giving a silent message that they are less than capable. Each problem solved builds grit.

The ability to weather challenging situations is significantly affected by a positive attitude. Such an attitude gives children a mindset that problems can be solved and it is worth the effort it takes to get there. Some



children live in fear of failure and will do anything to avoid it. Avoiding failure also means avoiding learning. Children who understand that mistakes are opportunities for learning will approach a problem from a very different viewpoint. Help your children to see the benefit in working hard to learn something. Lead them to discover what they can do differently when something does not turn out as planned. A mindset that encourages children to keep working in the face of obstacles includes an

understanding that God will help them to grow and learn. *When we confess our sins, repent and are blessed by forgiveness we not only develop strength in Christ but also we learn we can grow from our failures.* Each positive approach builds grit.

One of the worst ways to inspire grit in children is to focus entirely on performance. While it is great to show your children you are proud of good grades, winning sports performances or stunning recitals, it is just as important to help them to make the connection between the win and the work put into it. When children forget the effort of study or practice, they begin to think the wins will come without work. When that does not happen they become discouraged. Research suggests that the best performers in the world get there by way of 10,000 hours of hard, deliberate, unrelenting practice. Each hour of effort builds grit.

Children who develop grit rarely do so on their own. Grit is not a genetic characteristic and it is not something we can simply demand of children. Grit is nurtured in the environment, and that environment is determined by relationships. Look for evidence of grit in your children's friends. Talk about how God helped Bible heroes overcome obstacles. Encourage relationships with Sunday school teachers, youth directors, choir directors and their pastor. These people will reinforce strong values. This is especially important for adolescents who are beginning to pull away from family in their process of finding their identity. Each strong relationship builds grit.



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

### For Further Study

A TED talk on grit by Angela Duckworth who conducted the research that defines grit.

[ted.com/talks/angela\\_lee\\_duckworth\\_grit\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_passion\\_and\\_perseverance](https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance)

Just as musicians and athletes need training and tools, children building grit also need resources. The best resource you can provide for your child is a strong faith built in the study of God's word. Time spent at church, at school and in family devotions will fill your child with the power of God. The only way we can be strong, the only way we can achieve long-term goals, the only way we can develop grit, is through God.

## Parent Pages

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# Professionally Speaking



## Feedback or Recognition



“We don’t want feedback;  
we want attention.”

**M**arcus Buckingham is a British author, motivational speaker and business consultant. With past experience as a researcher for Gallup, he uses interviews from around the world to draw conclusions about employee performance and engagement. Many of his encouragements center around self-awareness and building on strengths.

At the *Global Leadership Summit 2017*, Buckingham stated, “We don’t want feedback; we want attention.”

Fascinating.

In the world of education, feedback is an expectation — for students, for teachers and for administrators. Feedback is encouraged for comprehension, for assessment of teaching tools and for engagement. For example, these are three popular classroom tools used for engagement:

- **Twitter:** One can create a hashtag and then give students an opportunity for interaction on whatever topic the class covered or discovered. While Twitter certainly was not meant as a polling tool, it can work quite well.

- **Google Forms:** This is free and simple to use. Google Forms has many templates and themes providing opportunities for shared information.
- **Kahoot:** Kahoot is a simple-to-use web tool that delivers online quizzes and surveys. Teachers can drag and drop to create all kinds of feedback opportunities.

Frankly, Twitter and Google Forms work well for parent input as well.

But this idea of feedback is not the idea of feedback that Buckingham is commenting on. His “feedback” idea is part of the whole idea of professional performance reviews. Often these reviews are based on collaborative professional development plans and reaching goals spelled out in these plans. “360 reviews” are quite popular and are especially used in our world for administrative reviews so that multiple constituents can provide input on the leader.

Buckingham debunks reviews that use a numerical matrix. His research indicates that all input is skewed by the reviewer. One may be a “hard grader” and never give a top score. Or the person may be an “easy scorer” with an

## Our culture places much emphasis on success or at being the best at something.

inability to give a low score. Simply stated, he argues that most of the total score of the reviews are user biased and are worthless.

So, what is valuable? Research says we want to be informed and affirmed regarding our strengths. We want to know how well we are using these skills. We also want to know purpose — the organization's purpose and how we plug into that purpose.

Does this sound like you? Are you more interested in a little recognition vs. feedback? Years of experience say there is much fretting over having a performance review. Administrators find limited time to get these accomplished and teachers and staff see little connection between the process and actual personal growth. More often than not, reviews are “check offs” for board approval or for accreditation reports.

The reality is that having some critical eyes in the classroom is valuable for the growth of a teacher. Hearing from teachers, students, parents and other leaders is helpful for the effectiveness of a principal. Students need to get information to improve their products — essays, projects, etc.

But if Buckingham's research is valid, might our review processes look different and become more effective if reviews are relational, intentional and ongoing, or, as Buckingham directs, we share purpose and we build on strengths? What are the implications of this research in the classroom, for ongoing teacher development and for supporting and encouraging administrators?

Our culture places much emphasis on success or at being the best at something. Parents will spend hundreds of dollars on club sports or for personal trainers with the hope a child will be the best volleyball player, basketball player or musician. Much is discussed and encouraged with educational reforms that lean toward the exceptional.



Educators are encouraged to be creative and avoid placing barriers so that the inner curiosity of the child can be fostered. The child can find his/her strengths and grow those strengths to create new impact on the world. One could argue that a classroom with few barriers for creativity might lose some direction and purpose.

What happens when purpose and awareness of strengths are aligned with our theology? A gold mine of joy can occur!

### Purpose? There's a lot of Law here but there is also clear direction from our God.

- We should use our talents to the best of our abilities (1 PETER 4:10-11).
- We are encouraged to be faithful (REV. 2:10). We are never directed to be successful.
- We are witnesses of God's grace and are salt and light to the world (MATT. 5:13-16, ACTS 1:8)
- We are called to have children and be stewards of the world God has given us (GEN. 1:28-30).
- We should be patient and loving, ready to share the joy that we have (EPH. 4:1-3).

### Knowing strengths? Self-awareness?

- We are a chosen people (1 PETER 2:9-10).
- We are Christ's workmanship (EPH. 2:10).
- We are fearfully and wonderfully made (PS. 139:14).

What a gift to know and to be able to share these directions for life! These insights are especially helpful as we know the One who is the giver of the gifts, the One who knew His purpose. Jesus knew His purpose. He died for us so that heaven is ours. Life here has purpose. Our gifts are used for His glory. Our perspective on life and life eternal is still all about Jesus.

## Professionally Speaking

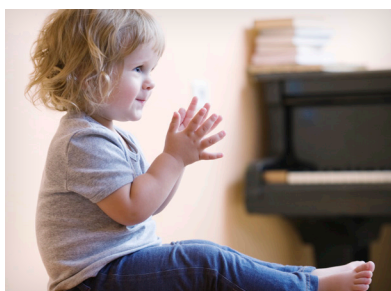
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# Rattles & Prattles



A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS

IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT JESUS: *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).*

## Jesus is our Teacher

**Bible Story:** Mary and Martha (LUKE 10:38-42)

**Before teaching the children:**

Take a moment and read the Bible story from Luke 10:38-42. Then close your eyes and make a mental picture. Mary is sitting in front of Jesus, her Lord and Savior, and listening, listening intently, to everything He says. Her sister, Martha, is also focused on Jesus. Her focus is on preparing dinner for Him. She wants to make sure the food is perfectly prepared. She wants Jesus to feel welcome, but she also knows the meal doesn't prepare itself.

When her sister, Mary, doesn't help, she asks Jesus to please tell her sister to help. Jesus kindly looks at her, saying her name twice. "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (LUKE 10:41-42).

Jesus didn't tell Martha that preparing the meal wasn't important. He let her know that the meal could wait. He wanted her to join Mary in listening to what He wanted to say.

We have many examples from the Gospels in which people were listening to Jesus. And, when Jesus spoke, people listened. Why? Earlier in the book of Luke we read, "And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed

authority" (LUKE 4:31-32). What was Jesus' message? Fast forward to an event following His resurrection. As Jesus talked with two men, He "opened ... the Scriptures" (LUKE 24:32). Jesus told them who He was and why He had come. He was the Savior God promised to send from the time of Adam and Eve's disobedience. Jesus explained how it was necessary for Him to suffer and die for the sins of all people and to rise again.



**"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things..."**

— Luke 10:41-42

Mary and Martha knew and believed Jesus was their Lord and Savior. We do, too, as well as many of the children in our care do, but we all need to hear the wonderful news over and over again. When God's Word is spoken or read, God's Spirit is at work creating, sustaining and increasing saving faith in God. And so, we pray "Grant that we may so hear them [God's Word], read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that ... we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life" (LSB, P. 308: Prayer #148).

Ask God's Spirit to be you as you share the message of Jesus, the Teacher. He is God's Son, the Savior, who was born to live, suffer, die and rise again to take away the sins of the world so that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we become God's children and have the sure hope of eternal life.

*Please use the reproducible to prepare visuals to use as you share the Bible story during Jesus' time and activities throughout the day.*



# Curricular Materials

## Jesus' time – the focal point for each day

### Getting Prepared:

- **Prepare a Worship Center:** Place the altar covering (either cloth or laminated colored construction paper — color can change with the church season) on the altar. Add a cross and two candles (cardboard tubes covered with laminated paper and red tissue for flames)
- **Prepare materials:** color, cut apart and laminate the figures on the reproducible. Cut out again and add the adhesive pieces of the hook half of Velcro on the back to use with a felt board, or place adhesive pieces of a magnetic strip to the back of each figure to use with a magnetic board.
- **Children's Bible:** place figures in the Bible.
- **Songbook:** *Little Ones Sing Praise* (LOSP), Concordia Publishing House, 1989.



### Invite the children:

**Sing a song using the melody** “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” Please come here and sit with me, sit with me, sit with me. Please come here and sit with me right here on the floor.

**Wave and sing:** Now it's time to say hello, say hello, say hello. Now it's time to say hello to you and you and you.

**Show/point to a picture of Jesus. Sing:** We will learn of Jesus' love, Jesus' love, Jesus' love. We will learn of Jesus' love for you and you and me.

### Share God's Word:

**Show the Bible and take out the standing figures of Jesus, Mary and Martha:** Jesus had friends just like you and me. Two of them were sisters: Martha and Mary.

**Point to Martha:** “Jesus, come have dinner with us,” Martha said. “I'll make some soup, pick some fruit and bake some bread.”



**Show or point to Mary:** When Jesus came, Mary met Him with a great big smile. “Please wash your hands, sit down and rest a little while.”

**Exchange standing Jesus and Mary for sitting figures:** They sat down and Jesus talked about God's great big love. He told her God sent Him down from heaven above. Mary listened while Martha worked; and then Martha said, “Jesus,

please tell Mary to help fix the soup, fruit and bread.” But Jesus said, “Martha, Martha, come and sit down too. Before we eat I want to share God's love with you.” I think Martha stopped, sat down and listened for a while. Hearing Jesus sharing God's love gave her a great big smile.

### Sing and Pray:

**Say:** Jesus loved Martha and Mary. Jesus loves us too. He wants us to hear stories from the Bible (*put figures back in the Bible; show Bible*).

**Sing:** “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” (LOSP, P. 42).

God gives us people who tell us about Jesus' great big love. They tell us Jesus loves us so much He came to be our Savior. He was hurt and died on a cross to take away all our wrong choices. Jesus came alive again.

*Show the teacher:* Teachers tell us, “Jesus loves you.”

*Show the parents:* Moms and Dads tell us, “Jesus loves you.”

*Show the pastor:* Pastors tell us, “Jesus loves you.”



Let's pray, thanking Jesus for His great big love and for people who tell us of His love. Point to the figure of Jesus: Thank You, Jesus, for loving us and coming to be our Savior. Point to the teacher: Thank You for teachers who tell us. Point to the parents: Thank You for moms and dads who tell us. Point to the pastor: And, thank You for pastors. Thank You, Jesus. Amen. Put away all the figures and altar pieces.

### Closing:

**Using the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”**

Jesus' time is over now, over now, over now. Jesus' Time is over now; it's time to say goodbye. Verse 2: Jesus loves you very much, very much, very much. Jesus loves you very much. He is your Savior too.

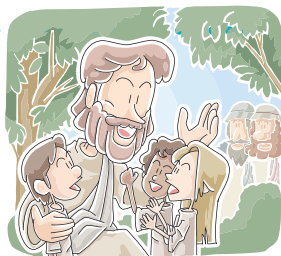


## Integrating the Theme

### Literacy Activities:

#### ■ Books to Read:

- Children's Bible which includes the story of Martha and Mary.
- *Jesus Loves Me, This I Know*, board book by Debby Anderson
- Books about listening and ears:
  - *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What do you Hear?* board book by Bill Martin, Jr. and Eric Carle
  - *I Hear*, by Helen Oxenbury (Baby Beginning Board Books)



#### ■ Rhymes:

- **Action Poem:** show enlarged picture of open Bible from the reproducible. Here is our Bible; its stories are true (*hands together, palms touching to make a pretend Bible*). God gave us these stories — for me and for you (*point to self and children*). Quiet, so quiet, we all now will be (*put index finger up to mouth*). Listen, a story, and pictures to see (*point to ears*). —source unknown
- **Nursery Rhyme:** "This is the way the Ladies Ride." Change words to "This is the way Mary rode to Bethlehem, up and down, up and down, up and down the hills."

### Art and Music:

- **Art:** Make multiple copies of the heart and cross shape from the reproducible. Cut apart. Invite the children to use glue sticks and make a collage of the shapes on an open Bible shape on an 8 ½-by-11-inch piece of paper. In the Bible we hear Jesus loves us and came to be our Savior. Post/tape them on a bulletin board or wall. Refer to them often and sing:



- **Music:** "The Best Book of All" (LOSP, P. 49).

### Math, Science, Engineering and Social Studies:

#### ■ Math:

**Share a chant with the children:** Jesus, Martha and Mary. Count them, count them: 1, 2, 3. Make up chants for other sets of three, e.g. three children: Spencer, Lily and Marie. Count them, count them: 1, 2, 3.

- **Science:** Enlarge and use the picture of ears from the reproducible. God gave Mary ears. She loved to hear Jesus share the story of God's love. God gives us ears too. Our ears hear many things.

- Call attention to each child's ears. Have fun using the action rhyme "Eye Winker, Chin Chopper." If you are not familiar with it, do an online search. Sing about the senses God gives us with "I Have Hands" (LOSP, P. 29).
- Set out toys that children can use to make different sounds, e.g. rhythm instruments, balls that make sound, pull toys, a jack-in-the-box, etc.

- **Engineering:** Have fun building with three blocks, e.g. make a tower, train, snake, etc.

- **Social Studies:** People gather together to listen to God's Word. If your center is part of a church campus, take the children into the church. Invite the pastor to show his Bible and share the story of Martha and Mary with them. Sing "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know" (LOSP, P. 42). If you're separate from the church, invite the pastor to come to your room.

### Health, Safety, Nutrition and Large Motor Activities:

*As always, check for allergies, wash hands and take time to pray before eating.*

- **Serve a crispy rice cereal and milk.** Invite the children to listen to the sounds before eating.
- **Older toddlers** will enjoy listening to corn popping in a microwave and then eating the treat.
- **Large Motor:** Take a listening walk, e.g. around the center, outside. Call attention to the sounds, e.g. children, cars, birds, sirens, etc. God gives us ears to hear.
  - Lead children in moving to the rhythm and sound of different kinds of music.

## Rattles & Prattles

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# Connecting with Families

## Empower parents:

Make a copy of this letter for each family. Take time to personally sign it and add a personal comment.

Dear Caring Adults,

We are bombarded with sounds. Many people block out unwanted sounds and wear ear buds so they can choose exactly what they want to hear on their phone or tablet.

In the Bible story (LUKE 10:38-42) we shared with the children, Mary is listening to Jesus share the message of God's love. Mary and her sister, Martha, invited Him to dinner. When He arrives, Mary welcomes Him and invites Him to sit down. He talks and Mary listens. Martha is busy preparing the meal. She becomes so frustrated that she finally asks Jesus to tell Mary to come and help.

Jesus gently tells Martha the meal can wait. He invites her to come and sit down and listen too. What was so important about what Jesus said? Jesus was sharing the story of God's great big love.

The Bible itself tells us the importance of hearing God's Word. "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (ROMANS 10:17). When the story of Jesus' life, suffering, death and resurrection for us is shared, God's Spirit moves us to believe Jesus is our personal Savior and gives us faith and trust in Jesus. God's Spirit also creates a desire to hear and learn more about Jesus, God's Son and Savior of all. This is done as we read, learn and take to heart God's story recorded in the Bible. We encourage you to read God's Word and to hear God's Word during worship.

We also encourage you to share God's story as you read Bible stories to your children. If you do not have one, check online or at a book store. Pick one that will fit the age level of your child. Some you might check out are:

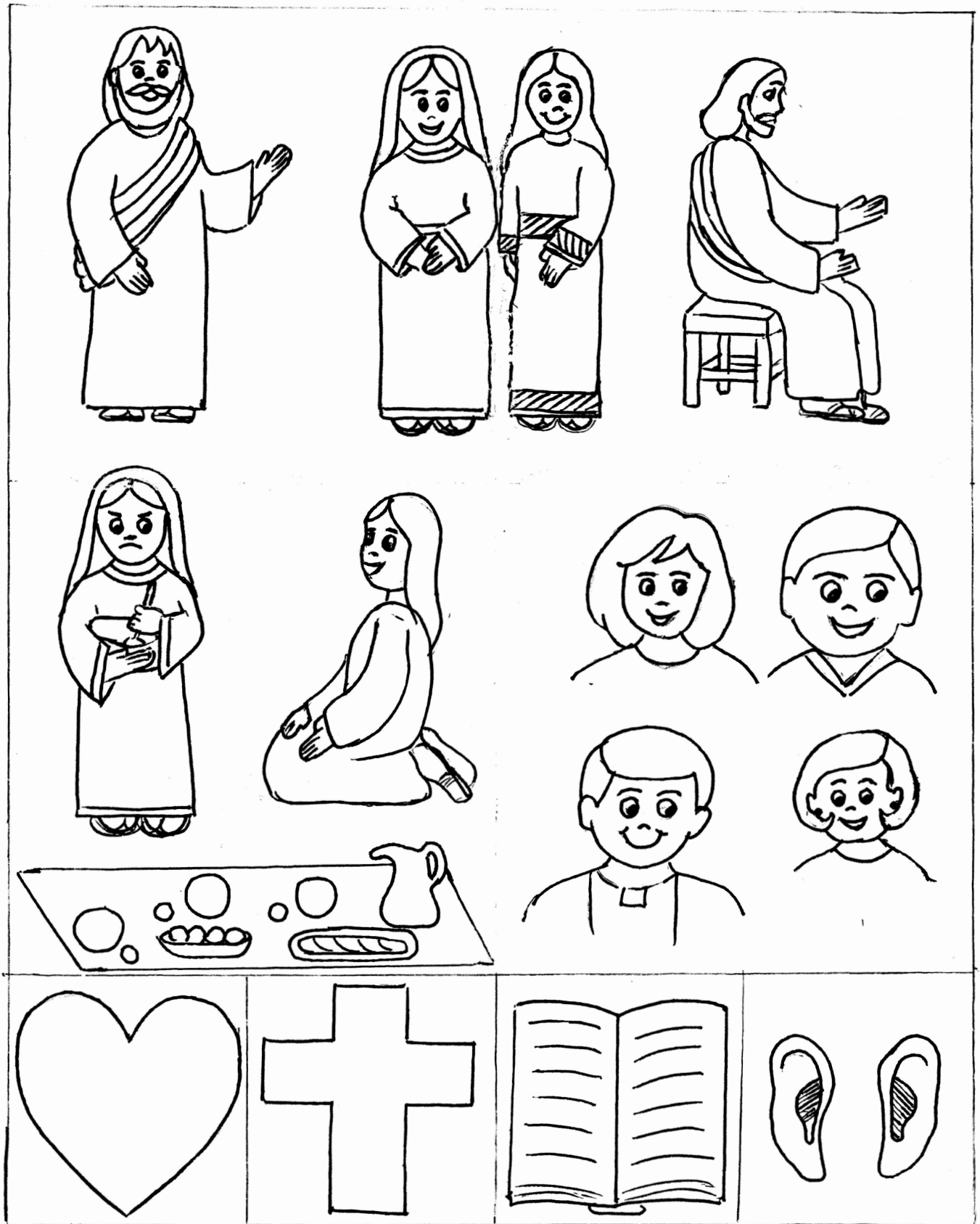
- *Baby's First Bible*, a Parragon board book.
- *The Early Reader's Bible* by V. Gilbert Beer contains many stories and has an added benefit of a controlled vocabulary so beginning readers can read the stories on their own.
- *The Beginner's Bible*, told by Karyn Henley and Dennas Davis (Zondervan), is a favorite of many families.

May God bless your family as you journey through God's Word and life together,  
Your child's teacher

JANUARY 2018

# Rattles & Prattles

Please use the reproducible included here as you share the Bible story during Jesus' Time and activities throughout the day.





# School Shepherd



## It's *Still* About LIVING Jesus



**“I**t is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”

(GALATIANS 2:20).

The school shepherd and the school flock live Jesus because Jesus lives. Lutheran schools are Easter places with Easter people in every season of the year. Living Jesus is not a decision on our part, but it is God's Spirit calling us to faith and directing us to faith's response.

Because of our new life in Jesus, we are truly alive with our response to His saving work. Several Christians were dialoging about which translation of the Bible they preferred. Hearing the selections of several in the group, one responded, “I prefer my grandmother's translation.” He explained, “She not only read it, but she also lived it.”

Lutheran school shepherds, staff, students and families live the Word that is preached in worship, taught in classrooms, discussed in staff meetings and read in homes. Jesus is lived in the relationships of Lutheran schools.

School policies regarding relationships are always consistent with the policy requirements of state licensure and other accrediting and supervising agencies. However, the policies of a Lutheran school have the added perspective of our desire to be Christ-like and Christ-living in all relationships.

Living Jesus is part of the routine of the school day. Lutheran schools are not monastic settings where students and staff withdraw from the world. Lutheran schools enroll real children who are by nature and by their actions sinners. Relationships need the Law. Relationships are guided and judged by the Ten Commandments. Lutheran school students honor their teachers and respect the life, property and reputation of fellow students.

Living Jesus is a Gospel response. The Apostle Paul celebrates that “Christ ... lives in me” (GALATIANS 2:20). Christ who brought new life in baptism now gives evidence of that life in relationships with students, staff, volunteers and everyone who is part of the Lutheran school ministry.

Living Jesus goes beyond the school building and school day. Lutheran school students and staff live Jesus at the athletic game and concert. They live Jesus at home with family or at the mall with friends.

### Challenges to Living Jesus:

- The response can easily be law driven (“We have to live this way”) rather than Gospel motivated.
- Life responses are pietistic.
- Life responses are judgmental or comparative.
- Life responses are emphasized only in the “box” of the school.





## Suggestions for Living Jesus:

- The Gospel is preached, taught and lived.
- Confession is practiced: “We confess that we have not lived ....”
- Grace abounds.
- Students and staff are often reminded that they not only represent their school but also their Savior.
- School policies regarding relationships between students and teachers, student to student and other dynamics are clearly stated and regularly reviewed.

## The School Shepherd as Life Teacher and Leader

The school shepherd lives Jesus in his ministry because Jesus lives in him. The school shepherd is first and foremost a baptized child of God whom God has reclaimed and recreated. Living Jesus is always a matter of sharing the Word who is Jesus. Supporting the Word spoken from the pulpit, in the classroom, in the staff meeting and in other contexts is the Word that is demonstrated in Gospel actions.

The school shepherd is more than the theological teacher and ministry supervisor. He is also real and relevant in relationships with students, parents, staff and other Lutheran school partners. Key words in the shepherd’s relationship with others are “transparency” and

## PRAYER

“Christ, the life of all the living,  
Christ, the death of death, our foe,  
Who, Thyself for me once giving  
To the darkest depths of woe:  
Through Thy sufferings, death,  
and merit I eternal life inherit.  
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,  
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.” (LSB #420, v. 1)  
Amen.



“vulnerability.” The shepherd’s struggles in living Jesus are sometimes confessed to others. The shepherd shares the power and presence of Jesus in being His person in all contexts of life. The shepherd exudes the joy of ministry in a variety of relationships and settings.

## Continuing the Living Dialog

What does it mean to have the certainty that “Christ ... lives in me”? Are we worthy to have Christ live in us? When and where is it difficult for you to live Jesus? How can the school staff support you and one another in living Jesus? How can we assist our students in living Jesus?

# School Shepherd

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# Time Out for Directors



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS

## Time to Start Anew!

It's important not only to have goals, but also to achieve them.



It's here — a brand-new calendar year — 2018! The Christmas holidays are complete and the decorations have likely been packed away. The Christmas cookies have been eaten, and now the goal of losing weight is on the minds of many. Perhaps you have one goal, or many goals, on your mind. Goals can be scary for some people. The fear of not reaching a goal causes many people to struggle. Just because you ate a cookie yesterday doesn't mean the goal of eating healthy is over. In Lam. 3:22–23, God shares, “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” These verses share great comfort in knowing that God's love is with you each day; starting anew is a good thing! God's love, grace, mercy and forgiveness never leave you; they are with you always.

**Goals can hold you accountable, but only if done correctly and shared with someone.**

Now, aside from personal goals, have you had the opportunity to look at your professional goals? Do you have goals you wish the students in your school to achieve? Does your school have any goals that need to be addressed as part of an accreditation process?

It's important not only to have goals, but also to achieve them. Simply setting a goal but leaving action behind is not a good strategy — it will most likely fail. Goals can hold you accountable, but only if done correctly and shared with someone. Too often people set lofty goals but have bad habits that make achieving those goals difficult. Thankfully, as a Christian, you do not need to have goals regarding your salvation; there is nothing you can do on your own. Christ has already paid the price for your sins by His death on the cross and resurrection three days later. This is something to celebrate!





## Professionally Speaking

As a Christian educator, it is important to grow professionally. Whether it be through reading, attending conferences or coursework that leads to an advanced degree, learning something new that you can bring into your profession is important. Strong leaders value learning and embrace it with welcoming arms. Strong leaders encourage staff members to grow professionally as well. Educators need to be excellent role models for learning. When students and parents see teachers continuing their education, it shows care and passion for the profession. Parents want to know their child is in the loving, caring hands of a life-long learner.

Growing in faith is also important. As a Lutheran school leader, you have the honor and responsibility of teaching and sharing the faith. Through the stories and lessons, the words and actions and the interactions you have with others, be sure to let the light of Christ shine through you!

## Regarding Your Students

Educators also have goals for their students. What do you want your students to learn? What do you want your students to experience? How do you know that

your students are growing in their faith? If you are unfamiliar with typical, age-appropriate goals and developmental levels, complete a Google search of the topic. Each state has a useful document of early learning goals that highlight developmentally appropriate goals students at different age levels are typically able to achieve. These early learning goals can assist educators to determine classroom activities and environmental set-ups that support optimal development, growth and learning.

Consider, too, the goals of individual students in your school or classroom. Are there students who appear to need some extra support in their development? If so, be sure to communicate with parents and seek their input and insight. If additional services and support are needed for individual children, research opportunities that exist. Parents look to teachers for support and guidance on topics such as these. The above and beyond support you share with

a family is just one simple way to minister to them through education. Your care and understanding speak volumes to a family when difficult conversations must take place.



**Strong leaders value learning and embrace it with welcoming arms. Strong leaders encourage staff members to grow professionally as well."**



God knows the children in your care and has a special plan for them. You, as a Lutheran school leader and educator, are part of that plan. As Luke shares in Luke 12:7, “Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.” Through the ministry of a Lutheran school, you have the opportunity to show children and families the love God has for them. Your ultimate goal for each child is that he knows the saving message of Jesus’ death and resurrection!

## To Help Your School

Serving as an early childhood educational leader is not always the easiest profession. While there is certainly a special kind of joy in working with young children, there are also unique challenges. Ministry is not without obstacles. God doesn’t promise perfect days, but He does promise to be alongside you. “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you” (DEUT. 31:6).

There are indeed many pressures on Lutheran school ministries today. Finances, enrollment and securing highly qualified staff are all likely on your mind. There are supports to assist you and your school develop goals, plans and strategies as you further your ministry. Strong leaders seek the input and assistance of others. Thankfully, The Lutheran Church—

Missouri Synod has a strong history of supporting educational ministries. The LCMS School Ministry office, the Lutheran Education Association (LEA) and educational leaders at your local district level are all equipped to support you and your ministry.

Consider attending district educational events and conferences where you can learn from and network with others. Join LEA as a professional membership to provide access to a support system and resources that are pertinent to early childhood educators. Reach out to your district (or neighboring district) early childhood consultant for suggestions and insight. Finally, consider completing the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) process. NLSA is a nationally recognized accreditation process that allows schools and sponsoring congregations to look deeply into their practices and set goals for improvement and increased performance. The work in an accreditation process is great, but the investment is priceless.

In closing, remember to keep your goals in prayer. Whether these goals be for yourself, for students or for your school, take your petitions to God in prayer and ask for the prayer support of others. Lutheran school leaders and educators should serve as prayer warriors. Knowing God is in control serves as a strong foundation in supporting the achievement of your goals!



“  
I have fought the good fight, I have  
finished the race, I have kept the faith”

(2 TIM. 4:7)



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