

FEBRUARY 2019

SCHOOL MINISTRY

# Mailing





# Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



## I ♥ Lutheran Schools

*“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 COR. 13:4-7).*

In 1977, designer Milton Glaser developed the logo “I ♥ NY” to address the decline in tourism and reverse flight to the suburbs in New York City. This iconic logo captured the spirit of the city. Still recognizable and enduring today, the logo has been used on every continent and in major cities to express affection for things that people love, including Lutheran schools.

I ♥ Lutheran Schools brings thoughts and expressions of love because these schools touch the lives of children and families daily with the Gospel message. Each school is cherished in God’s Kingdom where children are nurtured in the Word and experience an excellent education.

Lutheran schools foster education. Schools serve children in early childhood programs through grade 12 in nearly 2,000 schools nationwide and three schools internationally. Additionally, nine colleges and universities operate to serve post-secondary and graduate students across the nation.

Lutheran schools pursue excellence. In a Christ-centered religiously integrated curriculum, Lutheran schools meet or exceed state standards for high quality schools. Through National Lutheran Schools Accreditation (NLSA), schools complete a rigorous self-study, are re-

viewed by a team of peers and implement initiatives that provide a continuing program of excellence for students.

Lutheran schools innovate. Schools continually evolve to meet the needs of students and the communities they serve. Classical schools, academies, robotics, athletics, STEM, service learning, resource programs, drama, fine arts, blended classrooms and virtual schools are the many opportunities that students can explore and experience in reaching their full potentials.

Lutheran schools show the love of Christ. Caring, Christian teachers share the Word of God daily with children and families. Strengthening a home, school and church partnership, through an education of the whole child, students are prepared and equipped for a life of Christian citizenship and discipleship.

God’s great love for us is manifested in Jesus who was sent to love, serve, die and rise so that the promise of eternal life can be for all. This love note is at the heart of Lutheran Schools.

*“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 COR. 13:13).*



Celebrating Lutheran Schools in the Michigan District, LCMS 

# February 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					Freedom Day <b>1</b>	The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord Ground Day <b>2</b>
Norman Rockwell born, 1894 <b>3</b>	Rosa Parks born, 1913 <b>4</b>	Weatherperson's Day <b>5</b>	National Girls and Women in Sports Day <b>6</b>	Laura Ingalls Wilder born, 1867 <b>7</b>	Jules Verne born, 1828 <b>8</b>	National Pizza Day <b>9</b>
First World War II Medal of Honor anniversary, 1942 <b>10</b>	Get Out Your Guitar Day <b>11</b>	Abraham Lincoln born, 1809 <b>12</b>	World Radio Day <b>13</b>	Valentines Day <b>14</b>	Great Backyard Bird Count begins <b>15</b>	Surrender of Fort Donelson anniversary, 1862 <b>16</b>
National Engineers Week <b>17</b>	Presidents' Day <b>18</b>	U.S. Landing on Iwo Jima anniversary, 1945 <b>19</b>	Fredrick Douglas dies, 1895 <b>20</b>	Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day <b>21</b>	George Washington born, 1732 <b>22</b>	Single-tasking Day <b>23</b>
St. Matthias, Apostle <b>24</b>	First National Bank Chartered by Congress anniversary, 1791 <b>25</b>	Grand Canyon National Park Established, 1919 <b>26</b>	International Polar Bear Day <b>27</b>	National Tooth Fairy Day <b>28</b>		

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



# Computer File



## Virtual and Augmented Reality



*“ I always wanted to be able to have my students experience the wonders of the world around them.”*

**S**ome of us might remember the excitement of one of our favorite cartoon shows on Saturday morning, “The Magic School Bus.” Using her magic school bus, the teacher, Ms. Frizzle, would take her students on these amazing adventures to places inside a body or to faraway ecosystems. Not only would the students be whisked away to these normally unobtainable locations, but they also would be immersed in deeper thinking and problem solving that would truly help them grasp the lessons that Ms. Frizzle would place before them.

During my years in the classroom, I always wanted to be able to have my students experience the wonders of the world around them. I did my best to “transport” us into the cell in order to help my students visualize its

complex mechanisms and functions. I know my history-teaching counterparts would love to have been able to take their kids to any battlefield or other location of historical significance. History teachers can show maps or videos of faraway locations and times, and I also had some amazing videos and animations, but these just did not capture the same awe and wonder as Ms. Frizzle in her Magic School Bus.

In the past few years, developments in augmented and virtual reality have brought us many steps closer to being able to replicate the Magic School Bus Experience. Virtual reality (VR) is using a technological headset to completely immerse the user in a virtual world. At first, virtual reality headsets were too expensive, bulky and complicated for your average classroom. They required

expensive machines and hardware that were just not practical. Now that this is not as new of a technology, there are many companies manufacturing inexpensive hardware so virtual field trips can be made commonplace. With technologies like Google Cardboard, **MERGE Cubes** and cell phones or iPods, teachers can now take students on **virtual reality expeditions** and immerse students in a world that they might never have been able to imagine. While there is a **growing list** of pre-planned VR experiences that teachers can use, Google has also built a **tour creator** for teachers and students to build and share their own VR expeditions. **DiscoveryVR** has also built many really cool VR applications for school use.

While Google Cardboard is a great starting point, advanced VR setups are now more commonly seen in schools. Some schools have invested in VR spaces equipped with HTC Vive or Oculus VR headsets. While these setups are amazing, schools must keep in mind their average computer will not yet support them. However, if they have the resources, the complexity of these systems has reduced drastically as hardware developers have made them much more user friendly. Hardware manufacturers have also made stand-alone headsets that don't require a phone or computer, such as the Google Daydream VR headset.

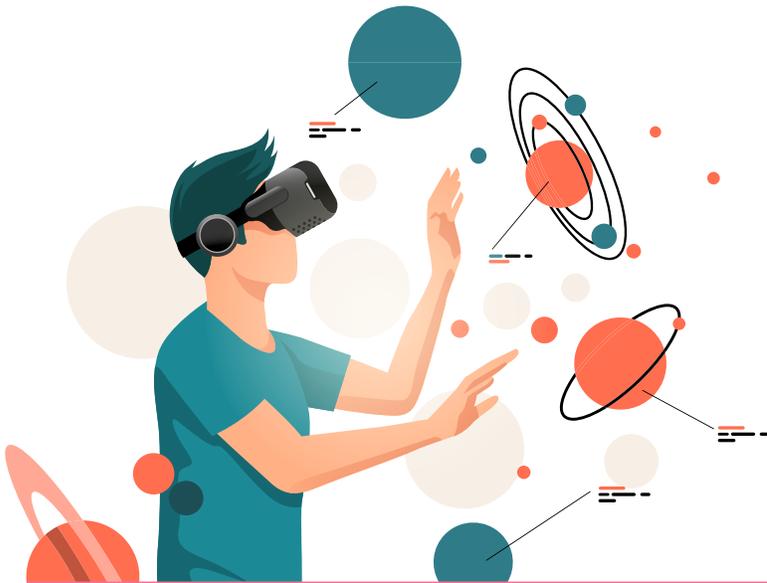
Another option toward recreating the Magic School Bus Experience is Augmented Reality (AR). AR is where students view their existing world through a screen, and



then other images and information are overlaid on top of that view. This extra layer of data is intended to point out and teach about new and interesting things about the world around students. The first ones most people experience are apps like SkyView where you hold your phone up to the sky and you can see the labels of all the constellations, stars and planets on the screen.

In the classroom, students can hold a tablet up to a partner and see a virtual heart beating inside of that partner. Imagine, now, if teachers and students can create these augmented reality experiences and place virtual layers around their classrooms to give the students more context and real-time information. **AR Portal** allows students to become like the Marvel Comics character Dr. Strange and create AR portals. The app allows the student to walk in and out of portals to new places, such as Niagara Falls, without ever leaving the classroom.

Virtual and Augmented Reality are starting to take off in the classroom. The options and opportunities for creating our own Magic School Bus are growing every day. However, we must always exercise caution that we are not creating a novelty, but we are using it for real learning. We must make sure that we are not adding in something new for the sake of something new, but rather integrating the methodology into our current lessons so that it enhances the learning experience.



## Computer File VOL. 18, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2019

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Jonathan Orr Designer: Lisa Moeller

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# Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

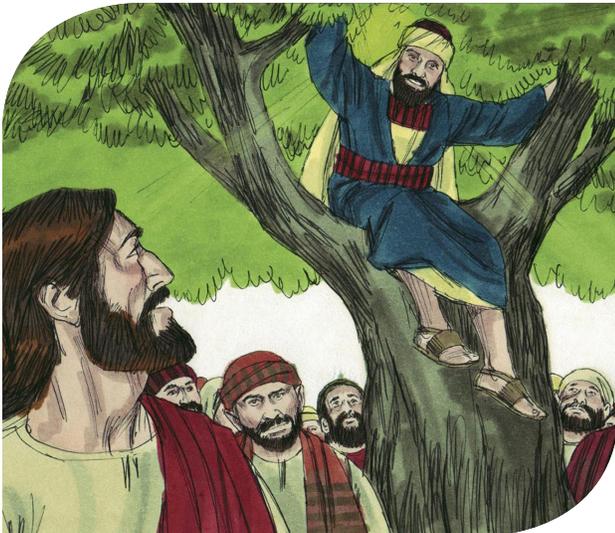


REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

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

## Jesus Loves All People: Zacchaeus

LUKE 19:1-10



### Before You Teach

Jesus' last recorded sentence to Zacchaeus begins with these words: "Today salvation has come to this house" (v. 10). This was not at some future time, not after Zacchaeus has performed some noble work, but TODAY. Salvation is where Jesus accepts sinners. The real presence of Jesus, Son of God, is enough. This is a dramatic story, rich with memorable details. Most importantly, Jesus welcomes sinners into the arms of a loving God. Let us help our students come to know God's acceptance of all people, and to be people who share that loving acceptance as freely as Jesus does.

### Greeting

Greet each child upon entry. "Good morning/afternoon! Jesus loves you, child of God." Sign a heart (thumb to thumb, index finger to index finger).

### Gathering

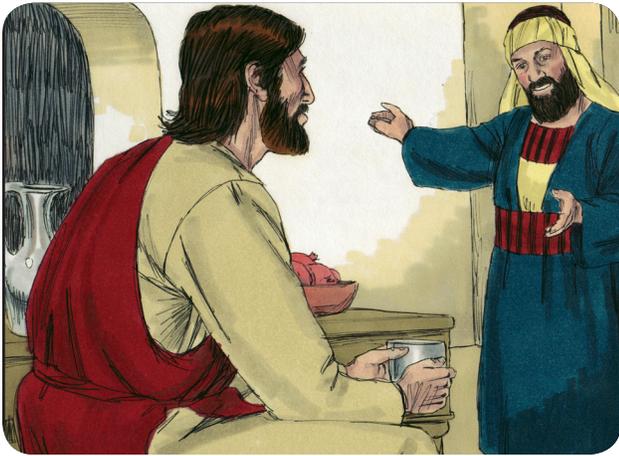
Signal children to gather in your worship area. Lead children to, throughout the day, sign a heart (see "Greeting") each time the word "love" or "loving" is spoken or sung. Say together: "Jesus came for short and tall; His gracious love (sign heart) is for us all. He came for people everywhere, so let us show His loving (sign heart) care." Sing: "Love in a Box" (LOSP, p. 35).

### Tell the Story

**YOU WILL NEED:** Circle faces (one per person). Draw a happy face on one side and a sad face on the opposite side.

**DIRECTIONS:** Invite children to show happy faces or sad faces as indicated.

Jesus was traveling through the city of Jericho (*happy face*). A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus. He was in charge of collecting taxes and was very rich. People did not like him (*sad face*). Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was (*happy face*), but he was very short and could not see because the big crowd would not move out of the way to let him in (*sad face*). Jesus was coming his way, so he climbed a sycamore fig tree



in order to see (*happy face*). When Jesus reached the spot where Zacchaeus was, He looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down right now, for I am going to your house today!” So Zacchaeus climbed down immediately and gladly welcomed Jesus to his home (*happy face*). Seeing this, all the people angrily grumbled (*sad face*), “Jesus is going to the house of a sinner!” Zacchaeus stood up and said to Jesus, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of all that I own to the poor (*happy face*). And if I have wrongly taken money from people (*sad face*), I will pay them four times more than what I took.” Jesus said to Zacchaeus, “I have come to find and to save sinners (*happy face*). Today you and your family are saved” (*happy face*). Jesus loves and forgives sinners: you and me (*happy face*)! We share Jesus’ love with others (*happy face*)!

### PRAY TOGETHER

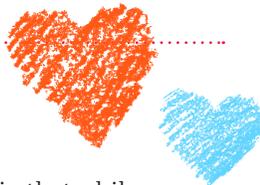
Dear Savior Jesus, full of love, sent to us from heaven above, Forgive us for the wrong we do; saved to one day live with You. Amen.

### Remember the Story

#### BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

**Pre-K & K:** “We love because he first loved us” (1 JOHN 4:19).

**Gr. 1 & 2:** “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (ROM. 5:8).



### ACTIVITIES

**Create: Heart Art.** You will need: colorful chalk, double-sided tape, construction paper hearts and a roll of dark-colored paper cut to fit a bulletin board or wall. Adhere tape around heart edges and randomly adhere them to the unrolled length of bulletin board paper. Using colored chalk, guide children to completely color over the taped-down construction paper hearts and the surrounding background paper. When finished, remove the construction paper hearts to reveal the heart outline on the paper beneath. Surprise! Add the words from 1 John 4:19. Hang to display.

**Do: Share the love.** Discuss what it means to be kind — showing the love of Jesus to others. Engage children in unexpected acts of kindness. Invite their ideas. Develop a plan. Involve others. Go! Do! Reflect!

**Sing:** “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” (LOSP, p. 42); “Zacchaeus” (LOSP, p. 55).



### Live the Story

Leading by example is the greatest form of teaching. Use words and model behaviors of inclusion, respect, kindness and forgiveness. “Tolerance” is not enough! Jesus’ love and forgiveness are for all. Continue to review, guide, practice and model the language, “I love you because Jesus loves me.” “I forgive you because Jesus forgives me.”

### Sending

Gather children in a “Sending Circle.” Pass a heart, guiding each child to in turn offer a brief prayer as it is received, or to silently pass the heart along. Conclude by saying, “*Jesus, we love others because You first loved us. Thank You, Jesus, for Your extravagant love!*” As children depart say to each, “*Jesus loves YOU! He goes with you wherever you go!*”



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

# Early Childhood Devotions

VOL. 23, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2019

Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Lisa Moeller

NOTE: You will need the songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

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# Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



## REAL. PRESENT. GOD. God IS Love

*“It is what it is.”*

This common expression, which has surfaced in recent years, seems to be heard and shared in a variety of settings:

- › In business and work settings;
- › In conversations among friends;
- › In the family setting;
- › In competitive contests and games of chance; and
- › In the realm of sports.

In nearly every setting, it is used as phrase or comment of reluctant acceptance. It is an acknowledgment of the status quo. It is usually a phrase that doesn't sound very satisfying as it states the obvious, and it even implies a bit of helplessness.

Sometimes, we like to take the easy road when it comes to parenting children. We will often avoid conflict, not give correction when needed, look past issues that need attention, accept situations as presented and be content with the reality that, “it is what it is.”

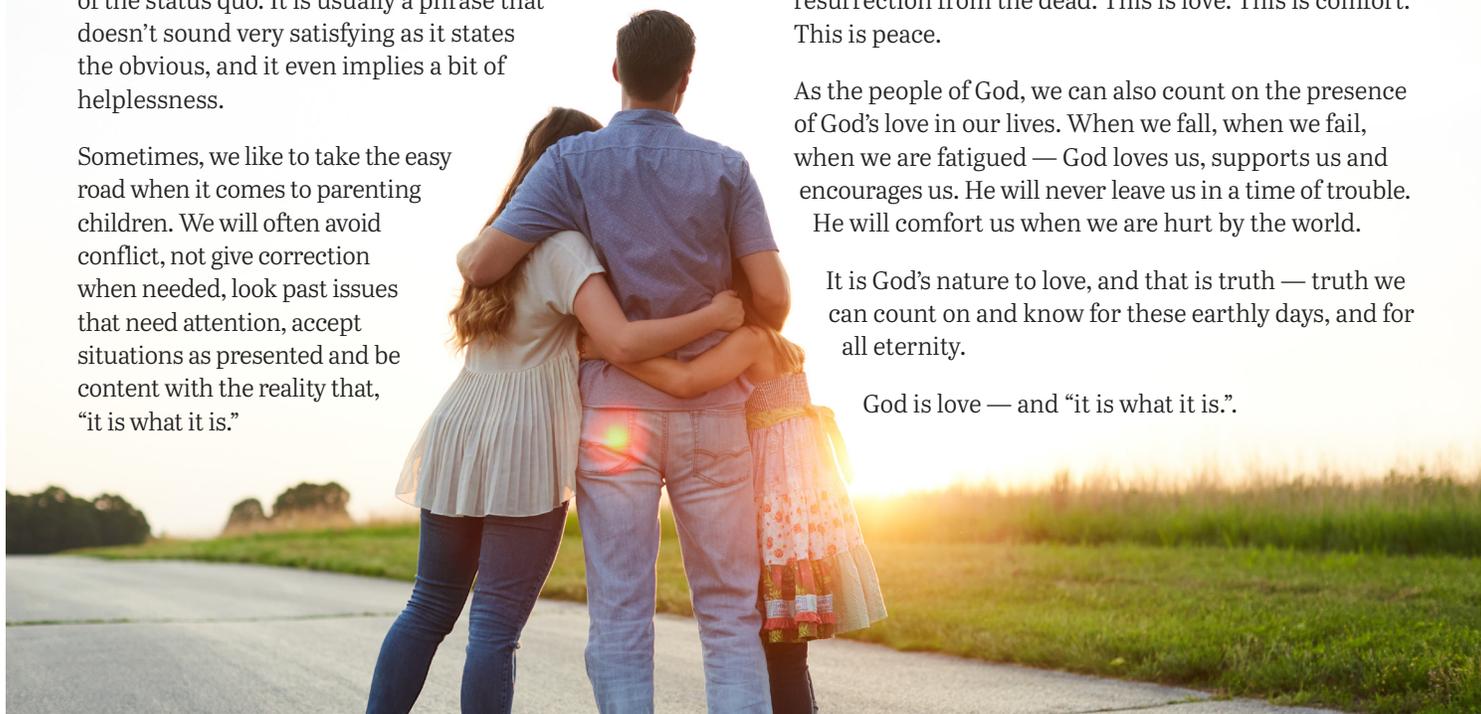
As parents who want to do our best in our God-given responsibility as leaders in the home, we want to walk the path of love and address concerns and issues related to the shortcomings of our child. This doesn't mean that we ignore what has occurred, but that because we love our child, we explain things in such a way that they understand and accept what is expected of them by us as parents, by society and by God.

When we say, “God is love,” it is a statement of what is obvious! We are explicitly told in 1 John that “God is love” (4:16). In addition to just describing God as love, we also see that God is love through His actions. God intentionally sent His son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. He gives us the promise of eternal life through His resurrection from the dead. This is love. This is comfort. This is peace.

As the people of God, we can also count on the presence of God's love in our lives. When we fall, when we fail, when we are fatigued — God loves us, supports us and encourages us. He will never leave us in a time of trouble. He will comfort us when we are hurt by the world.

It is God's nature to love, and that is truth — truth we can count on and know for these earthly days, and for all eternity.

God is love — and “it is what it is.”



## 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

Led by the family member who is planning to give the most valentines to friends and family.

### FAMILY DISCUSSION TIME

Have each family member respond to the following items:

A nice thing somebody said about you recently is ...

A nice thing you said about somebody else recently is ...

### FAMILY STUDY TIME

Have various family members look up the following verses and read them aloud.

What do the following verses say about God?

Genesis 17:1 (*all powerful*)

Leviticus 19:2 (*holy*)

John 21:17 (*all knowing*)

Acts 17:27 (*everywhere*)

John 3:16 (*loving*)

### LOVE IN THE FAMILY ACTIVITY

- 1 In advance, have a person cut several large hearts (approximately five per family member), of various sizes, out of red, pink or white construction paper.
- 2 Write the words, "YOU ARE..." at the top of each heart.
- 3 Distribute several of these hearts to family members.
- 4 Next to the words on each of your hearts, write in the name of each family member.
- 5 Now in the heart, write positive descriptions of that person. For children or others who are unable to write, have a parent or older sibling write down their descriptive words.
- 6 When everyone is done, sit in a circle and have each person read their hearts aloud.

### CLOSING ECHO PRAYER

Have an older sibling or adult read the following prayer, with everyone else in the family repeating the words, phrase by phrase.

Dear God. Thank You for loving us. Thank You for sending Jesus as a sign of love. Help us to love each other as You love us. Help us to love all of those around us. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

## Family Matters VOL. 23, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2019

Writer: Dr. Steven Christopher Designer: Lisa Moeller

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# Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



## Students with Intellectual Disabilities, Part 1

**Although intellectual disabilities may frequently be referred to by different names, such as cognitive impairments or, reaching even further back in time, mild to moderately handicapped, this disability includes students with significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.**

Adaptive behavior includes skills that students use in daily life, such as communicating with others and being able to take care of their own needs. Similar to other disabilities, there is a spectrum of need with students with intellectual disabilities, but there are also some consistent signs and strengths these students bring to the classroom. This month, we will look at these two aspects of intellectual disabilities and, next month, we will address struggles and appropriate classroom strategies for these students.

Students with intellectual disabilities vary in the extent to which they have deficits in intellectual functioning, as measured by an IQ test, but these difficulties include deficits in language development, reasoning skills, problem solving, abstract thinking, planning and academic learning. Additionally, there are signs related



to developmental and adaptive skills. Typically, these students reach developmental milestones, such as sitting up, crawling, walking and speaking later than other children, and have difficulty with social rules. Difficulty remembering things, trouble seeing the consequences of their actions, not understanding how to pay for items, great difficulty with problem solving and trouble thinking logically are additional signs of an intellectual disability. Adaptive skills include daily life activities such as personal care, and as the student gets older, more complex undertakings involving employment, transportation and household tasks. The extent of these difficulties varies with each individual, but limitations

in these areas are present in individuals with intellectual disabilities.

If there is a more severe intellectual disability, delays in motor skills, language and social skills will most often be noticed when the child is a toddler, but mild intellectual disabilities may be more identifiable when he begins school and is confronted with challenging academic tasks. A student may qualify as having an intellectual disability when her IQ is below 70–75, and there are accompanying difficulties with adaptive skills. Most students with intellectual disabilities have what is considered a mild intellectual disability, with an IQ between 50 and 70. These students can and will learn, but it may take more time to master new information, and they need additional support with adaptive skills.

Students with moderate intellectual disabilities have an IQ between 35 and 49; severe intellectual disabilities, between 20 and 34; and students with profound intellectual disabilities have an IQ less than 20.

Thomas Armstrong, in his work with the concept of neurodiversity, described how one would not say a calla lily has “petal deficit disorder,” but instead would appreciate its uniqueness and beauty. Likewise, all individuals should be viewed for their uniqueness and strengths, rather than viewing the deficits first. This fits in with what God tells us about each of us being “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14). Students with intellectual disabilities bring strengths to the classroom and school as well. These students often function well socially and vocationally outside of an academic setting and frequently have strengths in music, nature and art. They typically have strong interpersonal intelligence.

Individuals with Down syndrome, one type of intellectual disability, often have great senses of humor and

are happy and upbeat. Sometimes these students are referred to as having “Prince Charming” syndrome because of their friendly attitudes and disarming smiles. Individuals diagnosed with Williams syndrome often have great musical skills, including reading and composing music and having perfect pitch. They also have additional strengths in vocabulary and people skills. Prader-Willi syndrome, another type of intellectual disability, often brings with it strong nurturing and caregiving skills. Students with this diagnosis also may have great skills in puzzles and word searches. Additional strengths that come with intellectual disabilities may be strong skills in drama and abilities in mimicking and reading body language.



While these strengths vary from student to student, as with any learning difference, we know to appreciate each student as a child of God, as one

who is fearfully and wonderfully made, and to identify each one’s strengths as well as areas of need. Next month, we will continue this topic and discuss struggles and strategies for this group of learners.



If you have additional questions regarding students with intellectual disabilities, or other learning challenges, please contact Lutheran Special Education Ministries. Visit [luthsped.org](http://luthsped.org) or send an email to [lsem@luthsped.org](mailto:lsem@luthsped.org).

## Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

VOL. 2, NO. 6 // FEBRUARY 2019

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



## Trouble Spots

**T**here will never be a time when governing boards always get it right. Running a Lutheran school is complicated and is filled with challenges and big questions. There are many dynamics, personalities, church culture and the families of the school that are involved – and all are important pieces of the bigger picture.

For all these things and more, we pray often, for wisdom. The school mission stays in the forefront. The students that are served remain the focus. How best do we work together as a governing board to keep the lens on the children — and faith formation, with humble service to the church and to the world?

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

We live in a sin-filled world. Thank God He rescued us when He died on the cross and rose from the grave. As we deal with people in this life, we need to rely on Him to forgive us for the wrongs we commit. We continue to circle back to the power of forgiveness and grace.

The phrase “trouble spots” can be defined in many ways. Read below about just a few of the “trouble spots” governing boards run into that cause them to pause and reflect on struggles that can be very real. Through the lens of the Christian school board, how can these things become opportunities for change? Collaborative, spirit-filled discussion and decisions can lead to a better way.



### Constitution and By-Laws

This is a most important document, and it often dictates how board members are elected or chosen. How board members are selected can be a “make-or-break” situation for a board. If the governing documents allow for interviewing prospective members, very important questions can be asked, such as, “Do you understand that as a member, you will need to look beyond your own family, to make decisions based upon the best interests of the entire school?” A vetting process is needed — one that makes it possible to have the most qualified and capable on board.

### When Board Training “Does Not Stick”

Best practices include having a board orientation or training. It is the most crucial piece when a new board begins its task. In Lutheran schools, training is both available and specific — to ensure that the distinctive mission of the school is carried out. When individuals or boards take it upon themselves to move away from this

training, typically (even when well-meaning) the school suffers.

### The Vision and Mission are Lost

Re-visiting the vision and mission should be an annual, very important event and discussion. If there are personal agendas that drive decisions, these can move the entire school away from the ministry that was intended.

### Financial Decisions

This discussion is a critical piece. Most schools budget annually, although some go the extra step and do a three- or a five-year business plan. If it is a unified church/school ministry plan, it needs to be a concerted effort to ensure income and expenses are aligned. That effort should include a strong look at personnel — base pay, raises and benefits, as well as needed income and expense levels and patterns. The case for raising tuition will need to be well researched and should balance the needs of the congregation with ensuring parents are not overburdened. A warning sign is when board members who are parents think only of their own situation and not that of the entire school.

### Unhealthy Team

How do we define a group that tends to not get along? It is a team that undeniably struggles with support for one another and for the defined job description. There is tension in the air, and conversations tend to degrade. The most likely culprit is pride. When a board humbly serves, it seeks God's will and always has the cohesive philosophy of "we," not "me."

### Lack of Attention to Details

Those in leadership circles know and understand the importance of paying attention to detail. Not doing so can be seen by constituents as perhaps the leadership not truly understanding the importance of those details. Attention to detail means a striving for true excellence. It is quickly noticed and embraced by those served by the board.

### "Distinctively Lutheran" May Be Missing

A close look at recent data from our universities shows the low percentage of Lutherans within the ranks of college students at our Concordias today. In our Lutheran

schools, the percentages have also changed. This means we need to work extra hard on maintaining Lutheranism within our schools, not for the sake of just being Lutheran, but theologically — adhering to Scripture and the Confessions. When those governing do not understand what it means to be distinctively Lutheran, there is a real danger that the school will not be able to uphold its mission.



### Managing the Team

The principal's role is to teach, to influence and to lead the board in its endeavors. The principal meets with the chair at least monthly, is in communication with her often and reminds members continually that Christ is central in all things.

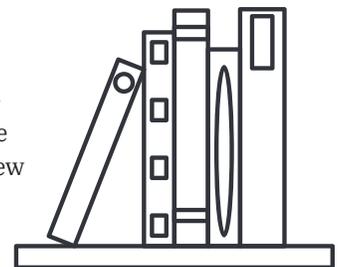
### Too Much Going On

Can there be such a thing as being too busy as a governing board? The answer is a definite "Yes." Take time every few months to assess what is going on. It is not bad to decide not to be involved in a particular area. Being more focused on fewer things can mean more time and effort can be devoted to excellence in a few, most important areas.

Forgiveness through Christ our Savior is a daily cleansing. As we spend time on our knees, in repentance, we receive this great gift of forgiveness. As Paul shares, the Son, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (COL. 1:14), is central to it all. Trouble spots are part of our lives, but through Christ alone we rely on His mercy and grace!

### Resources

- ▶ School board job description — for an individual and for the entire board; Includes interview questions
- ▶ Covenant for board service



Resources or continued conversations are available by contacting the author at [thomas.wrege@zionwalburg.org](mailto:thomas.wrege@zionwalburg.org).



# 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

# 1979 February

**I**n 1979, with a continued emphasis on celebrating *The Year of the Young Child*, Joanne Eisenberg tackled the topic of proper nutrition for children. In this article, she challenges early childhood educators to address this topic not only with adults, but also with preschoolers. She insists that this won't involve lectures on carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals or recommended daily allowances. Continuing the foundation of educating the whole child, Joanne shares a wealth of ideas and resources for exploring nutrition with young learners. Working with a variety of foods (including foods from around the world), recipes, cooking activities, community field trips, classroom visitors and literacy activities, children experience new tastes and grow in their understanding of the world around them. A connection to our loving God is central. From Matt. 25:35a, “For I was hungry and you gave me food,” Joanne proposes service learning for preschoolers with food collection and adoption of families in the community. Imagine how delighted children would be making their own ice-cream in a juice can with a margarine bowl filled with chipped ice to share with others. *Bon appétit!*



FOODS AND COOKING

Child-Made Ice Cream:

Each child needs a small metal juice can and a large plastic margarine bowl. In each juice can put 3 tablespoons of milk, 4 drops of vanilla (use eye dropper), 1 teaspoon sugar. Set the juice can in the margarine bowl packed with chipped ice and salt. Stir and watch the mixture turn into ice cream - Eat!

Crushed Candy Cookies:

Use a plain cookie mix or this basic recipe:



- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1/3 cup vegetable shortening      | 1/2 tsp. baking soda (sifted with flour) |
| 1/3 cup sugar                     | 1 tsp. salt                              |
| 1 egg                             | 2/3 cup honey                            |
| 3 cups flour (sifted-all purpose) | Chill dough before rolling               |

Mix and roll dough into sausage strips about 1/4 inch thick. Make designs with dough strips on cookie sheet covered with aluminum foil. Be sure pieces connect for strength. Colored filling: crack lollipops with a hammer. Sprinkle in openings. Bake at 375° about 8 to 10 minutes. Cool. Peel off aluminum foil when dough is firm. A hole can be made at the top of the cookie for hanging.

'A Spot of Tea?' (For Preschoolers!?!??)

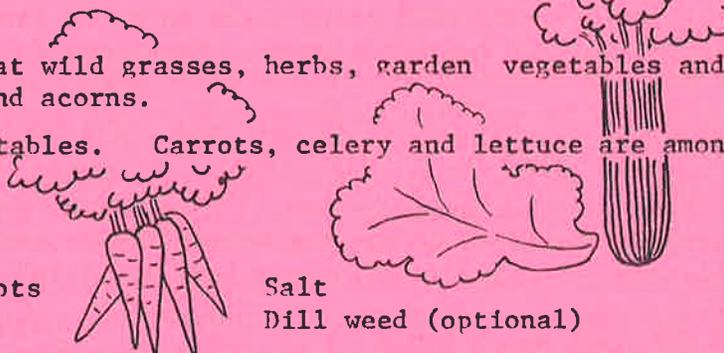


Make a pot of tea with lemon and honey for snack one day. It goes great with fresh ginger snaps. Also is a good way to enhance learning through senses.

Ground Hog Snack:

In the wilderness, ground hogs eat wild grasses, herbs, garden vegetables and other broad leaf plants, hickory nuts and acorns.

In captivity they also like vegetables. Carrots, celery and lettuce are among their favorites.



French-Fried Carrots:

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 pounds fresh carrots | Salt                 |
| 1 pt. peanut oil       | Dill weed (optional) |

Wash, peel and cut carrots into 1/4" strips. Heat oil in thermostatically controlled pan to 375°. Cook carrots 1 1/2 to 2 minutes, turning occasionally. Drain on paper toweling. Season with salt or dill weed. Makes 6 to 8 servings. Also try zucchini, but don't peel it.



Peanut Butter Fondue:

- |                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2 cups chunky peanut butter      | 1/4 cup margarine |
| 1 can evaporated milk (5 1/3 oz) | 1/8 teaspoon salt |
| 1 cup light brown sugar          |                   |

Mix all ingredients in saucepan over low heat until blended and hot. Stir occasionally. Marshmallows, graham crackers, banana and apple slices are good for dunking.

Banana/Orange Shake:

- |                     |                           |                            |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 cups orange juice | 2 bananas, peeled and cut | 1/2 pint vanilla ice cream |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|

Put all ingredients in blender in order. Blend until smooth. Makes 6-8 servings.



SOCIAL STUDIES

Extended Food Activities:

1. Trip to a bakery.
2. Trip to a grocery store or supermarket.
3. Trip to see a garden to see food growing.
4. Watch delivery trucks unload at the school.
5. Invite your local county home economist to prepare a tasty or nutritious snack food for (or with) children. Have the home economist tell the children about empty calorie foods and the foods that help them grow.
6. Invite a parent, native to another country, to visit school and bring a special food to share. Or have the children prepare a food enjoyed by children in that country. Demonstrate how best to eat the unusual food, whether it is Chinese, Mexican, Scandinavian, German, Italian.
7. Visit a restaurant and kitchen.
8. Visit a dairy store.
9. Visit a hatchery.

Pen Pals:

Select a school from the Lutheran Annual and begin a pen pal correspondence with their kindergarteners or preschoolers. Letter writing need not take place. Instead use pictures and tapes and exchange samples of items familiar to that area of the country. (For example: a kindergarten in Texas could send samples of cotton, cactus, cowhide, etc. to a class in Idaho in return for potatoes, sugar beets, pheasant feathers and deer skin.) Excitement builds as each class waits to hear from its "pen pals," and parents share in the excitement by donating samples to send.



*Dear Pen Pal . . .*

--Kathy Koch, Twin Falls, ID

Social Studies Resources from UNICEF, 331 E. 31st Street, New York, NY 10016:

1. Coloring Book (#5040) \$1.50
2. Festival figures. 14" high cardboard figures in the festive attire of their regions. Eight per set. \$3.00 (#5047)
3. "Sing Children Sing I-(USA)" LP recording of a children's chorus singing songs in the American tradition. \$6.00. (#5045)



Fun With Hearts:



- Cut cardboard heart shapes. Finger paint with whipped pink soap mixture.
- Cut heart shapes out of bread dough mixture. Paint with acrylic paint.
- Make Valentine designs with a pencil or pen on styrofoam meat trays. Cover with paint. Press paper on tray to pick up Valentine design.
- Make a heart pendant out of salt/dough mixture. Paste a picture of Jesus on it.
- Make Valentine butterflies with 2 paper hearts and a thumbprint in between.
- Cut heart shapes into puzzle parts. Number and have children reassemble.

--Charlotte Anderson, Los Alamitos, CA

Resources for Teaching Children About Africa, by Nancy J. Schmidt. 1976. Resource lists plus directions for African children's games. Order #155, \$3.50. ERIC Clearing House on Early Childhood Education, 805 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801.

Baa, Baa, Black Sheep: (A rhythm activity from England)

Children form circle, singing the familiar verse with the accompanying actions:

Words

Baa, baa, black sheep  
Have you any wool?

Yes, sir, yes, sir,  
Three bags full:

One for my master,  
And one for my dame,

And one for the little boy  
Who lives down the lane.



Actions

Stamp three times. Shake forefinger three times.

Nod head twice and hold up three fingers.

Bow to the person on the right, then to the person on the left.

Hold up one finger, and turn singly in circle, ending facing center.

# TEACHER'S CORNER

Various materials and resources can be obtained from the following sources:

State of Florida, Department of Citrus, P. O. Box 148, Lakeland, FL 33802. "The Sunshine Cookbook", "Why Do You Need Vitamin C?", "Food Is More Than Just Something To Eat" (085C), "Eat A Good Breakfast To Start A Good Day" (080C, 25¢), "Good Food News For Children" (034C).

Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Pueblo, CO 81009. "The Thing The Professor Forgot."

Order teachers' guides that accompany the following materials from the Dairy Council closest to you or from the National Dairy Council, Chicago, IL 60606.

- "My Friend the Cow", Lois Lenski
- "Let's Make Butter"
- "More Milk Please"
- "Your Health", Marjorie Pursel
- "We Like Milk Too", Picture Series
- "What We Do All Day", Picture Series
- food models
- "Where We Get Our Food"

Interharvest, P. O. Box 2115, Salinas, CA 93901. "Put Munch In Their Menu."

Bulletin Boards: **I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU FED ME**  
Use Matthew 25: 35a as the title: "I Was Hungry And You Fed Me."

Cover the bulletin board with grocery ads from the newspaper divided into the 4 food categories: meat, vegetables and fruit, milk, bread and cereals. Talk about proper foods and diets.

Adopt a family in the church or community in need of food. Plan a meal for them. Collect money. Plan a field trip to the grocery store to purchase food for the meal. Or, ask the children to bring food items from home to put together a well balanced meal.

## JESUS LOVES ALL CHILDREN

Caption: "Jesus Loves All Children"

Place cross in middle of bulletin board. Make a border of hearts. Have "silhouette heads" of children cut out of construction paper. Children put a piece of newsprint over the silhouette to make a rubbing of the head. Eyes, nose, mouth, etc. can be added before or after rubbing. Display the children's rubbings on the bulletin board.

### Stirring Chant:

Here's a chant to use when making vegetable soup. Stand in a circle to suggest a soup pot. Each child thinks of the name of a vegetable for the pot. The children begin chanting:



"Stir-ring, stir-ring, Round in the pot"  
 "Everything in, Ready or not!"  
 (Children name their vegetable and jump into the pot)  
 "Stir-ring, stir-ring, Round in the pot"  
 "Everything out, Ready or not!"  
 (On the word, out, everyone takes one big jump backward.)

--Alice Vegehaupt, Shirley Kuhn, Danville, IL

### Snacktime Prayer:

Sing, "He's Got The Whole World In His Hands" using the children's names in the song. When they hear their name, it is a signal for them to go to the snack corner to get their snack.





# NLSA Powerful Practices



Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, S.D.

## Policy Based Governance

**U**se of Policy Based Governance (PBG) is now fairly ubiquitous in LCMS schools. There are dozens of articles — hundreds of commentaries — about its use. This article assumes that your school understands and uses PBG in some form. It does not argue for its use, nor against it, but it attempts to show how to use PBG more effectively.

It is important to first note that PBG is simply a tool, not a panacea to cure overall deficiencies in the operation of a school. At Sioux Falls Lutheran School (SFLS), like any well-functioning school, the following components, together, noted by the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA), are what make a critical difference.

- › The PBG system functions appropriately, is well defined and *enables* visionary service and leadership for the school. The NLSA visiting team suggests that this is a powerful practice and worthy of publication and replication.
- › Administration is a strength of this school. The administrator provides dynamic leadership for the school and is *empowered* with an outstanding support staff including a certified public accountant, vice principal(s), full-time office assistant, admissions and communication director, technology director and preschool director.
- › Planning for the future has included the involvement of several consultants working with the school and its governing board to define a sustainable future.

The primary prerequisite is to have the right people focusing creatively on the right tasks. Then, when used correctly, PBG can help enable and empower those gifted people to govern (the board) and manage (the administration) effectively.

The NLSA Powerful Practice discussed below involves a few unique applications of PBG.

First, many generic PBG models do not clearly express the division of authority between the board and the administrator — beyond the usual formulation that the administrator is responsible for staff and a too-strict prescription that the board should concentrate on *ends* and never interfere with *means*. These standard policy formulations, alone, leave much ambiguity that is not



SFLS Board Vice-Chair, Mary Ellen Heirigs, addresses attendees during the Our Greatest Gifts Capital Campaign kick-off on November 6, 2016.

helpful in actual Lutheran school governance. As PBG guru John Carver says, policy governance calls upon each board to clearly establish by policy a dividing line for its own organization. “[T]here is no excuse for it [what is within the board’s purview, versus the administrative functions] being ambiguous.”<sup>1</sup>

To eliminate ambiguity, SFLS has created a very specific **Board-Administrator Linkage** policy, entitled *Board Retained Means and Means Delegated to the Administrator*. Here are a few examples:<sup>2</sup>

The board’s tri-part job — Linkage with the Owners, actively producing Policies in four areas (Ends, Executive Limitations, Board Process, Board-Administrator Linkage) and actively monitoring administrative performance/outcomes — is reserved to the board.

Though budgets are largely *means*, a Lutheran school board usually retains some budgeting authority. The SFLS delegation policy provides for the administrator to prepare and present the operations budget within the outcome (Ends) and restriction (Executive Limitations) policies set by the board, but the board retains the final authority to approve Association assessments and parent tuition. Thus, the board stays out of the operational weeds — how Lutheran education is accomplished at the school is delegated to the administrator, except through preset parameters established in its Ends and Executive Limitations policies — but reserves, in writing, the right to adjust income sources and to approve the final budget.

The board retains the right to issue all calls, contract full-time employees and release or terminate called/commissioned or tenured faculty under its Reduction in Force policy.

During its recent fundraising and building project, the board passed specific policies that retained the rights to (A) conduct and manage the capital campaign, (B) secure loans and (C) perform construction administration, but specifically delegated (1) the building design authority, (2) the business plan preparation and (3) the facility moving/transition to the administrator. The retained rights/delegations were based on who could best accomplish the tasks and how much capacity the board/administrator had to complete them.

The board retains certain duties specifically given to it in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws (e.g., picking the bank used by the school).

<sup>1</sup> John Carver, *Boards That Make a Difference*, Third Edition, (Jossey-Bass, 2006), 326.

<sup>2</sup> Please contact Sioux Falls Lutheran School directly to review the full policy.



On June 26, 2018, SFLS Board Chairman, Scott Peters, signed official closing paperwork on the 30 acres of land graciously donated to (SFLS) by Sanford Health.

The administrator has complete authority over the staff, subject to attaining the outcomes (Ends policies) and avoiding the limitations (Executive Limitations) set forth by written policy.

Finally, the policy provides that “all means not reserved to or retained by the Board belong *exclusively* to the Administrator, subject to Board monitoring (by specific policy).” This means that if some authority is not specifically reserved for or retained by the Board, then the Administrator has all authority in that area, until changed by written policy.

This delegation policy provides governing focus. If there is a question as to who has specific authority, this specific policy is consulted first. If the answer is clear from the delegation policy, then the policy is either followed or changed by the board. If the answer is not clear from the policy, then the administration has the authority to act, unless the policy is amended to make specific board authority clear.

This delegation policy also materially assists in setting the board agenda.

Instead of a traditional Old Business/New Business agenda, the school’s PBG agenda is based primarily on the board’s job. It begins with a *significant* Linkage with Owners discussion. It proceeds with action items that involve policy review or production. With every board issue, the discussion should address the

following. First, is there a current policy that governs the issue? Second, if so, is it sufficient or does it need revision? If not, what policy should be adopted to resolve the issue? The agenda ends with monitoring administrative performance, using only the Ends policies (outcomes to be attained) and the Executive Limitations (means to be avoided), followed by an assessment of the board's own process.

Any subject or means not reserved to or retained by the board is simply not an action item on the board's agenda. It may be included as an informational item, which may generate a production of or revision of a policy, if appropriate, or the information may be relevant to monitoring. But the agenda action items are focused, based first on the delegation policy.

To meet a valid PBG criticism that board members do not always know or remember which of their policies apply to any given issue at any given time, the school connects policy numbers to agenda items, with live links to the applicable policy, for board/administrative reference.

The last board agenda item includes a time where the board can circle back in two important ways: (1) it can assess how it performed, using its own policies (Board Process policies), and (2) it can review action and information items in order to enhance its current and future linkage with the owners — in SFLS's case, its Association churches.

This article cannot come close to covering all important facets of PBG. There are, however, some important final considerations:

- For PBG to work effectively, it is critical to have at least one board member and at least one administrator who understand PBG philosophy well and the school's own policies very specifically. Most PBG models provide for cross-check policies on the board and administration, where each has the obligation to inform the other when the other is not conforming to existing policy. If this cross-check does not exist in your policies, add it.



SFLS Board Treasurer, Kent Harnisch, addresses attendees during a United Voters' Assembly Meeting on September 23, 2018.

- It is critical that the board train itself periodically in the use of PBG, with specific reference to its own policies and governing documents. Time and funds should be reserved for this purpose. If the board and administrator do not understand how PBG works in their own context, this will not be effective for their organization and its benefits will not be achieved for their school.
- Finally, a key component to effective use of PBG is a well-considered, carefully prepared and frequently reviewed Annual Agenda, which provides the means and opportunity to review all governing documents and all board policies on a periodic basis. The temptation is to quickly pass over this "annual agenda policy review" portion of the board agenda, with little or no comment. Avoid that temptation!

Thank you for considering these PBG suggestions. Please feel free to contact me at Sioux Falls Lutheran School if you have further questions.

Blessings,

Scott N. Peters, Board Chair  
Sioux Falls Lutheran School Association



# Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



## Responding to Good News

**I**s it bragging when our children come to us with good news? We certainly do not want to train our children to be boastful about their accomplishments, yet we do want to be able to respond appropriately to their good news. When children share good news, they are in a positive frame of mind and are primed for learning. In the best case scenario we are able to use that good news to teach life and faith lessons.

We can encourage good communication and promote humility by paying attention to the characteristics of our responses.

› **Active/passive:** Active responses are better than passive responses because the listener is fully engaged and active in the conversation. This is not a time to multi-task while checking your messages on the phone. A passive response indicates that the message is not important, and this will dismiss the good feelings that come with sharing good news. Children learn from hundreds of thousands of these little parent/child interactions. It is important that parents are fully present for each of these short events because each interaction builds on the one before it.

› **Constructive/destructive:** A destructive response undermines the communication either by ignoring it or stealing the conversation away from the speaker. If you give a minimal response, you are reinforcing the message that the news is not important. While it can be argued that one good grade on a spelling test or a home run in kickball at recess is not of huge importance, for your children, communicating these events is important.



The destructive response of stealing happens when a child's good news is overshadowed by another story or event. If you have more than one child chiming in, teach them how to take turns and give each story its due. Each good news communication has its own potential benefits. Taking turns sharing good news not only builds relationships between parent and child, but among siblings as well. Plus, children who learn to wait also learn empathy.

A constructive response not only acknowledges good news, but also continues the communication interaction. It can be as simple as a follow up question that allows you to savor the positive news, or it can become an important thinking lesson.

Here are good and bad responses to a child's good news:

Child: "Guess what?! My team won the classroom math competition!"

Passive-destructive response: (Looking at phone)  
“That’s nice, dear.”

Instead of giving the message that the news is not important, ask your child to repeat the news after you have a few seconds to finish with your phone.

Active-destructive response: (Looking at child) “I am happy for you! I was good at math when I was your age.”

Instead of stealing the story away by changing the topic to your experiences, let your child share more before making the connection to family pride.

Active-constructive response: “That is great news! Tell me about the competition.”

This response indicates that the news is important and gives the child opportunity to build on the positive nature of the event. This shows your child that good news is just as important as complaints or worries which tend to get more emotional attention.

When children are in a positive mood, they are also in a good mood for learning. With careful communication response techniques, you can build some important skills for your children. You can respond in ways that extend the conversation into a teachable moment with good questions. Imagine how the following questions might allow your children to learn to value success:

- › In what ways did you work hard to get good at this activity?
- › How did members of your team help?
- › What problems did you solve to build a strong team?

These kinds of questions not only give your children opportunity to savor the good news, but to also apply good lessons regarding the importance of working hard, learning from problems and failures and collaborating with others.



“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace” (PHIL. 1:6-7).

The most important lesson we can teach our children about the successes in life is that all that is good comes from God. The things we do well are done with God’s help, and when things do not go well, it is likely we have something important to learn. When children have a positive mindset, they have brains ready to learn. When children are grateful, they are more likely to have a positive mindset. When children know to thank God, they have a self-concept rooted in their relationship with their Heavenly Father.



# Professionally Speaking



## Getting out of the Doldrums

**F**ebbruary. We're just a month into the new year. How many resolutions are still going for you? It can be sad to think how quickly we can move on from good intentions.

Weather-wise, Midwesterners are in what recently has become the wintriest month of the calendar — gray skies, cold air, different forms of precipitation.

As for school, a little cabin fever demonstrates itself. The short days of daylight have taken their toll and it's time for spring ... but that's still ways away.

Either at the end of the month or in early March, the school year will be 3/4 over. There's an eye on spring break, but there's full awareness of standardized testing coming this way.

All these things contribute to what is called “the winter doldrums.”



The phrase “the doldrums” comes from oceanography. Sailors near the equator could come into areas called by this name, and they would experience very calm but shifting winds and be unable to sail on. Today, the term is commonly used to describe the blahs, these times of listlessness and inactivity.

While it's hard to believe that work in a school could have a time of inactivity, there's no doubt that some personal listlessness can occur. Do any of the following sound like you?

- 1. Faking it over the past weeks (or longer).** No real lesson plans. No enthusiasm in the classroom. No enjoyment of newfound knowledge gained by the kids. No visits of teachers; you're “holed up” in the office. Budget meetings are done for the next school year so you're cruising to the end of this one. You'll get to the NLSA report when you have to, but it won't be much different from last year's report.
- 2. Avoiding.** Avoiding parents. Avoiding emails. Avoiding the realities of a building that needs attention. Avoiding addressing ... well, you know what the list is ... that's why you're avoiding. Instead, distractions take control of life. Social media time increases. Time away from the office is mounting. All in all, nothing is getting done.
- 3. You're tired.** You might not be hopeless, but it's hard to get up and go to school every day. The challenges of leading a school seem more and more daunting. More questions are piling up than answers. You don't see how things are going to get better ... ever.

How low are you? Often called the “woeful prophet,” Jeremiah seems to be at rock bottom when he records in Lam. 3:1–6,

“I am the man who has seen affliction  
under the rod of his wrath;  
he has driven and brought me  
into darkness without any light;  
surely against me he turns his hand  
again and again the whole day long.

He has made my flesh and my skin waste away;  
he has broken my bones;  
he has besieged and enveloped me  
with bitterness and tribulation;  
he has made me dwell in darkness  
like the dead of long ago.”

Jeremiah was an eyewitness to the “woe” he had prophesied. The Jews had not repented and Jerusalem was destroyed. Jeremiah was seeing things that were “joy suckers” and his laments in his Old Testament book with his name and in Lamentations are heart-wrenching and depressing. Yet, in Lam. 3:21, it all changes. Jeremiah’s words become upbeat and hopeful. “But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope.”

Jeremiah turns not to himself. He changes from self-pity and a bleak look at life (and there was plenty around him that physically was bleak) to a look to God and the hope that comes in His promises.

Ours is a call that goes against the perceived realities of this life. In Christ, the meek inherit the earth, the merciful and peacemakers are blessed and those who are persecuted because of their connection with Christ can be glad of heart (MATTHEW 5).

As this series of articles is meant to be a support for leaders, this article needs to be different than various self-help guides that are available. Might the following actions to lean on the promises of God serve to get our eyes lifted from the doldrums to the energizing spirit of God’s desire for our life?

“Blessed is the man  
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;  
but his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and on his law he meditates day and night” (PS. 1:1–2).  
*What to do? Pray, Bible study, worship.*

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (PHIL. 4:6).  
*What to do? Make a list of things to be thankful for.*

“Be still and know that [God] is God” (PS. 46:10).  
*What to do? Take time away (from technology and from work) and honor a Sabbath rest.*

“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (HEB. 13:5).  
*What to do? Remember that you’re the crown of creation. Jesus is always with you.*

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (JER. 29:11).  
*What to do? Remember that you are God’s own child — that’s who you are. Rest in Him. Your hope for all that is in the future is in His hands. The same God who created the world also redeemed it through Christ, and you are one of the redeemed.*

To be certain, the doldrums isn’t the place to give in to the temptation of self-pity. Rather, it’s time to lift up your eyes.

“My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (PS. 121:2).

## Professionally Speaking // FEBRUARY 2019

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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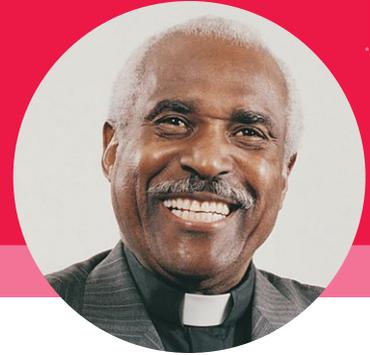
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# School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



## REAL. PRESENT. GOD. The School Shepherd: Real and Present With Children

**“Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world; Red and yellow, black and white, All are precious in His sight, Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world.**

**Jesus died for little children, All the children of the world; Big and little, short and tall, Jesus died to save us all, Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world.”**

*(Songs of God’s Love, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984, 48.)*

**T**he school shepherd loves and serves the children that the Good Shepherd loves and saved.

As the little children exit the sanctuary, the pastor kneels down to their eye level and shakes their hands (or shares a “high five”) with a smile. In a simple and symbolic way, the pastor has entered their world. The school shepherd is privileged to minister in the world of children. Not every school shepherd is equally comfortable in that role. The shepherd does not need to know the latest books, games, technology or terminology of children. He does not need to be an expert in every extracurricular activity of children. The shepherd can and should be real and present for them. The shepherd welcomes them and loves them in Jesus’ name.

It is important for the shepherd to know the characteristics of various age levels. The grade-level teachers can be an excellent resource for the shepherd. What are the interests of the typical kindergartener?



The third-grader? The seventh-grader? How long is their attention span? While that information is helpful to relating to children in all contexts, it is especially helpful in planning school chapel services, children’s lessons and other teaching opportunities with the children. The school shepherd reflects, “How can I make Jesus real and present as I share God’s Word with the children?”

The school shepherd shares Law and Gospel with children. While some in our culture may suggest that children are inherently good, God’s Word (and our experiences as pastors, parents and teachers) declares their sinful nature and sinful behavior. The school shepherd shows the rule and mirror of God’s Law. Children are fallen and need a Savior.

Martin Luther's words to parents [*What Luther Says Volume 1*, compiled by Ewald M. Plass (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 140] are also helpful for pastors: "When the spirit has been cowed, one is of no use for anything and despairs of everything, is timid in doing and undertaking everything. And, what is worse, this timidity, implanted during the tender years, can almost never thereafter be eradicated." While the message of God's law is taught and administered as real, it should not be oppressive. School shepherds pray that they will never be the barrier to a child's real relationship with his Savior.

The school shepherd is honored and humbled to be God's messenger of grace to children. The Sunday worship services and the weekly chapel services are the primary contexts for sharing the Good News that "Jesus loves the little children," and "Jesus died for little children." The message is shared in classroom settings, in hallway conversations and in every context of the Lutheran school.

The school shepherd is the champion for the children not only in the school, but also in the congregation and community. Because of their age, size and other limiting perceived characteristics, many times children do not have a voice for their needs or destiny. The school shepherd asks, "What about the children?" The school shepherd reminds the congregation that the school staff, facilities and other aspects of the ministry are for Jesus' children. The advocacy for children is God pleasing: "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God" (MARK 10:14). This focus on children often translates to increased enrollment, parent satisfaction and other positives for the Lutheran school. The physical and emotional safety of the children is top priority.

The school shepherd is often a participant in conversations about behavior and other challenges with children. The frequency and the intensity of those conversations are becoming more pronounced. The school shepherd always brings the spiritual perspective to the

“ Shepherd of tender youth,  
Guiding in love and truth  
Through devious ways;  
Christ, our triumphant king, We  
come Your name to sing And  
here our children bring To join  
Your praise.”

(LSB 864:1)

conversation: How does the Word of God speak to this situation? What sins do we need to confess? How can we provide spiritual support for the child and family? How can I pray for you and this child?

### Real Applications

- ▶ What are the joys of ministry to and with children?
- ▶ What are the challenges of ministry to and with children?
- ▶ How are the children celebrated in the school and church?
- ▶ How could the school shepherd be more real and present to the children?





# Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



## Child Assessment: How to Best Engage Families

**E**arly childhood education is about fun, play, social development, spiritual growth and much more. It is often said that more happens in human and brain development during the first few years of a child's life than throughout the whole period of adulthood. This translates to unique responsibilities for those who teach and lead in early childhood settings. While the planning and delivery of programming and other opportunities for young children is critical in the early years, so, too, is the process of assessing children's growth and progress.

Parents are a child's first assessors. Parents assess if a baby is hungry or needs a diaper changed. Parents often partner early with pediatricians and other medical staff to monitor growth and weight gain, assuring that the child is progressing according to norms. As children continue to grow, other adults enter into the conversation for developmental assessment. Early childhood educators determine if a child is learning at an appropriate rate or if she is meeting specific milestones in her life.

Because families play such a critical role in children's lives, it's essential for teachers to partner well with parents in ways that promote healthy development and assess it appropriately. When necessary, early intervention is important for supporting the needs of children. Those in Lutheran schools may or may not have in-house supports necessary to provide services for children who have been determined to have special needs. However, there are outside support agencies in many communities that partner



well with early childhood programs to provide services for children and families. Teachers and, especially, school leaders need to be aware of resources available to them in their communities.

It is a professional responsibility of early childhood educators to engage families in the assessment process. Knowing that each child is a gift from God provides the opportunity to serve Him as you provide the best for children. God knows the needs of these special children; seek His guidance to determine the best ways to address and meet these needs. While there are many ways to engage families in the assessment process, the following recommendations are often viewed to be highly effective by educational leaders.

### Develop Opportunities for Teachers and Families to Communicate

Communication is an important skill for everyone to have. The communication between teachers and families about strengths of or concerns for a child needs to be handled carefully. It can be difficult for a parent to hear a child is not meeting specific developmental milestones. As an educator, it is important to be prepared for these conversations and provide support and resources so the parent can understand the concern with as little anxiety as possible.

Information teachers share with parents should be unbiased, free of difficult-to-understand educational jargon

and presented in different ways. The use of checklists, portfolios of student work or picture documentation can allow differentiated ways to provide concrete information to parents. Depending on the families you serve, providing notes and conversations in their home language is also important.



Parent-teacher conferences are also important opportunities to meet, build relationships and discuss progress and areas of needed growth. However, not all children live with parents. Consider who should attend such a conference: parents, grandparents or other family members who have responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child. These are also excellent opportunities to build stronger relationships with caregivers and be open to hearing their needs and concerns. Just as Jesus did, engaging in conversations with others and building relationships is a Gospel-focused way of reaching out to others with the love of Christ.

## Use Assessment Components that Include Development and Behavior in Multiple Settings

The time children spend in school is only a small snapshot in their whole development. If there are concerns about a child's progress, it is important to gain information from others who see the child. These conversations can begin in meetings with parents as you gain information on who the child sees regularly.

It is important to document the things you notice that raise concern. What time of day are these behaviors happening? Is there a pattern to what is being observed? Are there potential triggers that could be removed? Is there an additional support that could provide assistance for the child? Much reflection and professional conversation can provide unique insight into the development and behavior of children, as well as potential modifications and interventions.

## Connect Home and School Teaching Practices

During conversations with caregivers, seek to learn more about the practices and interactions they have with the child at home. Are there practices the family should engage in more that will benefit the child? Or, are there practices

that occur which could be linked to the concerning behaviors? Educators play a significant role in providing insight, tools and resources for parents to use as they work toward supporting their child's development.

Be sure to clearly articulate what areas of growth are

needed and how the child is supported within the classroom environment for such progress. Seek to provide a clear understanding for why these activities should also occur at home and the benefits that could be achieved for the student. Being able to share the "why" of a suggestion is critical for parents to better understand the reasoning for modifying their home-behaviors or starting something that may be unfamiliar.

Children are gifts from God. As an educator and leader, you serve God through your ministry not only to children, but also to their families. For some families, hearing about specific areas of growth for their child, or even hearing of concerns, may be difficult. As an early childhood professional, you may be one of the first people to share concerning observations with a parent. Such conversations need to be handled carefully and gently. Use these conversations to minister to parents; they will likely need comfort and direction when learning of something that impacts their children and family-dynamic.

Prayer is power — it draws others closer to God, provides comfort and can make a difference in the lives of others. Regardless of the topic of conversation with a family — successes or concerns — remember to begin by offering prayer. For some families, prayer is not a regular part of their life. Knowing they are being prayed for, thought of and remembered by others can be quite meaningful. Through prayer, families can learn that God is real, that God is present and that God can do marvelous things!

### Prayer:

**Dear Lord,** give me the words needed when I have conversations with parents. When conversations are difficult, give me wisdom to use words that offer hope. In Your heavenly name. **Amen.**