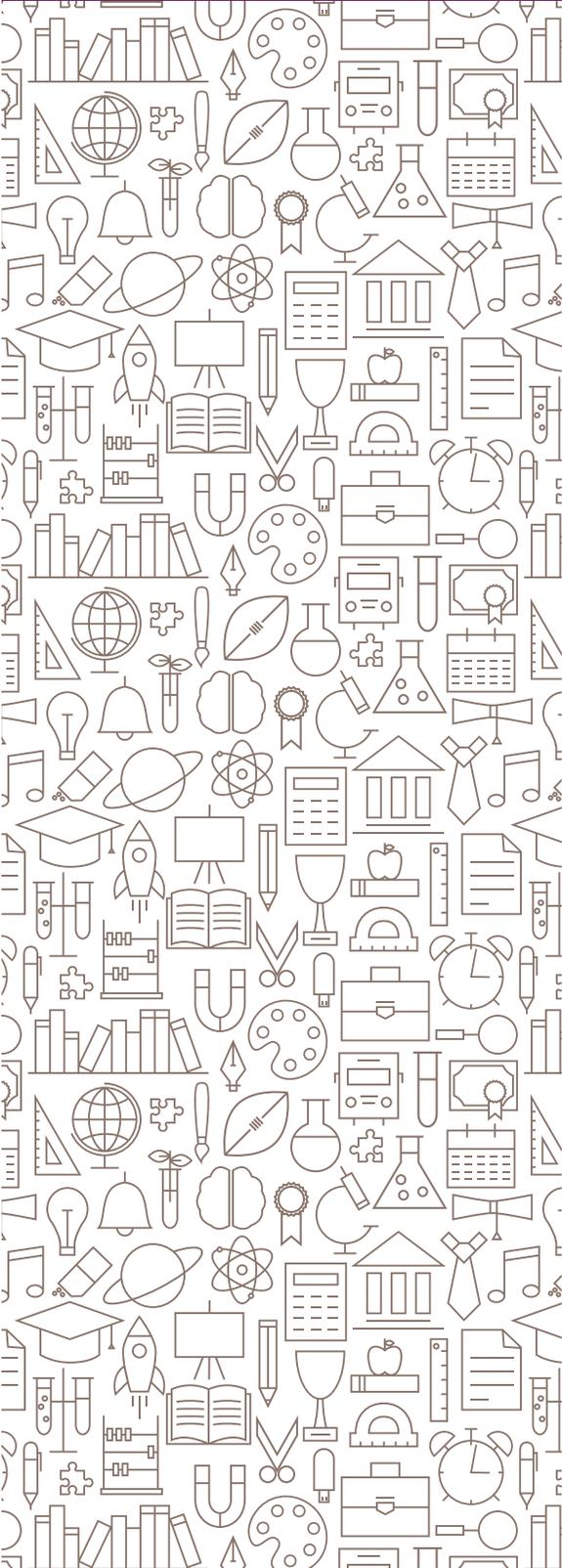




NOVEMBER 2018

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing





NOVEMBER 2018

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Give Thanks to the Lord!

“I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing” (GEN. 12:2).

We hear it often: “Count your blessings!” It’s interesting that as God’s blessings are freely given for the benefit of His people, they also rub off on others. I often experienced this firsthand serving as a principal and vividly remember one such blessing on a blustery November day. The morning bell had rung and classes were underway. The school office was busy with the morning routine of announcements and parents stopping in. Our pre-school teacher and her three-year-olds walked in waving brightly colored pictures. “We wish you a ‘Happy Thanksgiving’ and thank you for all that you do,” they chorused. “Our job is to pass on smiles today,” they sang. “We want you to pass our smiles on too!” No doubt about it — we smiled the rest of the day.

Counting blessings and praying regularly is something Christians do. We pray aloud with individuals and groups for their needs. We pray in church for our congregations and communities. It is a privilege to share joys, sorrows and concerns with the One who gave His very life to forgive and save us, the One who can work all things for His glory and our good!

Teaching our children to pray in all circumstances and for others is one of the great privileges of Christian educators. Just as Jesus’

disciples asked Him to teach them to pray (MATT. 6:9-13, LUKE 11:1-4), we model prayer. Jesus taught us to give adoration and praise in our prayers, to confess our sins, to come to Him with sorrows and concerns and to give thanks in all circumstances. By praying for children’s requests and needs, we show them that they are loved and valued. Additionally, trusting children to pray for us, and our needs, allows them to understand that we, too, need and love God’s real and present help.

As we pray together, we are reminded that God listens to our prayers (PHIL. 4:6, MATT. 7:7-8) and promises to answer them (MATT. 21:22). As we seek His will in our lives and serve His people, we are assured of His presence, His comfort and His love in all that we do. Therefore, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 THESS. 5:16-18).

Sharing God’s blessings of love, grace and forgiveness is the greatest thanks we can give back to Him. Other people’s lives are improved, both spiritually and materially. Whom will the Lord place in our paths for the opportunity to share a listening ear, a sunny disposition, a witness of faith or, in the case of three-year-olds, a grin from ear to ear? We are blessed to be a blessing and we can pass on the smiles with joy!



November 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Daylight Saving Time Ends				All Saints Day	U.S. President James Polk born, 1795	Cliché Day
4	National Young Readers Week	General Election Day	Marie Curie born, 1867	X-ray Discovery Day, 1895	Berlin Wall Opened, 1989	Martin Luther born, 1483
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11	National Bible Week Veterans Day	Veterans Day Observed	Aaron Copland born, 1900	Great American Smokeout	Substitute Educators Day	Homemade Bread Day
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18	National Family Week	Lincoln's Gettysburg Address anniversary, 1863	Congress firsts meets at Washington, DC anniversary, 1800	Thanksgiving Day	Native American Heritage Day	Celebrate Your Unique Talent Day
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25	Joe Dimaggio born, 1914	Charles Schulz born, 1922	Space Milestone: <i>Mariner 4</i> , first successful mission to Mars, 1964	C.S. Lewis born, 1898	St. Andrew, Apostle	
26						
27						
28						
29						
30						

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



Computer File



THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING Collaboration



Collaboration is an essential skill that we must teach our students, but teaching students how to collaborate is not an easy task. In my own classroom experience and from talking with other teachers, our view of collaboration is assigning kids a group project. However, when we do that, our students will break apart the assignment, each will take a piece and then they will reassemble the project when they have all finished their own parts. This does not teach the collaborative skills that we want them to have.

“When a teacher assigns a group project, oftentimes students will divide up the task into smaller pieces, work independently, and then just shove their parts together at the very end. In this case, the teacher likely had good intentions to help develop collaboration skills in students. But it doesn’t happen.”

Researchers have identified three important sub-frameworks of collaboration that must be intentionally taught in order for a person to become a successful collaborator:²

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:

how to communicate verbally and non-verbally with teammates,

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

the ability to acknowledge and resolve disagreements in a manner consistent with the best interest of the team, and

TASK MANAGEMENT:

the ability to set goals, organize tasks, track team progress against goals and adjust the process along the way as needed.



In order for students to learn the above skills, time must be dedicated to intentionally teach these skills. It is wrong to assume that students of any age innately know how to do these skills. While it might seem counterintuitive, it has been suggested that direct instruction about collaboration skills is necessary and important. Teaching collaborative skills is analogous to teaching writing skills. David Ross, CEO of P21 says:

“Collaboration skills are very much like writing skills—they do not develop naturally. Educators must be very purposeful in how they prepare students so that everyone can benefit from group work.”

¹ Emily Lai, “Teaching Collaboration Skills From Cradle to Career,” Pearson Learning News, April 24, 2017, pearsonlearningnews.com/teaching-collaboration-skills-from-cradle-to-career/.

² Dr. Jordan Lippman and Suzi Neft, “Teaching Collaboration Through Preparation and Project-Based Learning,” Getting Smart, Dec. 6, 2016, gettingsmart.com/2016/12/teaching-collaboration-project-based-learning/.

Here are five quick tips that you can use to help improve your students' collaboration skills:

- 1 Teach your students how to establish group norms** or rules of engagement. Students need to know what is expected of them and how to behave in a collaborative environment. Do they know when it is appropriate to be on an electronic device or when they should be engaged in face-to-face conversation? Do they know how to appropriately give feedback and criticism? Work with your students and model these types of appropriate behavior.
- 2 Teach them how to evaluate and talk** to their peers about collaborative behavior. Framing those discussions around rubrics and rating scales can also help them develop interpersonal communication skills. NewTech Network (newtechnetwork.org) has published some excellent rubrics to help with this endeavor. **For middle school rubrics**, visit newtechnetwork.org/resources/collaboration-rubric-middle-school/. **For high school rubrics**, visit newtechnetwork.org/resources/collaboration-rubric-high-school/.
- 3 Develop standard language** on how to give and receive feedback to and from peers. Teaching students how to use appropriate conversation stems and how to ask questions can improve interpersonal skills and increase group efficiency.
- 4 Formative Assessment** (*see last month's Computer File*) is essential to teaching any skill that we find important in our classrooms. Collaboration skills are not immune from this. Students need to be taught the dis-

crete collaboration skills, given ample time to practice those skills and then given feedback on how they are doing on their collaborative work. Different technologies can really help you assess individual collaborative work and provide an opportunity for you to give the students individualized feedback on their skills. In addition to their final product, require the students to submit various forms of digital communication, chat logs, emails and discussion threads. You can also require them to submit documentation of task planning and role assignments. Having teams document this in Trello is a powerful way to see how the team simply managed tasks and who completed those tasks.

- 5 Build challenging tasks.** Design your activities so that learners are required to use all three elements of collaboration in concert. When building the activity ask yourself, "Is this project complex and challenging enough that it would be impossible for an individual student to complete it alone?" If the task is built in such a way that your answer is "yes," then students are required to utilize and practice the skills that we want them to learn as they cannot simply rely on one or two group members to get the job done on their own.

Teaching students how to collaborate is not easy, but collaboration is an essential skill that will benefit your students in the long run. Not only will they be able to be successful in the workplace, but they also will be well served by collaboration skills in other vocations as well as being a spouse, parent or neighbor.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Computer File VOL. 18, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2018

Writer: Jonathan Orr Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

FOCUS: Jesus Is Real. Jesus Is Present. Jesus is God.

Jesus Provides for Our Needs

HEALING A BLIND BEGGAR (Mark 10:46–52)

Before You Teach

The blind beggar had nothing and no one to recommend him to Jesus. All he had was a deep need and nowhere to turn — except to Jesus — for that need to be met. The Church has seized upon the blind man's words, shaping our historic prayers around the cry, "Jesus, have mercy on me!" Those words are both a recognition of our need and a claim on God's generous love. Martin Luther said, "We are all beggars before God." Teaching our children of their great spiritual need is important if they are to appreciate and hunger for the Good News of Jesus.

Greeting

Greet each child upon entry. *"Good morning (afternoon), child of God. I am thankful you are here today, to help us in our work and play."*

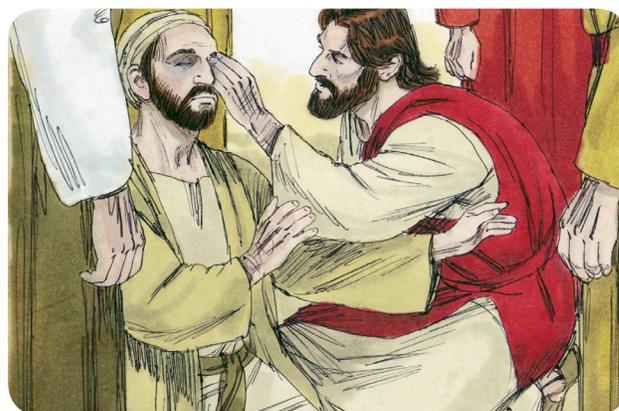
Gathering

Signal children to gather together in your worship area. Teach and sing "I Have a Hello in My Heart" (LOSP, P. 10).

Tell the Story

Guide children to repeat underlined statements after the leader and follow the leader's actions as indicated

One day Jesus was on His way to the city of Jericho. As He came near, there was a man who could not see. His name



was Bartimaeus and he was blind (*hands over eyes*) Bartimaeus was sitting by the side of the road begging. When he heard the crowd going by, blind Bartimaeus (*hands over eyes*) asked what was happening. The people told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is coming by." Hearing this, Bartimaeus (*hands over eyes*) called out, "Jesus, have mercy on me!" (*Lower hands.*) Those who led the way scolded him, telling him to be quiet. But Bartimaeus (*hands over eyes*) shouted louder, "Jesus, have mercy on me!" (*Lower hands.*) Hearing him, Jesus stopped and ordered the people to bring blind Bartimaeus (*hands over eyes*) to Him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Bartimaeus (*hands over eyes*) told Jesus, "Lord, I want to see." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Suddenly, Bartimaeus could see! Hurray! (*Raise hands in the air.*) Immediately he stood up and followed Jesus, thanking and praising God! Hurray! (*Raise hands over head.*) When the other people saw this, they also praised God! Hurray! (*Raise hands.*) Jesus cared for Bartimaeus. Jesus cares for us. Hurray! (*Raise hands.*) Jesus is God. We praise and thank Jesus for healing us from our sins. Hurray! (*Raise hands.*)

PRAY TOGETHER

Children repeat each phrase first spoken by the leader.

Jesus, we thank and praise You for Your care.
Help us Your love to always share. Amen.

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

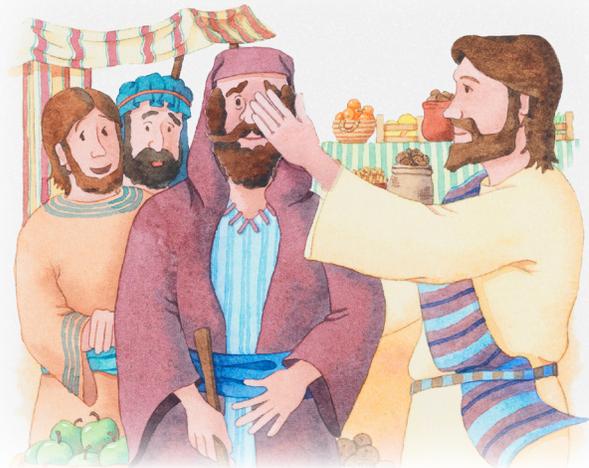
Pre-K & K: “Oh give thanks to the LORD for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever” (PS. 107:1).

Gr. 1 & 2: “Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples” (PS. 105:1).

ACTIVITIES

Create: A class chant of thanks. Bartimaeus praised and thanked Jesus for healing his eyes. We praise and thank Jesus for all He provides. Together chant the following, clapping and stamping as indicated. Children verbally fill in the blanks where indicated. **Clap, clap, stamp (repeat).** “Thank You, Jesus, for Your care; You are with us everywhere. When we (children fill in the blank), and when we (children fill in the blank).” **Clap, clap, stamp (repeat).** “Thank You, Jesus, for Your care; You are with us everywhere. When we _____, and when we _____.” **Clap, clap, stamp (repeat).** “Thank You, Jesus ...” Continue, following the pattern. Conclude with **Clap, clap, stamp.**

Sing: “Making Melody in My Heart” (LOSP, P. 63);
“I Have the Joy!” (LOSP, P. 62).



Do: Bartimaeus called to Jesus for mercy. When we pray, “Lord, have mercy,” we are asking Jesus for kindness, understanding and forgiveness. With older children, develop a list of words and/or actions that are kind and/or express forgiveness. For younger children, teach words that reflect kindness and forgiveness: “I forgive you because Jesus forgives me.” “I love (care for) you because Jesus loves (cares for) me.” *Practice:* Provide likely classroom scenarios to which children can appropriately respond, e.g., someone pushes in line; someone falls down and is hurt; someone needs help with cleanup.



Live the Story

Set aside time this month to send a personal note to each family. Express thanks for entrusting the care and education of their child to you. Cite ways the child has positively impacted you personally and/or demonstrated care for the welfare of other children.

Sending

Gather children in a “Sending Circle.” Review the “Bible Words to Remember.” Pass a beanbag, guiding children to in turn offer a brief prayer of thanks as it is received or to silently pass it along. As children depart say to each, “Remember, Jesus loves and cares for you all the time!”



Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

Really Thankful



The family Thanksgiving dinner table is a special place!

This unique American holiday is centered around the gathering of family, friends and food — usually, a whole lot of food! We often use the term “feast” to describe the focal meal of the day — although parades and football grab our attention as well.

It is a great tradition to gather with loved ones to celebrate all the gifts that we have been given by our generous God. The tried and true question asked of people around the table, “What are you thankful for?” never grows old. It is a question that is as new as the dawn of another day, a question that gives evidence of a loving and giving God. Sure, it may seem bothersome to the tween who doesn’t want to talk and would rather get on with the eating. Other family members, however, especially those who are of a “mature” age, seem to enjoy the recollection challenge — so many blessings, over so many years, sometimes too many to name. The question provokes thoughts aplenty, as one thinks about the many blessings.

In our modern twenty-first-century life, we are blessed with creature comforts large and small. We have devices that make life easy and convenient. It is interesting to consider how upset we can become when a switch doesn’t work, there is a loss of power or suddenly things go blank. How easily such first-world problems can really frustrate us!

As parents we want to instill in our children a sense of thankfulness. We teach them to say “thank you” when they receive a gift or experience a kind gesture. We want to raise grateful children who express appreciation for goodness received in their lives. We are eager to hear their words of thankfulness on Thanksgiving!

As we celebrate another Thanksgiving, let’s be attentive to the various ways that children will express their thankfulness in words, song and deeds. As repetitive and perhaps even outdated the, “What are you thankful for?” question may seem, it is appropriate for our conversations this Thanksgiving — as well as every day, as God’s gifts are ever present and His mercies are new every morning.

As the people of God, blessed beyond what we deserve, loved beyond measure, we turn our thankful hearts to the Father who is the giver of all good gifts — first and foremost, His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. This gift of the Savior gives purpose and meaning to all other gifts that we recognize and celebrate around the Thanksgiving dinner table.

Thank You

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.

OPENING PRAYER

Given by the person whose birthday is closest to Thanksgiving.

FAMILY DISCUSSION TIME

In order to help family members “think thankfully” over the past year or so, and ask them to give a response to any of the following categories where they find themselves thankful for a:

PERSON (someone who is special to them or has done something nice or helpful)

PLACE (a location that has special meaning, provided an experience or holds good memories)

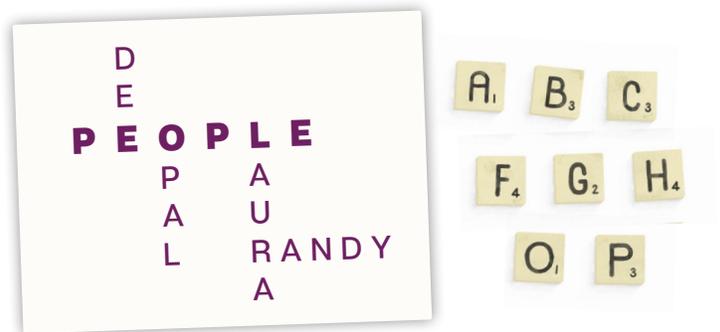
POSSESSION (an item in their life that makes life better or more enjoyable)



FAMILY ACTIVITY

Locate three large pieces of paper or poster board (11-by-17 would be good) and write the words “People,” “Places” or “Possessions” in the center of each. Think about people who you are thankful for and write their names in “scrabble/crossword style,” interconnecting the letters. List as many friends and family members as you can on the “People” sheet. Then repeat the activity for the “Places” and “Possessions” that your family is thankful for as well. Use these posters as decorations for your family Thanksgiving celebration.

Example:



FAMILY STUDY TIME

Ps. 100 is a psalm for giving thanks! Have someone in the family read the psalm, phrase by phrase, as it is printed below, and have the rest of the family members repeat each phrase enthusiastically!

“Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!
Serve the LORD with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!
“Know that the LORD, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
“Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!
“For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.”

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER

Have an older person read the prayer below, with the rest of the family members repeating the words, phrase by phrase.

Gracious God. Thank You for all You give us. Thank You for people in our lives. Thank You for the places we can go. Thank You for the possessions You give us. Most of all, thank You for Jesus our Savior and Lord. In His Name we pray. Amen.





Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Students on the Autism Spectrum, Part 2

Last month, the signs and strengths of students on the autism spectrum were discussed. To follow up that information, struggles and strategies for working with students with autism will be explored here.



It was previously discussed that students on the autism spectrum may do better with visual and hands-on learning. One area of difficulty for these learners tends to be large amounts of verbal information. Due to difficulties with language processing and communication, verbal instruction should be kept short and backed up with visual supports to help students retain the information. This is why visual schedules are often helpful tools, regardless of the student's age. Visual schedules also help with the student's need for routine, transition and knowing what is going to happen next. While this type of strategy may seem elementary, don't discount its effectiveness for older students as well. Visual schedules may be created to outline an entire day in pictures or using words (for older students), but they may also be used to detail a

transition or part of the day that seems to be the most difficult for the individual student. Breaking down a difficult task into a few clear steps represented visually will help the student focus on and complete one part of the task before moving on to the next. Also, incorporating some type of reinforcement at the end of the difficult task will encourage the student to complete what is being assigned. The reinforcement could be something as simple as a short break to do a desirable activity, but make sure whatever is chosen will actually be reinforcing to the student. For more specifics on using visual schedules or to download a free visual schedule toolkit, visit thelc.ms/autism-treatment-toolkit.

Students on the autism spectrum often have difficulty with transition and changes to routine. This creates a lot of anxiety, especially when, such as during transition, other students in the classroom are moving around and it is less structured. Finding ways to create some structure for the student during these times will help with that anxiety. As much as teachers might love for students to just "get used to it," that likely will not happen, and strategies are needed to help students in these areas. Students need to know about changes well in advance whenever possible. Obviously there are times when this cannot happen, but if the teacher knows the fire alarm is scheduled to go off at 10 a.m. and the noise normally creates anxiety for the student, the teacher can tell the stu-





dent in advance and provide headphones to muffle the sound, or allow the student to leave the building before the alarm goes off, if there is an adult to supervise. Also use a visual support to show the change to the routine to help alleviate some of the stress that comes with change.

Difficulty with transitions to new places and new people can be accommodated by visiting the new location in advance, meeting the new people before school starts or providing the student with actual pictures of the new people and places with labels. For example, if the student was expecting Mrs. Smith to be the fourth-grade teacher, but over the summer a new teacher comes in, present the student with a picture of the new teacher with the new teacher's name as soon as this information is known. This allows time for the student to adjust to the idea of a different teacher and to recognize the teacher and name before school starts. The same could be done for other new people in the school and new locations.

Many teachers have heard the idea of using visual timers, such as Time Timers, so the student can see how much time remains before moving to the next activity or subject. This tool can sometimes present problems, however, if the student is overly focused on the timer or if the teacher is not ready to move on when the visual timer shows it's time for the next activity. This doesn't mean you should throw in the towel with visual timers though, as the idea can be very helpful for students on the autism spectrum. An alternative is to create a visual countdown with strips of paper or cardstock, label them with numbers 1 through 5 and display them where the student can easily see them. Counting backward, you

keep mental track of about how long you want the lesson or activity to be and break that down into five increments. After the first-time increment, remove the strip labeled "5," then remove "4" after the next increment and so on. These increments do not have to be perfectly even, so if you find a lesson running longer or shorter than expected, you can remove the next strips accordingly. This has the same effect as the visual timer, and the student can see that the next activity is getting closer, but you are not tied to a specific number of minutes and can be more flexible.

While there are many other strategies for the different areas of difficulty students on the autism spectrum may experience, hopefully these ideas give you a starting point.



For **other ideas** and **strategies** for specific students, please reach out to Lutheran Special Education Ministries for help with any questions and specific situations you have in your classroom! Visit luthsped.org or contact us at lsem@luthsped.org.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

VOL. 2, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2018

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Kara Bratton Designer: Frank Kohn

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Growing in Governing

GROWTH TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS



Effective Meetings

meeting is necessary. If the answer is no, perhaps your needs could be accomplished with a conference call, texting, email or just simple dialogue among members.

Choose Type of Meeting

- › Stand-up
- › In a circle of chairs
- › At a conference table
- › At an eating establishment or away from the normal meeting room
- › Conference call
- › WhatsApp, or Texting

Meetings are a way of life.

Is having a culture of meetings proper? Should training on how to run a meeting effectively be part of board professional development? Do we sometimes have meetings that really aren't necessary? Could the culture of meetings be changed so that we have fewer of them and make them more effective? Meetings mean time. Time is precious. In being good stewards, we should make sure the meetings we hold are ones that really do make a difference. We are always teaching. Key components of effective meetings should be part of every orientation and training. Board members need to keep one another accountable.

Start on Time/Begin With the Lord

Expect that members will be there and that the chair will begin on time. This sets the stage and it means the habit of starting on time is both expected and actual. Have the focal point be God's Word and the common purpose of your network of believers be Christ in all things.

Don't Hold Unnecessary Meetings

Before you go to the calendar to schedule that meeting, pause for a moment and ask yourself if the

Have an agenda

The most important reasons to have an agenda are: 1) to organize and add structure to the meeting, 2) to allow participants to prepare, 3) to ensure proper flow, 4) to create a reasonable time frame and 5) to make items actionable. Some committees/boards need to place time restrictions right on the agenda.

Follow a Process

The procedure of Robert's Rules of Order is still used quite often. Other models are acceptable but should follow the organization's protocol. If guests are present, make sure to include introductions.

Teach the "How of Great Meetings"

This topic is an in-service all by itself. It is worth the time to be taught and to learn. 90% of people who attend meetings have never been trained. There is great resource material available, or facilitators are available. Learning this skill is a game changer.

Leader/Chair/Person in Charge Moves the Meeting Along

Train the Chair! This person is the key to your meetings. He directs, stops conversations that don't need to

be part of the meeting, re-directs where needed and counsels about meeting etiquette — on the spot.

Include Fun But Meaningful Parts

- ▶ Have a pre-determined signal to allow anyone at the gathering to make known that it is time to move on, according to the agenda.
- ▶ Stand up — If the meeting time together reaches 90 minutes, it is time to wrap things up. Be the first to just stand up, as another way to say, “This meeting has been long enough.”
- ▶ Have food — This part just adds joy to meeting time, especially if it is appetizer or dessert.
- ▶ Provide In-Service — Principal can lead, bring in a guest or do a professional book read.
- ▶ Take a stretch break — The chair directs everyone to stand up mid-meeting for 90 seconds of stretching, deep breathing or just walking around the room.

Come Prepared

The agenda should always come to participants before the meeting, allowing the participants to come properly prepared and to be fully engaged.

Report Efficiently

If reports are part of the agenda, those who submitted them should give a simple summary only. This summary is rarely more than five minutes, including a time for Q&A. Reports that are written in a meaningful way help prevent a multitude of questions.

Encourage Vigorous Debate

Debate is not bad. If it turns negative, that is not true. Respectful dialogue can be healthy in many ways. It often allows the entire group to hear various perspectives and thus to make more informed decisions.

Maintain Confidentiality

The chair will often remind the group about the critical importance of this topic. Repeated reminders are necessary given that importance.

Leave the Meeting Being of One Heart and Mind

Even when there are disagreements or if the vote does not go one’s way, leave the room with a common purpose. Especially in a church setting, we need to have unity within the spirit of our respective mission. Our conversations outside the meeting room door

should be void of gossip and instead be God-honoring in every respect.

Have a Note-Taker

This person’s job is simply to capture a summary of the meeting and to include action items and a timeline in which to complete them. Typically, the notes/minutes will go out to the organization’s public and will become official record.

Go Over Any Action Items at the End of the Meeting

One of the final items in review is for the chair to direct action items. This paves the way for good work to be done, and it initiates preparations for the next meeting time together.

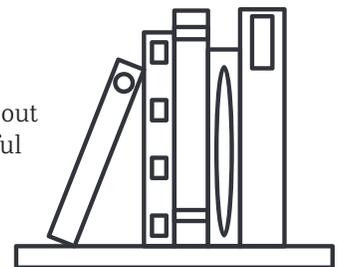
End with a Blessing of Peace to All

A most beautiful and scriptural blessing is “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 COR. 13:14). Others include singing the Doxology or sharing the Lord’s Prayer together.

Meetings should be beneficial. They are certainly a part of life that will not go away, so why not make them effective and most meaningful? When training takes place, and everyone is on the same page, this organization and structure can bear much fruit. Important habits can be formed that will continually bless our churches, schools and ministries.

Resources

- ▶ “Death by Meeting: A Leadership Fable ... About Solving the Most Painful Problem in Business,” by Patrick Lencioni (2004).



- ▶ “No Fail Meetings: 5 Steps to Orchestrate Productive Meetings (and Avoid all the Rest),” by Michael Hyatt (2018).

Resources or continued conversations are available by contacting the author at thomas.wrege@zionwalburg.org.

Growing in Governing

VOL. 31, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2018

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Thomas Wrege Designer: Frank Kohn

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PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



Insights & Ideas

FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



Happy Anniversary *Insights & Ideas!*

Here's a little bit of history! In 1945, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) recorded 127 kindergartens and one nursery school in operation. Twenty-six years later, 52 nursery school programs were listed in the *Lutheran Annual*. In 1973 at the LCMS Synod Convention, the Board for Parish Services presented Resolution 7-03 titled “To Encourage Development of Early Childhood Education Programs.” The result was the vision of Melvin Kieschnick (LCMS Board of Parish Education) with *Project Young Child*. Joanne Eisenberg was its first director. One of her initiatives for equipping teachers was the creation of the *Insights & Ideas* newsletter, designed for educators working in the field of early childhood education in Lutheran schools.¹

This school year we are sharing nine issues of *Insights & Ideas* from the 1978–79 school year to celebrate Joanne Eisenberg's inspiration and 40 years of talented writers and their remarkable resources for the Lutheran early childhood classroom.

¹ Judith Christian, “Early Childhood Education in the LCMS,” *Issues in Christian Education – A Publication of Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska*, Vol. 47, no. 2 (2014): 7–9.

1978 November

This November *Insights & Ideas* was originally published 40 years ago. It is rich with activities designed to embrace and give thanks for God's creation by helping children to explore its beauty and majesty using their five senses. Joanne Eisenberg champions math and science activities in the early childhood classroom with her suggestions that certainly advocate for the STEAM classroom. Inspiring children to create a turkey out of an apple, marshmallows, cereal loops and toothpicks is just one of the activities designed to encourage children to explore and experiment with materials. What child could resist making rain in the classroom, observing live earthworms and predicting and testing which objects float? Counting activities, literature selections, songs and fingerplays round out an education of the whole child in the early childhood classroom. Joanne recognizes that God richly blesses all with His creation and that sharing that creation with children is a joy!

God, the Young Child: Math & Science

"Math and Science, Yuck!"

These were the exact words of a 6 year old I met my first year of teaching. It didn't help much that these were my sentiments also.

"Math and Science, Yuck!"

Many years and many miles later, I now find it hard to believe that I would describe anything so closely related to God's creation as "yuck." After vacationing in the South this summer, the words of Psalms 19:1 often resound in my ears:

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

Young children learn through their senses--seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, smelling. . . . Their questions are endless: "How does the firefly light up?" "What makes it rain?" "Why does the sun disappear at night?" "Where do baby turtles come from?" The curiosity of young children naturally lends itself to the wonders of God's world.

Christian teachers have the power to make God's world come alive -- to point out His orderliness, His artistic flare, His protection and plan for continuation, His love!

Math concepts can be taught to young children as easily as "ring-a-round-a-rosie." Measuring flour and sugar to bake bread seems like fun but is important for later life. And playing store with toy money may be a first step toward an economically sound society.

As Thanksgiving approaches, encourage the children to draw up a list of the many blessings God has given to us in the areas of Math and Science. And then let's also join in the final refrain of the enclosed Preschool Devotion:



TURKEYS, TURKEYS, TURKEYS

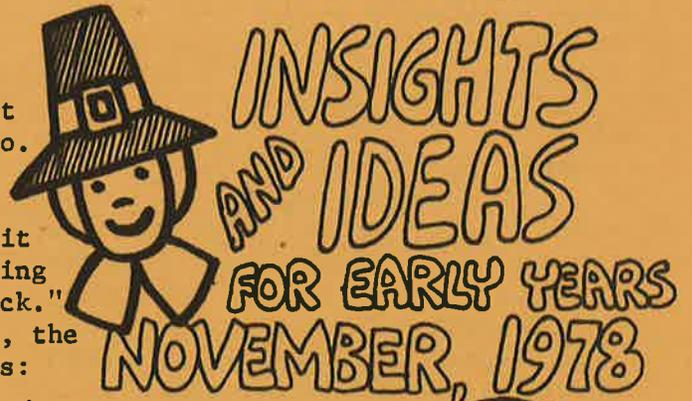
Draw a large turkey outline on the bulletin board. Children collect, press and tape leaves to the inside of the turkey outline for feathers. Smaller leaves can be used for the head and neck, larger ones for the body. Pointed oak leaves are perfect for the feet.

--Marilyn Reck, Jackson, TN



Make turkeys out of apples and toothpicks. Use 5 toothpicks for the tail and one for the neck. Break toothpicks in half for the legs. Use Fruit Loops for the tail with a small marshmallow at the end of each pick to hold the Fruit Loops on. Use raisins for the neck with another marshmallow for the head.

Draw a turkey outline (minus tail) on the bulletin board. Have each child make a paper feather and draw something on the feather that he or she is thankful for. Then play the traditional "pin the tail" game.



Joanne Eisenberg
Board of Parish Education
Lutheran Church - Mo. Synod
3558 S. Jefferson
St. Louis, Missouri 63118



TEACHERS' CORNER

November is traditionally a time to teach about Indians. Before doing so, read the following suggestions which were presented at a NAEYC Conference in Chicago last fall:

DON'TS:

- begin your study of Indians with the Thanksgiving story.
- study, sing songs, or use finger-plays, etc. which lump all Native Americans together and call them "Indians."
- use expressions such as "sit like an Indian." (Actually this is a tailor's position.)
- treat Indians as if they no longer exist.
- make teepees, paper bag vests, and macaroni jewelry unless children understand that these are "just for fun" and representative.
- consider yourself an "Indian Expert" because you've read a few books.

DO'S:

- increase your own background on Native American people.
- find out what resources exist in your area.
- involve children in many different kinds of activities making sure each is appropriate and accurate in portraying Native Americans in the time period being studied
- study "core values" which Native Americans share and which are a legacy of their past.
- begin your study of "Indians" in the present with Native Americans as they now live. (Fun question: "Do you think Indians can be cowboys?")
- provide opportunities for students to interact with Native Americans (first hand, letters, tapes, pictures, etc.)

The following may be ordered from: Akwesasne Notes, Mohawk Nation, Rooseveltown, NY 13683. Records are \$6.50 each.

Indian House Records:

Pueblo Songs of the Southwest
War Dance Songs of the Ponco
Sounds of Indian America -- Plains and Southwest

Navajo Sway Songs
Comanche Peyote Songs

Shemay, The Bird in the Sugarbush by David Martinson, \$1.25: "Liza is a Chippewa girl. She helps make maple sugar. Her grandmother teaches her about the saddest bird."

A Coloring Book of American Indians by Catlin, Bodmer, etc., \$2.00.



SCIENCE FUN



Salt and Pepper: Sprinkle salt and pepper in an empty cup. Shake them together. Pour some water in the cup. The pepper will float to the top. The salt stays on the bottom. Test other objects in the water table to see which will float or sink. Make a plastic egg carton barge and see how many objects can be loaded in the barge without sinking it.

Earthworm Experiment: Place tall tin can, closed end up, into a widemouthed jar. Force damp soil in space between can and jar to level of top of can. Cover with thin layer of sand. Add earthworms. Cover jar with cylinder of black paper. Set aside for several hours. Later, remove cylinder and observe. Worms will find their way to earth section leaving castings behind on sand. Tunnels can be seen through glass.

Celery Experiment: Split a 6-8 inch stalk of celery about halfway from the bottom up. Place bottom of one half in glass of red colored water, other in glass of blue colored water. In a few hours tubes and leaf veins will take on different colors.

Upside Down: Children use spoon as mirror. On one side of the spoon the child will appear right side up. On the other, upside down.

Hanging Carrot Basket: Cut off end of a carrot. Hollow out remaining end. Make into a hanging basket by putting two toothpicks through the carrot and attaching yarn or string. Water it, watch the bottom grow, and use the basket as a rooster.

Making Rain: Heat water in teakettle. Hold glass jar over spout of kettle to collect steam. Steam may be compared to fog or rain clouds. Air outside jar is colder, so droplets will form inside jar and fall down like real raindrops.

Black Magic: Have children draw pictures on sheets of stiff paper with cotton swabs dipped in milk. Let dry. Place on cookie sheet on top of stove over low burner. Let everyone watch as the invisible pictures are revealed. (Caution: do not leave on burner too long.)

Can Race: Roll two soap cans (one empty, one full) down an incline. Which will win?

Neat Knot: Child crosses arms, one hand under armpit, the other on shoulder. Teacher places ends of three foot rope in child's hands. A knot forms in the rope when child uncrosses arms.

Submarine: Fill a soda bottle to the brim with water. Fill a small glass medicine dropper with enough water so it will barely float. Put the dropper in the bottle. Put the palm of your hand tightly over the mouth of the bottle and press down. Try to make the dropper stay in the middle of the bottle.

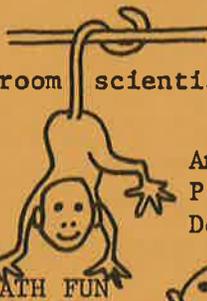
Rock Making: Mix a half cup of dry plaster of paris with a cup of sand. Add about a half cup of water until a "doughy" consistency is formed. Give each child a hunk to form into a rock. Put in sunlight to harden. Compare with real rocks.

What do you hear? Have children scratch a pencil with their fingernail. Can they hear the scratching? Now hold pencil between teeth and scratch. The scratching noise will be louder. The noise goes through the teeth, through the skull, and right to the ears.

The following are friends of the classroom scientist. Contact them for animal pictures and other information.



National Wildlife Federation
1412 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036



American Humane Association
P. O. Box 1266
Denver, CO 80201



Magnetic Fish: Make fish out of construction paper. Put corresponding numerals and pictures on the fish cards. Also attach a paper clip on the nose of each fish. Use a child size fishing pole with a magnet. One child catches a fish and picks a friend to catch the matching card (ie: fish card with numeral five and fish card with five ice cream cones).

2 Dice Roll: Make large dice from foam rubber. Cover with felt. On each side, draw or sew shapes or numerals. Teacher rolls a die to a child. As the child catches it, he/she is to tell "how many" is up.

3 Feather Count: Make turkeys out of cardboard with a felt tail. Write numerals on each turkey's body. Children place felt feathers on the tail to correspond with the numeral.

4 One to Ten: Section a long piece of cardboard in ten parts. Paste one to ten circles in each section. Number clip-clothespins from one to ten. Children clip the number five clothespin to the section with five circles, etc.

5

6

7

8

9

10

Styrofoam counters: Make math counters out of an 5 x 8" styrofoam slab. Insert 10 thin shishkabob sticks into slab, point up. Children use round styrofoam packing material as counters. Sticks can be numbered so children know how many counters to put on each.

Matching: Clip cards with numerals or circles to clip-clothespins. Children match blocks, buttons, whatever, with each card.

Again, 1-10! Fill 10 styrofoam cups with soil. Label them 1-10. Plant one seed in #1 cup, 2 in #2 cup, etc. Keep your fingers crossed that the right number of plants will grow in each cup.



Body Parts: Give each child 2 pieces of cardboard with the numeral one and two on them. Ask the child questions about their body that can be answered by holding up either card. Example: "How many eyes, noses, mouths, arms, etc. do you have?"

Ordering: Check with a paint store for paint sample cards. Cut the color chips apart and mount on cardboard if desired. Children order from light to dark or vice versa within each color family.



Patterns: Use a file folder for a pattern board. Cut off half of the front flap horizontally. Teacher makes a pattern with geometric figures under the flap. The child closes the flap and tries to duplicate the pattern from memory. The child then lifts up the flap to check if the two are the same.

Calendar Chain: Each child makes a calendar counting chain using small strips of paper. Weekdays can be orange, weekends brown, special days such as Thanksgiving gold or silver. The calendar chain can be used for counting how many days are left in the month, how many days until Jessica's birthday, how many weeks in November, etc. Calendar chains may be kept in cigar boxes.

KORNER

IRS

Seven Little Rabbits by John Becker. Walker and Company, 1973.

Seven little rabbits go for a walk; each one, in turn, finds something to do until there is only one little rabbit left.

Moja Means One: The Swahili Counting Book by Muriel Feelings. Illustrated by Tom Feelings. Dial Press, 1971.

Soft brown colors illustrate many aspects of East African life.

Teddy Bears 1 to 10 by Susanna Gretz. Follett, 1968.

As the dirty old teddy bears get washed and redyed, a new one is added each step of the way.

Count and See by Tana Hoban. Macmillan, 1972.

Beautifully clear black and white photographs show familiar objects which are fun to count.

Circus Numbers by Rodrey Peppe. Dial Delacorte, 1969.

The excitement of the circus comes across in poster-like illustrations of circus people and their wild animals.

Number 10 Duckling by Betty Rosendall. Illustrated by Tom Dunnington. Children's Press, 1972.

Mother Duck has trouble getting the number 10 duckling in and out of the swimming pool.

1 Is No Fun, But 20 Is Plenty by Ilse-Margret Vogel. Atheneum, 1965.

The nonsensical conversation of a hippopotamus and a lion make this a fun counting book.



NLSA Powerful Practices



St. Lorenz Lutheran Church and School, Frankenmuth, Mich.

Foundations

Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Lutheran schools are designed to instill fundamental foundational cornerstones necessary for a life built and predicated on Jesus Christ. Understanding the importance and significance of these building blocks, we at St. Lorenz worked to build our school around them. Our fundamental question can be summed up as this: What is our legacy? The answer led to a foundation built on Faith Development, Academic Excellence and Family (positive climate). This meant really looking at what we do and consequently restructuring how we educate, how we handle professional development and how we look at integrating technology into our school. God says train a child and when they are older they will not depart. This means building a legacy to be passed down from one generation to the next so that when the students are grown they in turn pass along the foundational knowledge they learned as children to their children and so on. This is a legacy built on Christ as the true cornerstone.

LEGACY VERSES

The idea was to develop a set of core Legacy Verses that we believed were so invaluable and fundamentally relevant to the growth of a child’s faith that these will be the cornerstone verses we will build upon. 40 verses were identified, and it is through these Legacy Verses that we hope growth in the understanding of the Word takes place. This growth is not by ourselves, but by the grace of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith. As the Apostle John quoted Jesus, “The



Finalists from the St. Lorenz Legacy Challenge are excited to demonstrate competency in having God’s Word hidden in their hearts.



Students recite Bible verses and share applications during a worship service.

words I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (JOHN 6:63). Each year these verses are reviewed and five new Legacy Verses are included in a student’s learning. By the end of 8th grade, the students have compiled a ring full of these Legacy Verses. We add an additional fun element to the mix each year by having a Legacy Verse Challenge Day to get the children excited as well as to find a way to reinforce these foundational words of life. Our prayer and desire is that when students graduate 8th grade from St. Lorenz they will have committed these verses to memory and demonstrated knowledge of their content, so that they can use them as a comfort and guide in future years.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

The industrial age has nothing on the digital age. Every time you turn around, new technology is hitting the market. Something better, different and more powerful. The question becomes not of getting the next best thing, but of how you see technology being used at school. In other words, what’s its purpose? For St. Lorenz our purpose is to empower our students to use technology to enhance and enrich their learning and understanding. Our technology integration goes back to one of our foundations: Academic Excellence. The process took many years as teachers and administrators learned the importance of teaching the digital learner. The most powerful implementation that we do is to provide a one-to-one learning environment that involves one student, one computer and anytime access for the students in grades 3–8. With an

emphasis on providing a personal learning experience, students are equipped with a laptop that empowers them with an anytime-and-anywhere learning opportunity. By utilizing this digital platform, we are able to better differentiate instruction for the students and thereby reach a wider range of students through the intentional use of digital technology. The process of learning becomes more in depth, involving the creation of products which use the knowledge of the content being taught. This also encourages a more well-rounded approach using visual, auditory, verbal and even kinesthetic learning styles. Being able, for example, to bring a speaker from around the world to interact with the students helps bring learning to life. Providing a platform where students can share ideas, present to their classmates with what they have learned as well as be instructed on digital citizenship builds a foundational love for learning and a legacy that will be passed down from one generation to the next. A school does not need to have the best product, but a foundational plan to educate digital learners on how best to utilize the powerful digital tools at their disposal is necessary.

FOUNDATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to build continuity and intentionality among our faculty family, we purposely designed our professional development opportunities to focus on the mission of the school — namely, each of the foundations of our school’s vision statement: Faith Development, Academic Excellence and Family (positive climate).



Left: Teams of students work together and use their technical knowledge to digitize, broadcast and provide lighting for chapel and other school events.



Right: Students are equipped with a laptop that prepares them for future success in a digital world and empowers them with an anytime-and-anywhere learning opportunity.

This responsibility is not just the administration's, but also the responsibility of the curriculum committees and the individual members of the faculty. Faculty are responsible for developing school-wide and individual plans that best meet the needs of the students at St. Lorenz and the teachers that instruct them. In return, the faculty has developed a culture of thinking of how to best accomplish ministry incorporating the foundational core values that are inherent in our vision and mission. One such notable method of professional development is the Fechter Fund through our St. Lorenz Foundation. This grant allows Church workers and spouses to gain educational and real-world experiences from travel to take back to the students in a variety of teachable moments. Staff members have traveled to have various places, including visits to Germany to trace the steps of Martin Luther and to the Holy Land. Teachers also make use of the Fechter Fund to plan professional growth by attending conferences throughout the region or country that speak to a specific area of growth for an individual or group of teachers. This intentional approach creates a positive culture that permeates the vision of our school and has led to a more positive professional culture.

By intentionally focusing on our foundations, St. Lorenz has been able to build a foundation for a brighter future for the students and families whom we serve.



Through the generosity of Tom and Marie Fechter, the Fechter Fund was established for faculty members of St. Lorenz to gain real-world knowledge through travel. The group pictured includes four of our faculty members on a trip to the Holy Land.



Faculty members traveled to visit sites where Martin Luther walked and gained experiential knowledge to share with their students.



Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



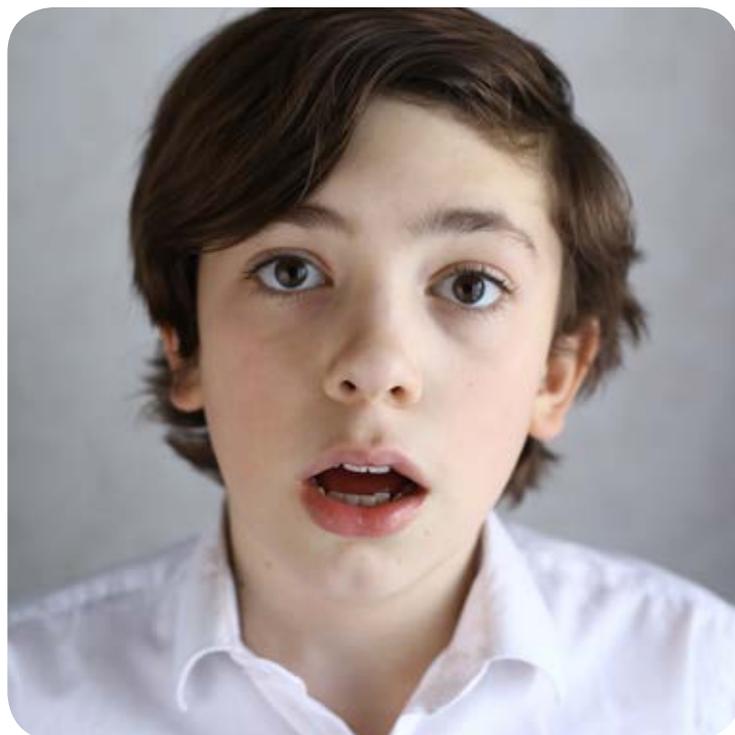
Finding Sense in a Middle Schooler's Brain

When Jesse was in elementary school he loved math, but now in middle school he is failing this subject. His teacher reports that his poor grade comes from not handing in his work. Concerned, his father tries to talk with him, but Jesse gets mad and storms out of the room. Later, when Jesse is doing his homework, his mother gently reminds him to put it in his school bag before he heads out to meet friends. He forgets and ends up with another low grade because of missed work. Jesse's parents take away his phone until his grades come up, but this does not seem to work. Jesse insists he doesn't care.

Does anything about this scenario sound familiar? A loss of organization skills? A sensitivity to correction? Consequences that don't work? Apathy? If so, then rest assured that your middle school child is not the only one!

Ages 11–14 can be a confusing time for children and their parents. Children, who just a year earlier had good sense, now seem to have misplaced their brains. During this time of my life I remember my father saying, “Girl, you’d lose your head if it weren’t screwed on tight!” Trust me that he wasn’t being mean — just accurate. There are major brain changes happening that can give us a clue to the unique, and hopefully temporary, patterns of middle school behavior.

Right before this age a child's brain undergoes a major event known as pruning: a process in which the brain destroys some of its unused connections in order to



strengthen more important neural pathways. Similar to a remodeling project in a home, this brain remodel can impact the thinking and planning process. During this time your child may have a shorter attention span and may struggle handling more than a few pieces of information at a time. This means that while your child is focusing, he might be able to complete a project that amazes you, but if the focus is not in place, the same child could be confused by directions as simple as fold-

ing clothes or mowing the lawn. This might explain why Jesse is having difficulty. He is still good at math, but organizing his behavior is a new challenge.

Another curious aspect of adolescent brains is a temporary reduction in the ability to accurately identify the emotions of others. Studies show that children this age may be wrong up to 40% of the time, even if they were good at reading facial expressions when they were younger. It is interesting to note that if they misidentify a facial expression, they are more likely to think the expression shows anger. This could explain Jesse's reaction to his parents' gentle interventions. He may be assuming they are angry, and if he thinks he can't improve things, he may simply stop caring.

When children are young parents get used to applying a consequence and typically seeing it be effective. If you are using a punishment and it is not working, don't increase the punishment. Instead, try a different tactic. Patience and humor become two important tools for managing early adolescence. Jesse's parents will want to patiently repeat their expectations. Instead of reacting in anger or concern, his parents can use humor to point out the wrong while emphasizing the patience side of discipline. It does little good to warn about the long-term consequences, so just focus on the here and now.

This is not the time to lower your expectations. When middle-school-brain behavior leads to a safe natural consequence, it is good to step back and let it take its course. Involve your child in the discipline procedure and look for a consequence that involves atoning action on the part of the child. For instance, Jesse's parents should not try to bargain with the teacher for a second



chance to hand in work. Instead, Jesse should be expected to apologize and work with the teacher to come up with a solution.

While these brain changes happen to all children, it is important to note that a child who has experienced a trauma such as the death of a loved one or divorce may need some professional help to navigate feelings. Do not hesitate to seek such help for your children; this is a tool God gives us to help us raise healthy individuals.

Parents of middle-school-age children need to be assured that the brain upheaval that is happening will sort itself out. Some of your child's symptoms will continue no matter what you do, but your patient reminders and consequences will eventually make a difference. It is a time of training — not a time of performance. This is a good time to help your child to learn life lessons such as the value of putting in effort, the blessings of healthy eating and sleeping habits and the discernment to make good decisions about friends and time spent on screens. For parents, it is a time of patient work and waiting. Through the grace of God you will see your children bloom.



Professionally Speaking



Lutheran Curriculum in the Light of Christ and Psalm 8

Learning to read is important and necessary for functioning in this world. Math helps us budget, plan and work. Science helps farmers do their work and health professionals care and bring healing. Music and art are useful for expression and comfort.

However, none of the disciplines and subjects are an end to itself. Science needs math. Music needs science. Reading supports all subjects.

Lutheran schools have long been confined and even sabotaged by textbooks. From evolutionary thought to biases that lead to strongly humanistic morals, Lutheran schools have struggled to have strong resources to support the unique educational ministry that is desired. Thirty years ago, publisher Silver Burdett & Ginn edited their elementary science curriculum to provide a Christian tone, but the attempt seemed awkward to many.

As curriculum mapping is used to demonstrate subject matter in our schools, the awareness of standards is becoming more pronounced. As the next steps of the process of mapping include hearty discussion on the need for our curriculum to be uniquely Lutheran, it would be wise to consider the wisdom of God's Word and how it relates to the work of educating students in our schools.

Psalm 8 could serve as inspiration for a discussion on curriculum. Consider these subjects and their incorporation into Lutheran teaching of various subjects:

➤ **BIOLOGY (PS. 8:2):** Out of all the ways God could have come and redeemed the world, He chose to

PSALM 8

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

enter through the miracle of birth. How does this choice by God impact our dealing with life issues and with care for children of all ages? How does this fact impact our direction and content for biology lessons in science class? It's important to share the intricacies of the human anatomy and not avoid it. It's important for students to see for themselves the cellular development of a baby in the womb — from conception to birth. It's important to share the unique ways God provides for babies through a mother and father.



► **ASTRONOMY (PS. 8:3):** It's fun to make shoe box displays of the constellations. It's a challenge to make a (somewhat) scaled model of our solar system. But digging in deeper, consider the precision of the related orbits (lunar and planetary) within the Milky Way. While we love to dip our toes in the oceans, isn't it marvelous also to consider the rhythms of tides? And what about the consistent rhythm of seasons and how changes can be expected? Teaching these in the context of an omnipotent Creator is greatly emphasized when we consider how unimaginably large our universe is; we even use an incomprehensible unit of measurement to describe distance (light year). Just as God uses His terrestrial creation to bring us to awe and hope, so too we are reminded of how He also used stars to demonstrate His fulfilled promise to Abram and to lead a crew of Gentile Magi to Christ.

► **ROLE OF MAN IN NATURE/ECOLOGY (PS. 8:5):** Weather is fascinating. As we consider wind patterns, the influence of elevations on vegetation, the ebb and flow of weather patterns and the impact of extreme environmental events, we can be awestruck. We can also be misdirected by the interpretation of these things and be led to guilt and misguided passions. It's important that as we teach ecology and care of the earth that we remember that humans were created by a loving God and given the

responsibility to rule over, subdue and care for the creation. Man is not capable of controlling the earth. Control belongs to the Creator Himself (PS. 24:1), who has made us His earthly stewards. As one considers the minute position of earth in comparison to all the terrestrial bodies, it is wise to see the omnipotence of our God.

Finally, while Ps. 8 directs our discussion of science and other subjects, Ps. 106 serves as a fitting way to express the depth of learning possible in science and other subjects. "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" (PS. 106:1). Knowing and *appreciating* the depth of the Creator's creation, we will share the abundance of His love. As students (and teachers!) learn of creation and all that is Christ's, they will no doubt grow in their relationship in Christ. The results will be found in faithful work and faithful relationships.

Oh give thanks to the Lord for He IS good ... very good!

Professionally Speaking // NOVEMBER 2018

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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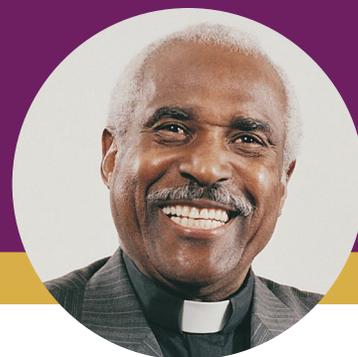
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PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD. The School Shepherd: Real and Present in Crises

“Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).



Teacher Brent is en route to another day of teaching at Trinity Lutheran School when another car disregards the stop sign at the intersection. Teacher Brent is killed in the accident. The school office is immediately notified. The school principal calls to inform the pastor and requests his immediate presence at the school.

The parents of second-grader Sally have been involved in a custody battle for months. Due to abuse allegations, Sally’s father has been served a “no contact” order. Sally’s mother calls the school office to inform the principal that she has received word that the father is on his way to school to request permission to take Sally to his home. The pastor is informed of the anticipated encounter.

A tornado touched down several miles from Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School. Fortunately, there was no damage to the school and church property. However, there were numerous homes damaged nearby. Several school families received damage to

their homes. The school staff meets to pray for the families and to develop a caring response.

Our Roles

Lutheran school ministry takes place in a fallen world which includes untimely deaths, broken relationships and natural disasters. Lutheran schools are affected by family tragedies and community crises. The school shepherd is called to shepherd the flock in times of need.

Lutheran school ministry takes place in the name of the Good Shepherd, whose assurances enable His flock to say, “I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me” (PS. 23:4). Our Shepherd was and is still always real and present. He gathered with Mary and Martha at Lazarus’s death; He accompanied the disciples in the stormy seas; He brought healing words and power to the lame and leprous. Jesus was real and present in the crisis of Good Friday as He endured the agony of the cross and entered the darkness of the grave. Jesus was real and

present on Easter Sunday as He declared His victory over death. Jesus was real and present as He ascended to the right hand of the Father to fill all things, and He is still present with us today.

As the undershepherd of Christ, the pastor brings the presence of Jesus into the context of the crises. He is typically not the school spokesman to media or public relations manager. He is not the traffic director or the site management coordinator. He is the pastor, sharing the presence of Jesus through the Word. In Jesus' name he ministers to those directly and indirectly affected by the crises.

Our Goals

By definition, a crisis is unexpected. One cannot plan for every emergency or critical situation. However, Lutheran schools are proactive in developing a crisis management plan. Fire, tornado and other drills help students and staff to respond effectively and safely. Locked doors, cameras and other procedures prevent unsafe entry. The administrative team has a plan as to who will be a school spokesperson. Handbooks describe responses to parents in emergency situations. LCMS School Ministry leaders and District staff can provide resources and direction in developing crisis plans for a variety of scenarios.

The school shepherd and school administration should also be familiar with Christian support and counseling resources. Many Districts have a Lutheran social or family ministry partner that can provide immediate and long-term assistance and support. Stephen Ministries has some excellent resources for caregiving and Christ-centered responses in crises. *Christian Caregiving: A Way of Life* by Kenneth C. Haugk (1985) and *Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart* by the same author (2004) are especially helpful.

The school shepherd is God's instrument in bringing the compassion



“Where charity and love prevail There God is ever found; Brought here together by Christ's love By love are we thus bound.

“Let us recall that in our midst Dwells Christ, His only Son; As members of His body joined We are in Him made one.”

(LSB 845, v. 1, 5)

of Jesus to a crisis situation. The school shepherd is not omnipresent, omnipotent or omniscient — only God is! The shepherd and the school staff do the best they can with the resources they have in the time of crisis. Not every action or decision will be perfect. It's great to live in God's grace. It's refreshing to trust in the Spirit's guidance. With the peace of God's presence, the shepherd can also take care of himself while he ultimately lets God be in charge.

While the Lutheran school would hope and pray to never experience a crisis, in one form or another it will happen. The situation provides an opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love and presence to the school and community. Crises open doors for ministry to individuals affected and to those who observe our responses. The school shepherd and the ministry team reflect, “How can we build on this experience?” “Who is God calling us to minister to through this situation?” “How can we glorify God together through that we have experienced?”



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



Encouraging Creativity & Learning with Loose Parts

Few if any educators would argue that creativity and imagination are not important for young children. Through experiences and interactions in which children engage, they are able to use their natural sense of curiosity to be creative and imaginative. The human brain is wired to be creative and imaginative. God’s design for people is amazing, and how He created the world is something only He could do! Even adults need to use their gifts to create something new and to imagine possibilities in their lives. Ponder for a moment when you last became entrenched in thoughtful reflection that involved creativity and imagination. Chances are you don’t need to look far back in your day.

The term “loose parts” refers to open-ended materials that can be used and manipulated in different ways. Think about your home, or your classroom, and you’ll likely find loose parts all over — paper clips, blocks, leaves, pebbles and even craft items. The availability of loose parts invites children to become immensely engaged in imaginative possibilities. As educational leaders and researchers recognize the potential of loose parts to promote children’s learning and development, many teachers are becoming more interested in having



including infants and toddlers. Children often become deeply engaged with these items as they explore with all of their senses. Toddlers use loose parts to explore their senses while older students use them to create, build and substitute. Items such as cardboard tubes, wooden spoons, shells and even paper plates can take on new meanings for those who use their imagination with them. Loose parts have unlimited play possibilities — they have multiple meanings and outcomes, and there is no one specific way to play with them. Loose parts are different than typical toys that children use today. For example, a plastic musical toy is made and used for the purpose of one thing — to make a sound when a lever or button is pushed. Creativity is not experienced at a high level with such items. Toy manufacturers make such items with the intent of selling them; they highlight that young children will enjoy their vivid colors and enjoyable sounds.



“He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer” (EX.35:35).

them throughout the learning environment and expanding on the stock that might already be available.

Items that can be considered as loose parts are captivating and open-ended; they are fascinating to young children,

Sadly, the novelty of such toys wears off quickly. Think of how often children enjoy playing with a cardboard box more than they do the item that was inside!

When you really look at the value and importance of



“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (GEN. 1:1).

loose parts, it is important to consider how they support learning and development across the domains. Through play experiences, young children strive to make sense of the world around them. Learning for young children is a dynamic system where everyday experiences provide opportunities to organize their minds. Through play and organization of the mind, children are learning executive functions skills, which are necessary for success in academic learning later in elementary school. Take a look at the following domains of learning and read how loose parts support growth and development.



relationships. Loose parts support social play for young children — the materials are engaging and promote socialization in infants and toddlers. Toddlers begin to understand what they have and do not have, and what others around them may have. If a toddler sees something he wants, he will try to obtain it. Interactions such as these provide opportunities to practice self-regulation, patience and turn-taking.

Perceptual-Motor Learning and Development

Children constantly learn from the world God created. Because many aspects of the environment are new to young children, they are naturally curious about what they encounter. Children love to touch, and that is important for their development! An example of perceptual-motor development is when a sleeping child awakens and begins to cry due to the loud sound of a toy falling to the floor. Her hearing produced a response. Sight can also produce specific responses from young children. Seeing something bright and shiny can easily tease the curiosity of a child, producing a temptation to touch, manipulate and utilize.

Regarding fine and gross motor development, loose parts are “golden treasures.” Being able to travel (crawl, walk, run, jump) to something that is of interest promotes gross motor development. Reaching for, grasping, touching, rolling, etc. are examples of how young children can best utilize loose parts in their



“And he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze” (EX. 35:31-32).

Social-Emotional Learning and Development

By manipulating loose parts and engaging in curious, imaginative play, children grow in self-knowledge of body, abilities and feelings. By touching, smelling and even placing items in their mouths, young children are able to use senses in new ways and develop an awareness of what they can do. Emotions are discovered as children squeal with delight at something that has a delightful sound or feel, while they may cry or become afraid because of something that has a strange sound or feel. Again, God has designed the human brain to be able to do many amazing things.

As children engage in meaningful interactions with adults and loose parts, they learn the importance of healthy

development of fine motor skills. Children can sit for extended periods of time sorting colored beads, stacking small blocks or gathering leaves from the ground. Each of these interactions with loose parts contributes to the overall “whole child” development.

Cognitive Learning and Development

Because loose parts are naturally interesting, they can be used to assist children in their learning and development of cognition. A collection of small paper squares can be sorted by color or shape (mathematics), items with alphabet letters written on them can be used for order or spelling (literacy) and items can be held in specific ways



“O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (PS. 104:24).

within the hand and fingers (writing). When you utilize loose parts in your classroom, consider not only the creative and imaginative uses they provide, but also the intentional learning that can result from their presence. Think of prepackaged literacy, math and science games that are readily available at your local educational-supply store; the contents of these games are simply loose parts that have been put together in such a way to allow for some aspect of cognitive learning.

Early childhood educators are great at using readily available materials, or even what some would consider to be “junk,” and finding a new purpose for them. Challenge your staff or co-workers to bring in some loose parts and repurpose them in a way that creates a new and exciting opportunity for children to learn. Consider using a portion of your regular staff meeting for each teacher to bring in something that can be made with loose parts and let the teachers’ creativity and imaginations flow!

Language and Communication Learning and Development

All young children are language learners, and the opportunity to take in and practice language and communication is essential to their growth and development. It is important to engage in conversation with children as they create with loose parts. Talk about the colors of the items they are working with; count the items they have in front of them; ask specific questions about the imaginative creation they have made. Remember to ask open-ended questions. Simple yes or no questions (closed-ended questions) do not have the same value as open-ended questions in developing language and communicative competencies.

It is also important to note the connection between language/communication and social-emotional learning. When children have the opportunity to interact with peers and adults in caring, trusting and meaningful ways, they receive the modeling and support necessary for their skill-set and the communicative strategies for future use.



Spiritual Development

As a Lutheran school educator, you know that incorporating faith-filled learning in your classroom for children is essential to your role. How can you weave faith-filled conversations and loose part items into your classroom to allow growth in yet another important domain for young children — spiritual development?

As you begin to try to answer this question, first look at the previous domains listed: social-emotional, motor, cognition and

language. Now, ponder the many ways you can weave the faith into these areas. As a Christian, it’s important to include and model for your students faith-filled interactions and conversations throughout the day. Faith-filled learning doesn’t just happen during “Jesus Time,” but rather throughout the day! As children engage in play and creativity with loose parts, talk about the shape God made the parts; talk about the color God made the parts; talk about the gifts that God has given people to be creative and imaginative.

Additionally, include faith-filled images in your discussions and interactions with young children. Use loose parts to make a cross; use items to build a replica of your church or school; encourage children to use loose parts to create an image of how they feel when they are reminded that God loves them. Above all, model for children the love you have for Christ yourself. When children see others they trust sharing their faith in various ways, it promotes spiritual development that the Holy Spirit will guide now and forevermore. As it says in Prov. 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

To learn more about loose parts, consider reading the following books:

Lisa Daly and Miriam Beloglovsky, *Loose Parts: Inspiring Play in Young Children* (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2014).

Rachelle Doorley, *Tinkerlab: A Hands-on Guide for Little Inventors* (Boulder, CO: Roost Books, 2014).

Time Out for Directors

VOL. 23, NO. 3 // NOVEMBER 2018

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod // 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295 // 314-965-9000 // lcms.org

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