

MARCH 2019

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing



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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Discipline is an Act of Love

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (PROV. 22:6).

It’s that time of year again. March, the third month of the year in our current Gregorian calendar, has 31 days and is named after Mars, the Roman god of war. It was originally the first month of the year in the Roman calendar and was named Martius. “March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.” Although this little verse usually refers to weather, not surprisingly, student behavior often follows the same route. It’s no wonder that March feels like the longest month in the school year!

Inevitably in schools, meetings with students, teachers and families accelerate during this time of year. Conferences, consequences and strategies are all enlisted to diminish negative actions and encourage thoughtful, responsible behaviors in students.

The process of classroom discipline is similar in schools across the country with rewards and consequences given to direct positive behavior. Many discipline programs have similar components with the promise that theirs is the key to positive student discipline. The amount of commercial discipline programs and strategies available to educators is plentiful. Love and Logic, Conscious Discipline, Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline (CMCD), The Good Behavior Game (GBG), I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) and Promoting Alternative



Thinking Strategies (PATHS) are only a few of the plethora of programs available to schools. I have personally heard a presentation on “Say Yes to No” and one on “Say No to No.” Clearly, few will ever really agree on the perfect way to manage student discipline.

Christian discipline is a vital part of a school. We are commanded to make disciples, and as we guide and correct out of love, we teach students about God’s justice. The most important difference in a Lutheran school is our motivation and intention. We teach and direct student behavior because it our God-given responsibility. We love and intend for each child to become a disciple of Christ, confident of his worth and forgiveness. We do this by teaching our students “to observe all that [He has] commanded” (MATT. 28:20). Although the instruction is often verbal, it also includes acts of love. We love our students

enough to make them disciples by teaching the Law and guiding the behavior. Our task does not end here. Sharing the Gospel always follows for the students entrusted to our care. For followers of Christ, Lutheran schools provide a foundation for daily living.

And now on to April. Its name is derived from the Latin word *aperit*, which means “to open.” April is the month of the growing season when trees and flowers begin to bloom. “April showers bring May flowers.” There is hope!

March 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					Music in Our Schools Month 1	Mount Rainier National Park Established anniversary, 1899 2
National Anthem Day 3	National Grammar Day 4	International Pancake Day 5	Ash Wednesday 6	Nametag Day 7	National Proofreading Day 8	Genealogy Day 9
Daylight Saving Time 10	Johnny Appleseed Day 11	Girls Scouts of the USA founded, 1912 12	Good Samaritan Involvement Day 13	Pi Day 14	Washington's Address to Continental Army Officers anniversary, 1783 15	Freedom of Information Day 16
Saint Patrick's Day 17	Act Happy Week 18	St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus 19	Won't You Be My Neighbor Day 20	Absolutely Incredible Kid Day 21	Tuskegee Airman Activated anniversary, 1941 22	National Puppy Day 23
24 Harry Houdini born, 1874	The Annunciation of Our Lord 25	Make Up Your Own Holiday Day 26	Little Red Wagon Day 27	"Greatest Show On Earth" formed anniversary, 1881 28	Niagara Falls Runs Dry anniversary, 1848 29	Pencil Patented anniversary, 1858 30
31 Eiffel Tower anniversary, 1889						

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



Computer File



Games FOR Learning

As I reflect on my past, I can remember staring at the green glow of the Apple IIe screen “crunching” the multiples of 3 or moving across the vast West trying not to die of dysentery. Fast forward a few years and I was searching the world trying to apprehend the mysterious Carmen Sandiego. Finally, I can remember being immersed in urban planning trying to keep crime down and fires at bay, all while trying to balance a city budget in the hit game SimCity. Games have a long-standing tradition in education, and I learned many valuable skills by playing them. I was able to learn simple things like basic math and geography facts, as well as more compli-



cated things like budgets and economics. These are all valuable things that I have used in my adult life.

As technology has advanced, where do games stand in the classroom today? Technology has given us the ability to do much more than we once did. There are still the classic games, such as Number Munchers and Oregon Trail, specifically designed to directly teach things like facts and figures, and possibly a bit of problem solving.

There are also mainstream games like SimCity and Minecraft that educators have put an educational twist or spin on. Minecraft has exploded on the educational scene in the past 5–10 years. The

MinecraftEDU community is strong and has created many resources that can be used in the classroom. When Microsoft acquired Minecraft, they built a great resource page for educators. A good place to start is checking out the lessons built at [Minecraft.net](https://minecraft.net).

Mainstream gaming companies are also entering the market with educational products. Take a look at Nintendo and what they are doing with the Switch and the [Labo product line](#). The Institute of Play, along with Nintendo, helped design STEM activities where students build things like cars and pianos out of cardboard and then combine them with the digital world for some rich learning opportunities.

Other popular games have also had an impact on education. Angry Birds and Super Mario Brothers have been used in lessons in physics. What would it look like if we compared a real fist slamming into a brick above our heads? Creative teachers have used games to intrigue and pique students' interest in numerous topics. Civilization V has been used in many history classrooms as a conversation starter and discussion surrounding popular history topics.

We have also reached the point where we can teach our students to create their own games using [GreenFoot](#) or [Scratch](#). In this evolution of games in the classroom, students have the tools that allow them to build games around any topic area. This combines the best of many worlds. Students are learning computational thinking, coding, collaboration skills, problem solving and, when framed correctly, the content that our teachers want



them to learn. I have seen English teachers use Scratch to create new types of interactive poems. I have also seen students build games designed to teach essay writing in AP Biology. Having students be the game designers is a powerful experience.

Finally, I think it is worthwhile to differentiate between using games (as described above) for learning and gamifying traditional learning environments. Gamification is applying the principles of game design (leveling up, earning badges, etc.) to a traditional academic environment. Game designers have always thought about how to keep people in their games. They use the basic principles of mastery learning, immediate feedback and simple points and rewards to help players make their way through the game. The thought behind gamification is to structure the learning so that students can make their way through the curriculum on their own by trying new things, getting feedback, mastering topics and making their way through various levels as they go. Early educators that adopted this tactic often keep spreadsheets and simple websites for their students to check on their progress. Now there are full commercial products to help teachers design their class like a game. You can check out [ClassCraft](#) where you can build your classroom on a game-type platform.

Games in the classroom, in the right hands, can be extremely powerful. I encourage you to check out this [new series](#) from Edsurge on game-based learning and its application to our students' futures. If students are having fun, and games are being used appropriately, why not harness that power in our classrooms?



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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 Washes the Disciples' Feet

JOHN 13:1-17



Before You Teach

Jesus' selfless act of washing His disciples' feet sets an example of humble service for Christians to follow. Next to His death on the cross, this act is perhaps the most selfless moment in Jesus' ministry. Some churches reenact this drama as part of the Maundy Thursday liturgy. Handled with thoughtfulness and care, it might well be a way for us in our classrooms to teach the deep and timeless Gospel truth of the selfless love of our Lord and Savior.

Greeting

Set aside time to warmly welcome each child upon entry into the classroom. *Good morning/afternoon child of God! Jesus loves you, and I do too!*

Gathering

Follow your established routine, signaling children to gather while playing or singing a gathering song. (See options in the songbook *LOSP*.) Introduce the biblical focus for the day.

Tell the Story

DIRECTIONS: Lead children in "scrub and rub" actions as chant is spoken.

At the time Jesus was on earth, people wore sandals where He lived. Walking from place to place on dirty and dusty roads, their feet got very, very dirty. Servants usually washed visitors' feet. It was a messy, smelly job. But one night, Jesus showed how much He loved His disciples by caring for their needs. After dinner, Jesus got up, wrapped a towel around His waist, poured water into a bowl and began to wash His disciples' feet, before drying them with the towel. **Scrub and rub, scrub and rub. Dirty feet, now clean and neat.** Jesus carefully washed the feet of one disciple, and then another and another. **Scrub and rub, scrub and rub. Dirty feet, now clean and neat.** When He came to Simon Peter, the disciple said to Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?" Not understanding Jesus' kind and loving heart, Peter said, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus said, "You do not understand what I am doing now, but sometime later you will." Peter replied, "Then wash my hands and my head as well." **Scrub and rub, scrub and rub. Head and hands and dirty feet, all are now clean and neat.** When Jesus finished washing



His disciples' feet, He sat down again and said, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet. I have shown you how to love, **forgive** and care for others just as I love, **forgive** and care for you." Jesus loves, **forgives** and cares for us. He shows us how to love, **forgive** and care for others. Jesus is with us always. Jesus is God.

PRAY TOGETHER

Jesus, our Savior, Lord of love, came to us from heav'n above. Thank You for Your loving care, for all people everywhere. Forgive us for the wrong we do. Teach us to always follow You. Amen.

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: "Through love serve one another" (GAL. 5:13B).

Gr. 1 & 2: "Love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (JOHN 13:34B).

ACTIVITIES

Create: Bulletin Board. Title: Love One Another As I Love You. You will need: A large construction paper cross, a heart, footprints cut from watercolor paper and watercolors. Children paint footprints. Set aside to dry.



Center and adhere the precut heart to the construction paper cross, placing both on the bulletin board. When dry, use footprints to create a path to the cross. Jesus humbled Himself before His disciples, washing their feet as a sign of His great love and **forgiveness** for all people.

Do:

- 1 Practice using the words, "I love you because Jesus loves me."
"I **forgive** you, because Jesus **forgives** me."
- 2 Jesus humbly served His disciples by washing their feet. Engage in unexpected acts of kindness or service (e.g., drawn-by-hand cards, small gifts such as candy or a flower, debris cleanup on school/ church grounds).



Sing: "Jesus! What a Name" (LOSP, p. 47); "There Is a Name I Love to Hear" (LOSP, p. 44).

Live the Story



Jesus' selfless example taught humble service and forgiveness to His disciples, and to the world. The selflessness of **forgiveness** is challenging to teach, and even more challenging to put into practice. The most powerful method for teaching is to instruct, demonstrate, practice and daily model desired behavior.

Sending

Gather children in a "Sending Circle." Pass a small cross. Guide each child to in turn offer a brief prayer or to silently pass the cross along. As children depart say to each, **Love others just as Jesus loves you!**



Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD. Real Growth

“What do you mean your shoes don’t fit you anymore? I just bought those six weeks ago!”

This is the time in the school year when growth becomes more observable. A teacher may now look eye-to-eye with a young student who was inches shorter last fall. A parent may now observe his child performing math calculations at an advanced level. As spring approaches, there may now be an increased “personal level of interest” toward classmates of the opposite sex.

Growth in our children is expected, and desired, in a timely and natural process. Not only are we interested in their physical growth, but we are also interested in their mental growth, their emotional and social maturation and their spiritual development. When growth doesn’t occur at a natural rate or even on a reasonable parental timetable, we get anxious. We seek out experts for insight and we even look at the things we have done, or perhaps didn’t do, as parents.

God has created a world made for growth. It is part of His plan for sustaining life. It creates a certain order and a natural rhythm that we come to count on as citizens of this planet. But we know that this world is not perfect, and there are times when things don’t work out as we would expect as we experience the process of birth, growth, life and death. It is hard to understand why a baby would have complications after a mother’s uneventful pregnancy. We are confused when a child or teenager contracts diseases that seem more appropriate for an adult. We can even feel cheated when a friend

or loved one doesn’t seem to have “lived a full life,” even though they died in their 60s or 70s.

How do we as parents cope with a growth/life cycle that sometimes does not seem to make sense? Here are three things to keep in mind as you and I go through life and as life comes at us:

REALIZE that not everyone, nor every family or every community, will have perfect health and enjoy the process of growth as expected. There will be challenges and setbacks, but these become opportunities for trusting God and supporting one another.

REJOICE in all things! God will work all things together for good! We may not see a “greater good” at the moment, but Jesus will walk with us through every deep valley.

REACH forward and see new possibilities. What we may think is a setback is only a side step from God’s perspective of our lives. Our perspective is only a partial picture of what can be and what is yet to come from our loving God, the Giver of all good things.

Real growth comes in our daily walk with Jesus. It doesn’t happen physically, or mentally, or socially or even financially. It happens as we celebrate the gift of eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Real growth is living a life, daily sustained by the Holy Spirit, which gives us the assurance of eternal life.



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

Shared by the family member who has grown the most physically this past year.

OPENER: "THE TALLEST AND OLDEST GAME"

Position the family in front of a computer/tablet/phone that is connected to the Internet and answer the following — but first, make a guess as a family!

ITEM	FAMILY GUESS	REAL ANSWER
Tallest man in the world	_____	_____
Tallest woman in the world	_____	_____
Tallest President of the United States	_____	_____
Tallest child under 10 years old	_____	_____
Tallest tree in the world	_____	_____
Oldest tree in the world	_____	_____
Oldest turtle/tortoise	_____	_____
Oldest living person in the world	_____	_____



Follow-up Questions:

- How did your family do on the questions?
- Was it easy or hard?
- What did you learn?

FAMILY STUDY TIME

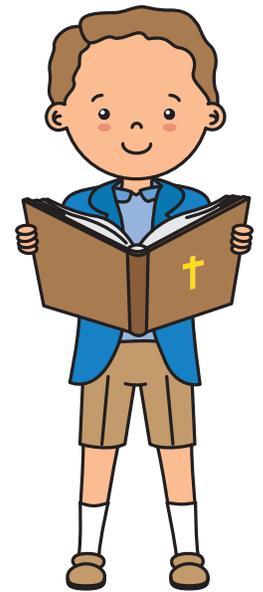
Have someone in your family look up 1 Cor. 3:6–8 and read it out loud for all to hear.

- 1 Does it matter who plants a seed? (*no*)
- 2 Does it matter who waters the seed? (*no*)
- 3 What matters? (*God, who helps all things to grow*)

What are ways in which the family grows in faith? Check the appropriate boxes below that indicate an activity that people in your family do on a regular basis.

- go to church
- attend Sunday School
- go to youth group
- go to adult Bible class
- do service projects
- do personal devotions
- read Bible stories to kids
- have family devotions
- attend a Christian school
- other: _____

What are some ways that people in the family can grow in faith in the future? _____



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 Father in Heaven. Thank You for making our world. Thank You for making me. Help us to grow in faith every day. Help us to trust You always, in everything we do and say. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



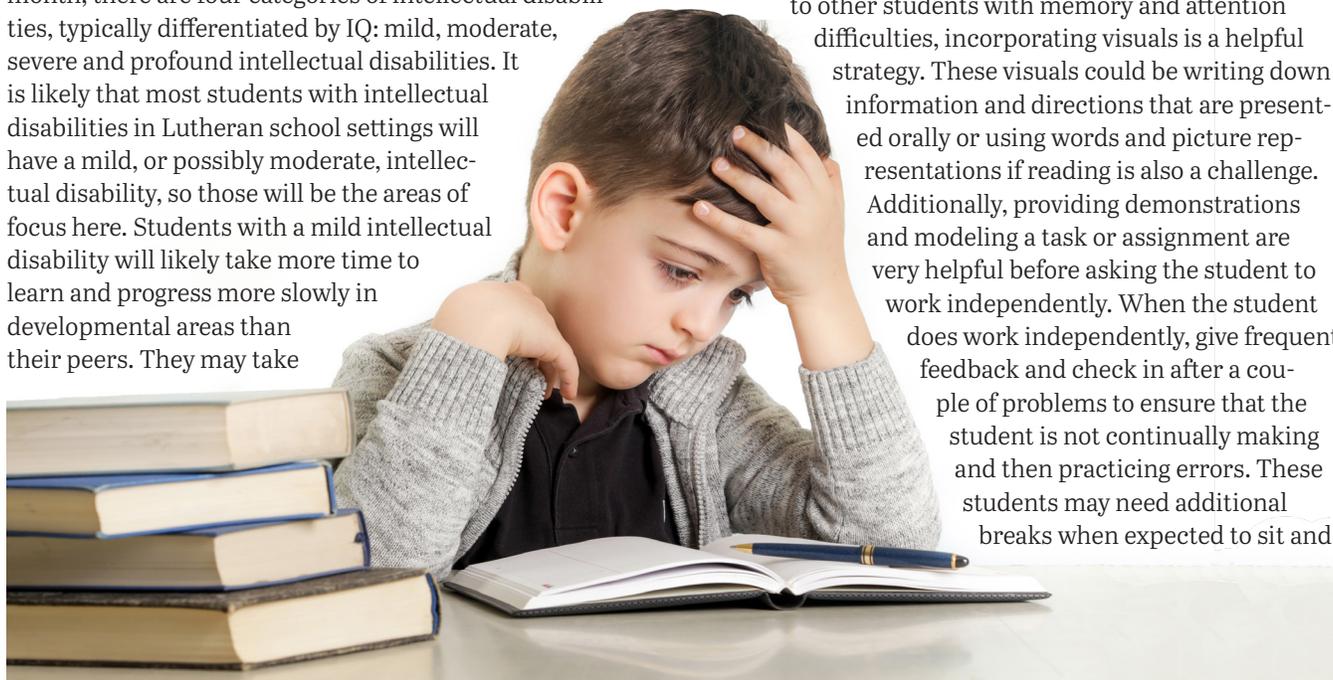
Students with Intellectual Disabilities, Part 2

Last month, we looked at some of the signs and also highlighted the strengths of students with intellectual disabilities. To continue with that topic, we will now discuss some of the struggles these students face and effective classroom strategies to help these learners.

While the struggles a student experiences due to an intellectual disability will vary by individual, they also may vary by the degree of the disability. As outlined last month, there are four categories of intellectual disabilities, typically differentiated by IQ: mild, moderate, severe and profound intellectual disabilities. It is likely that most students with intellectual disabilities in Lutheran school settings will have a mild, or possibly moderate, intellectual disability, so those will be the areas of focus here. Students with a mild intellectual disability will likely take more time to learn and progress more slowly in developmental areas than their peers. They may take

longer to learn how to speak, walk and take care of their personal needs like feeding and dressing when they are younger as well. Speech development may also be delayed in these students.

Students with intellectual disabilities are capable of learning academic content, but that learning may be at a different rate than their peers. Memory and attention span are two additional areas that are often affected, and that impacts learning for these students. Similar to other students with memory and attention difficulties, incorporating visuals is a helpful strategy. These visuals could be writing down information and directions that are presented orally or using words and picture representations if reading is also a challenge. Additionally, providing demonstrations and modeling a task or assignment are very helpful before asking the student to work independently. When the student does work independently, give frequent feedback and check in after a couple of problems to ensure that the student is not continually making and then practicing errors. These students may need additional breaks when expected to sit and



complete work for long periods of time. Establishing a schedule or expectation for completing part of an assignment before taking a brief break is helpful rather than randomly deciding that a student can take a few minutes to do another activity before coming back to complete a task.

Organizational skills may be another area these students need assistance with at school, and visuals are helpful tools for this also. Creating checklists for routines such as coming to school and unpacking the backpack, turning in homework and packing up materials to leave for the day will be beneficial additions to help students learn and practice routines and stay organized. These checklists may use pictures, words or a combination of the two depending on the student. This consistency will help the student with routine and knowing what to do during some of the difficult transition periods during the day. Try to pinpoint specific areas or times of the day that the student is struggling with and create a visual with specific steps for that activity. Keep the visual where the student can see it during that time and where it will not get lost.

The strengths of students with intellectual disabilities were previously highlighted, and we also emphasized that part of the blessing of each student being fearfully and wonderfully made is that educators can identify and use these strengths in the classroom. Building on some of the interpersonal strengths of students with intellectual disabilities brings us to some additional strategies that are helpful for this group of learners. Cooperative learning is very effective because of the student interaction that comes with it. The ability to use and practice communication skills and receive feedback from peers is also helpful. Using these students as peer teachers for young students also brings out their gifts of being nurturing and helpful. This practice can help with academic skills for both the student doing the peer teaching and the younger students while allowing each to show their care for others.

Many of these students have strengths in drama and acting, and teachers can incorporate these into the classroom with dramatic role-play to act out historical events or bring word problems to life. This also helps make the connection between abstract and concrete ideas that can be a challenge for students with intellectual disabilities.

To further help with this, use hands-on materials whenever possible and show pictures to demonstrate ideas and concepts being presented. Linking these abstract ideas to something concrete and the student's prior knowledge will help to build these connections. Abstract language such as similes, metaphors and idioms may also be difficult for these students to understand. Common idioms may need to be directly taught and demonstrated as appropriate, and similes and metaphors may not be understood immediately based on context. Keeping written and oral language clear, concise and direct will help with understanding as well.



While there are often more individualized needs and strategies for students with varying degrees of intellectual disabilities, these ideas give a picture of some effective tools for the classroom. Please contact Lutheran Special Education Ministries for help with more specific ideas and assistance for the students in your classroom. Visit luthsped.org or send an email to lsem@luthsped.org.

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Writer: Kara Bratton Designer: Frank Kohn

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Growing in Governing

GROWTH TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS



Rich in Resources

Being fully equipped for a task can make everything run more smoothly. Someone once said, “Success is dependent upon the preparation, which is 80 percent of the process; it is what ensures that the end product is a good one.” In Lutheran schools, governance work equates itself with an incredible amount of preparation. We could just “dig in,” but we know that the first step of preparation and of an “effective try” is to begin with the Lord.

We are reminded of this favorite hymn, “With the Lord Begin Your Task” (*Lutheran Worship* #483):

With the Lord begin your task;
Jesus will direct it.
For his aid and counsel ask;
Jesus will perfect it.
Ev’ry morn with Jesus rise,
And when day is ended,
In his name then close your eyes;
Be to him commended.

Let each day begin with prayer,
Praise, and adoration.
On the Lord cast ev’ry care;
He is your salvation.
Morning, evening, and at night
Jesus will be near you,
Save you from the tempter’s might,
With his presence cheer you.

With your Savior at your side,
Foes need not alarm you;
In his promises confide,
And no ill can harm you.



All your trust and hope repose
In the mighty master,
Who in wisdom truly knows
How to stem disaster.

If your task be thus begun
With the Savior’s blessing,
Safely then your course will run,
Toward the promise pressing.
Good will follow ev’rywhere
While you here must wander;
You at last the joy will share
In the mansions yonder.

As we begin with the Lord, so we keep Him in every part of the process. We thank Him for the outcomes. Resources help us to be better equipped. They are not only building blocks, but they are also important pieces that lend themselves to all standards in the accreditation process and they give great guidance to the principal and board as well.

Attention to Detail

For anyone who has served in the military or who has

witnessed an organization operate like a well-oiled machine, this design is a culture changer. In the military, it begins right away in basic training. Everyone is taught to make their beds, and to do so in the exact same way. From that point on it is expected. From that point on everyone follows the lead of the instructor and the instructions given and continually practiced. It creates team, a sense of pride, good customer service and — yes — a specific culture. If everyone on the team understands that watching the minute and the larger design flow can produce great results, more buy-in and success is a common observation. The difficult part is developing such a culture. Unless the culture is one where each person understands and accepts the vision, the goals, the mission and the healthy team concept, atrophy is a common result. It takes practice, it takes accountability, it takes oversight and it takes a good attitude for everything to come together.

Processes and Structures

This topic goes with the one right above it. It really is all about detail. Consider creating a notebook of “Process Pages” that drive certain outcomes. Structures can be kept and solidified, changed for the better or created from scratch. Those outside the school will both notice and applaud the managerial excellence, the leadership and the striving for greatness.

Policy

Most boards need policy to direct action. Policy-based governance demands it, with limits put in place for the head of school and all involved in leadership. Policy templates allow for important structure and they can be as simple as just one paragraph or more complicated with needed details. Procedure follows procedure; action, protection, and follow-through come next.

Board Orientation Materials

This is a must-have for all new boards, and an annual review should be the very first meeting protocol. The resources are there: *LuthEd.org*, the District Education Executive and professional Lutheran educators who specialize in sharing best practices and expectations can be found in many parts of the nation.

Third Source Funding

Budgets are set. In most cases school ministries do some type of fundraising beyond the budget. Consider

a one-page or a tri-fold flier that describes third-source funding opportunities to the entire community that supports the educational ministry. This can even be included in an annual fund mailing. It is a resource that will both be well-received and pay great dividends.

Vision Exercise

Without a vision, the people will perish. One needs to know where he is going to plan out how to get there. A vision exercise allows the board or governance committee to take time to reflect, to re-direct and to look short- and long-term at the future. Action plans can be put in place that will move the team to plan. It can be fun to dream! Remember — preparation is a critical step in ensuring successful outcomes.

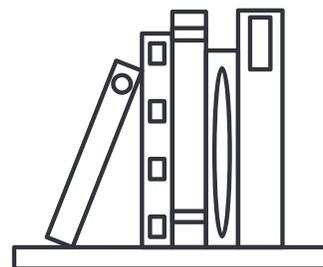
Protect Your Ministry

Legal safety nets must be in place in our schools. The LCMS and the organization Alliance Defending Freedom worked together to create a document that directs our churches and schools to put safeguards in place for the many areas needed.

Resources do not always need to be created from scratch. For any part of this article, one can find the resources discussed. Each can be custom-designed per school; each can be a blessing to be able to move us forward with confidence. With the Lord we begin our tasks. He will direct us!

Resources

- ▶ Process Pages template
- ▶ Opportunities for Stewardship template
- ▶ Protect Your Ministry booklet
- ▶ LuthEd website
- ▶ Governing Board Resource for Lutheran Schools
- ▶ Policy template



Resources or continued conversations are available by contacting the author at 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.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.

1979 March

In 1979, as the celebration of the *Year of the Child* continued, Joanne Eisenberg thoughtfully reflected about her encounter with a 6-year-old boy seated next to her who was traveling alone on a plane she that was taking to St. Louis. "I learned a lot about Damien in our short time together," Joanne wrote, noting the fear in his eyes as the tears and questions poured out of him. Joanne was moved by the fact that Damien had passed from his mother's hands, to her hands, to the flight attendant's hands and finally to his aunt's hands on his journey of traveling alone. With empathy and caring, she asked, "How many more hands would this little guy pass through in a lifetime?" Thinking about the *Year of the Child*, she wondered about the hundreds of children that "pass our way." She challenged readers, "Are we able to offer them a hand? A hand of God? That my friends, is what the *Year of the Child* is all about!" Although today I doubt that we would see 6-year-olds traveling alone, sadly we continue to see children with fear in their eyes with tears and burdens they are too young to bear. Fifty years ago, Joanne extended her hand to Damien with the prayer that we continue to extend ours to the children we serve today.

insights and ideas for early years - March 1979

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God, the young child, and the Language Arts

While celebrating the YEAR OF THE CHILD, many of us will have personal encounters with an individual child or a group of children that will make this year memorable. I had such an experience on the first day of the New Year, 1979, and I'd like to share it with you.

His name was Damien, and I met him on a return flight to St. Louis after the Christmas holidays. Damien was 6 years old and traveling alone. His anxious mother looked at me with question and relief when I offered to sit with him on the plane. The airline's usual concern for unaccompanied children was not in evidence that day—perhaps because of the overcrowded holiday traffic.

I learned a lot about Damien in our short time together. Outwardly he looked like a tough little guy, but his big, blue, questioning eyes, golden locks, and his hesitancy to sit by the window soon led me to believe that here was a scared little boy with a mighty facade.

My first impression was confirmed when he kissed Mom goodbye and burst into hysterical sobs. He needed her reassurance: "Do you love me?" (Yes, I love you.) "Will Aunt Trish and Uncle Jim be there to meet me?" (Yes, they'll be there.) "Will you call me?" (Yes.) "What time?" (10:00 o'clock.) "What happens if I'm asleep?" (I'll tell Aunt Trish to wake you.) "When will I see you again?" (At Easter time.)

AT EASTER TIME? That was 4 months away! Why did this little boy have to be separated from a mother he obviously loved for 4 months?

I don't believe in badgering kids with questions, so I don't know Damien's entire story. By putting together bit and pieces I could surmise that Damien was from a lower middle class family. Mom and Dad were separated. His bag full of Christmas gifts gave me some hints. His new record player from his Mom may have been bought with her tip money as a waitress. Dad's gift, "The 6 Million Dollar Man" game led me to believe that Dad didn't know a whole lot about 6 year olds. Perhaps it was a token present or an illusion to the tough guy facade that Damien was to convey.

I learned that Damien had only lived with his aunt and uncle since September, that there were no cousins to play with, that they lived 45 minutes from the St. Louis airport, that he didn't know how to read - but was curious and bright, and that he knew the value of money (he refused a snack because he didn't have any money).

By the time we taxied into the St. Louis terminal, Damien and I were friends. We were talking and laughing and singing together. As we left the plane, I asked the stewardess where Damien was to meet his relatives. "Oh, isn't he yours?", she asked. "Then he'll have to stay here with me until everyone departs."

Once again I saw the fear in those big, blue eyes as the tears and questions came. I had only known Damien a short while, but he trusted me. He had passed from mother's hands, to mine, to the stewardesses', to his aunt's - all in one night. How many more hands would this little guy pass through in a lifetime?

That night I had trouble getting to sleep. I thought a lot about Damien. I wish we had exchanged phone numbers so we could have stayed in touch. I wish we had had a chance to talk about Jesus.

Looking back, I thought it very appropriate that God had sent Damien my way that first day of the YEAR OF THE CHILD. Hundreds of kids pass our way in a lifetime. Dozens of them are Damiens. Are we able to offer them a hand? The hand of God? That my friends, is what the YEAR OF THE CHILD is all about!



kids

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A make-believe "Gallop Poll" taken among 200 kindergarten kids in St. Louis showed the following favorites:

- Brown Bear, Brown Bear, Bill Martin
- Curious George, Hans A. Rey
- Danny and the Dinosaur, Syd Hoff
- Harold and the Purple Crayon,
Crockett Johnson
- Harry the Dirty Dog, Gene Zion
- Leo the Late Bloomer, Robert Kraus
- The Little Engine That Could,
Watty Piper
- May I Bring a Friend, Beatrice De Regniers
- The Tale of Peter Rabbit,
Beatrix Potter
- Where the Wild Things Are,
Maurice Sendak

To this I add my list:

- Faces, Barbara Brenner
- Barto Takes the Subway, Barbara Brenner
- Hector Protector, Maurice Sendak
- Jimmy Has Lost His Cap, Bruno Munari
- Black is Beautiful, Ann McGovern
- Mama, I Wish I Was Snow, Child, You'd Be
Very Cold, Ruth Krauss
- Friday Night is Papa Night, Ruth Sonneborn
- Umbrella, Taro Yashima
- The Paper Party, Don Freeman
- Applebet Story, Byron Barton
- Play With Me, Marie Hallets
- Corduroy, Don Freeman

MARCH MAGIC



March is windy:

Give each child a small, light feather. Tell the children to keep it floating in the air as long as possible by blowing it.

March is green:



Fold a piece of finger painting paper in half. Put yellow finger paint on one half, blue on the other. Allow the children to finger paint until they blend the two colors and discover green.

March is a lamb/lion:

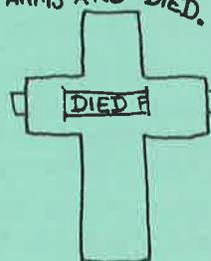
"If March comes in like a lamb, it will go out like a lion. . . ." Talk about the difference natures of a lamb and lion. Make lamb and lion silhouettes. Using popcorn, cover the lamb with popped kernels. Shake some of the popcorn with black tempera paint to be used as hoofs, ears, eyes, mouth. Shake some of the popped corn with yellow paint for the lion's mane. Color or paint the rest of the lion silhouette.



ASKED GOD, "HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE ME?" HE SAID, "THIS MUCH!" AND STRETCHED OUT HIS ARMS AND DIED.

March is Lent:

Cut a 6 x 9" cross out of construction paper. The cross should be about 1 1/2" thick. Make a slit in the cross bar. On another 1 1/2" piece of paper write: "He died for All." Pull the Bible words through the slit in the cross.



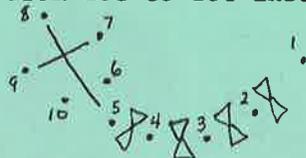
March is Irish potatoes:



Give each child a small Irish potato. Arms, legs, feet, hands, mouth, hat, etc. can be made out of salt dough and attached to "Mr. Potato Head" with toothpicks. Later, the features can be removed and the potatoes baked. Make butter for the potatoes by shaking cream in a glass jar. Add green food coloring to the butter.

March is kites:

Make dot-to-dot shapes on tagboard using paper fasteners as the dots and yarn to go from dot to dot instead of a pencil.



--Mt. Calvary Nursery, Cleveland, OH
Taken from LEARNING THROUGH THE YEAR, by Doris Edmund

LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES

SPEAKING:



Sharing

1. Use an Easter basket for "show and tell" this month. The basket, complete with straw grass, can be sent home with a different child each day. The child describes the item hidden in the basket to the class. Classmates may ask questions about the item. Six questions is sufficient or the group will loose interest.

2. Use a SURPRISE BOX for "show and tell." As spring approaches, the children may want to take the box home and fill it with "a sign of new life" (tree buds, bird eggs, etc.). Teacher may also want to take the box home and bring it back with a baby chick, rabbit or other "live" sign of spring.

3. Have the children line up and form a train by placing their outstretched arm on the shoulder of the person in front of them. The train chugs about the room, stopping frequently so children can tell the conductor/teacher what they see. Later the train can go to imaginative places -- "Leprechaun" land, "Easter" land, "vacation" land.

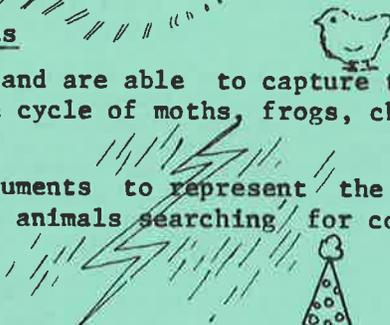
Creative Dramatics

1. Young children identify easily with animals and are able to capture the movement quality of familiar animals. Dramatize the life cycle of moths, frogs, chicks. Use the RCA Dance-A-Story Record/Book, "Little Duck."

2. Re-enact a thunderstorm using rhythm instruments to represent the raindrops, wind, thunder, lightening, etc. Add trees, and animals searching for cover in the woods to enlarge the dramatization.



Role Playing



1. Exhibit a collection of hats - cowboy hat, swimming cap, motorcycle helmet, etc. Children place the hat on their head and assume the role of that character.

2. Have children pretend they are going grocery shopping. Some can be fathers, mothers, babies, clerks. Cardboard boxes can be used as cars and grocery carts. Discuss what the children purchased on their shopping expedition.

PRE-READING:

1. String a clothesline across the room. With clip clothespins, pin the letters of the alphabet to the top of the clothesline. Tie real items beginning with each letter underneath the correct letter.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

2. Using a pattern, have parent helpers cut mother kangaroos for each letter of the alphabet with the capital letters on their pockets. Make small "Baby Roos" with lower case letters printed on them to fit in each pocket. Children match the two. (This activity can be self correcting if capital and lower case letters are written in the same color).

WRITING:

1. Make scribble drawings. Find shapes and letters in them.

2. Cut the letters of each child's name out of sandpaper or some textured material. Children can trace their names with their fingers.

LISTENING:

PUPPETS



Walking Finger Puppet



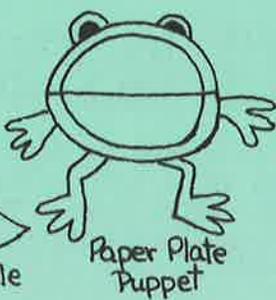
Paper Cup Puppet



Stick Puppet



Detergent Bottle Puppet



Paper Plate Puppet



Paper Bag Puppet

Storytelling

Using Literature with Young Children (edited by Leland Jacobs), Teachers College Press, explains that not all stories written are good for storytelling. The story to tell young children is one whose plot is compact, direct, and well paced, whose problem is established, and whose resolution holds the listener to the very last word.

Some good storytelling books are:

- Stories of animals, like Millions of Cats; The Story of Ping; Make Way for Ducklings
- Stories of everyday experiences, like Little Boy Brown; Rosa-Too-Little; Willie's Walk to Grandma's
- Stories of make-believe, like Georgie; The Five Hundred Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins
- Stories of holidays, like Ask Mr. Bear; The Animals Came First; Pumpkin Moonshine
- Stories of far away or long ago, like Mei Li; Crow Boy
- Stories of today's mechanical world, like Mike Mulligan; Little Toot
- Stories of the great outdoors, like Play With Me; The Little Island

Fingerplays



APRIL FIRST

Little bears have three feet.
 Little bears have four.
 Little cows have two feet.
 And girls and boys have more.
 Do you believe my song?
 I'll tell it only once a year.
 When April comes along.
 APRIL FOOL!

(Hold up three fingers)
 (Use four fingers in same way)
 (Use two fingers in same way)
 (Use five fingers in same way)
 (Point to "you", point to own temple and mouth)
 (Point to "you", point to own temple and throat)
 (Hold up index finger for "once")
 (Clap hands to express pleasure)

RAINY DAY FUN

Slip on your raincoat,
 Pull on galoshes;
 Wading in puddles
 Make splishes and splashes!

HERE IS JACK RABBIT

Here is Jack Rabbit
 With nose so funny.
 This is his home in the ground.
 When a noise he hears,
 He perks up his ears,
 And jumps into the ground.

(Make fist of right hand)
 (Make thumb wiggle)
 (Make hole with left finger and thumb)
 (Make ears by putting little finger and forefinger up)
 (Jump right hand into hole in left hand)

Teacher's Corner

The following resources will help with your language arts program:

1. Fingerplays:

Games To Play With The Very Young; A Treasury of Nursery Songs and Fingerplays, compiled by Elizabeth M. Matterson, McGraw, 1971.

2. Puppets:

Finger Puppets: Easy To Make, Fun To Use, by Laura Ross. Lothrop, 1971.
 Instructions for bare finger, shadow finger, Thumbelina, and other puppets using construction paper, cardboard, styrofoam and gloves; songs, rhymes, and stories provide concrete examples for use.

3. Storytelling:

Preschool Story Time for Children Ages 3-5, by Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California.

Along with helpful hints there are specific suggestions for suitable stories, poetry books, and fingerplay books to share.

Reading and Pre-First Grade (Brochure), "a joint statement of concerns about present practices in pre-first grade reading. Instruction and recommendations for improvement." Free. Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware, 19711.

The Midwest Association for the Education of the Young Child will hold its annual conference in St. Louis on April 4-8, 1979. This group includes 12 states and 3-4,000 teachers. Board of Parish Education staff members Norm Junghans, Earl Gaulke, Marlin Schulz, Al Senske and myself have been asked to present mini-sessions at this conference.



NLSA Powerful Practices



Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Macomb, Mich.

Community-Focused, Christ-Centered, Home for All

“We must be a community of faith that if we closed our doors, the community of Macomb would notice and care.” That’s the vision Pastor Greg Griffith challenges his staff and members with regularly.

“From community events to caring for those in need, Immanuel is united and committed to serving those in our midst and world with great love and compassion. We know that as we share the love of Jesus, He will be glorified, and others will know His love through our love. We strive to be the local church for the community around us, meeting the needs that no one else is,” describes Pastor Greg.

At Immanuel, we are committed to the biblical teachings and model of Jesus. Our mission is *To Know Christ is to Share His Love by Experiencing Faith and Life Together*. Jesus has set an example for us to follow in serving one another with love and humility. Through our culture of positive team ministry, our church and school ministries love and serve together through various community service activities and events.

RUN THE PLANK: 3 MILES OF FAITH

In 2011, Pastor Greg heard the Holy Spirit’s whispers and acted on an idea to coordinate a community 5K event with neighboring churches — St. Peter Lutheran Church and St. Isidore Catholic Church. Pastor Greg’s philosophy about this event? “As three churches, we each do good work for the community, but imagine the amazing good that could happen if we all came together!” Together, each church pledged that every



Participants gather before the Run the Plank: 3 Miles of Faith event.

dollar received after expenses would go out to the community, and no church would profit monetarily from this venture. With much prayer and cooperation from the Macomb Township Board and Sheriff/Fire Departments, 2012 became the inaugural *Run the Plank: 3 Miles of Faith 5K Event*. The initial goal was to register 500 participants, but God blessed us with 920 participants and \$20,000 in proceeds, donated to the MISD Homeless Student Education Program. In addition, 10,000 pairs of donated shoes were presented to Soles for Souls to support their ministry. Since 2012, we have raised over \$245,000 for various local charities and grown from 920 participants to over 1,600 participants. All proceeds continue to go to Macomb County charities.

BACK2SCHOOL FEST

Associate Pastor Michael Heiden felt God leading us to “continue to be a blessing to neighboring families and their children as they head back to school.” For many years, Immanuel has hosted the Fall Family Fun Fair and provided a carnival-type experience for families to kick-off the school year. This free day of fun was an



Left: A boy is given a backpack and supplies to prepare him for the first day of school. **Right:** Children perform a song at the VBS program.

invitation for the community to enjoy bounce houses, games, crafts, face painting, food and ice cream. In 2014, Pastor Michael was led to grow this event into the Back2School Fest in which we continue all the same carnival fun, but also give away over 2,000 backpacks to children! These backpacks include all the essentials a child might need to begin school including notebook, crayons, glue, erasers, pencils, highlighter, ruler, folder and more. This event involves the efforts of over 200 volunteers, \$20,000 from Immanuel's general budget, and \$10,000 from our community sponsors and other donations. The team effort by Immanuel's staff and dedicated volunteers allows us to host 3,000–4,000 people on our campus for this event!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

“Our Vacation Bible School is an experience, not just another VBS,” affirms Karen Reincke, Lead Family Life Minister. “Each year, over 800 students attend, and over 40% of those are neither church nor school members. Since it is a free event, we draw many people that may originally start off utilizing our VBS as a daycare option, but by the end of the week, all kids feel like they belong and they have become part of our family.” Our volunteer team members (over 200 adults and 150 teens) work together with an outreach focus to create a welcoming atmosphere of grace and love and strive to reflect Jesus in all we say and do. In training our volunteers, the focus remains on serving with a joy-filled attitude, as we realize some kids do not yet know Jesus nor worship Him. “VBS is a time when new relationships are made and current relationships are strengthened as we are vessels of Jesus’s love and forgiveness to children in our community,” adds Reincke.

HOLIDAY EVENTS

Immanuel offers several other widely anticipated, holiday-themed community events throughout the year.

During our Easter Egg Hunt, we hide over 11,000 candy-filled eggs across our campus. We average about 1,500 visitors who search for eggs throughout our classrooms and Worship Center. This allows first-time guests to experience our children’s ministry and worship venues in a relaxed manner, while having fun with their families.

Our Trunk ‘n Treat is an opportunity for the community to dress up in costumes and have some family fun! Families are encouraged to decorate their trunks with a festive theme and hand out candy from their cars. The trunk that has the best decorations and theme wins a prize! There are snacks, games, pumpkins, bonfire, music and much more free fun! About 1,800 guests come out to enjoy this event.

Immanuel kicks off the Christmas holiday season with our Living Nativity event. This free event includes both indoor and outdoor activities and is held rain, snow or shine! We feature live animals, including camels, and rotate cast members who portray the parts of Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels and narrator to bring the biblical Christmas story to life at our outdoor nativity scene. Indoor activities include crafts, music, food, photo booth and face painting. With approximately 2,000 attending this yearly event, it has become a fun family tradition for many.

CHURCH AND SCHOOL: UNITED IN MISSION AND OUTREACH

“Our school partners with our church throughout the year to carry out our mission statement by continually seeking ways to serve our local community, our country and our world,” emphasizes Joel Neumeyer, Principal. “We have a team of teachers who work in conjunction with our pastoral staff to identify groups or organizations that we can rally behind and support.”

“We are passionate about opening the doors for children to serve and be the hands and feet of our Lord,” continues Elizabeth O’Meara, second-grade teacher and long-time Mission Team Leader. “Our goal is to encourage each student to make a difference in the name of Jesus. We feel children are never too young to serve our God. We spend time learning about the chosen mission projects, in order to help the students take ownership of these projects. Our mission motto is always to encourage the students to: PRAY, TELL and GIVE. *Pray* for the mission work, *Tell* others about the mission project and *Give* an offering whether it be monies, items or time.”

We have launched many student mission projects over the years, including:

For our “Prayer Blanket Mission Project,” we partnered with the Macomb Charitable Foundation and Immanuel’s Prayer Blanket Ministry. Our school children raised \$3,500 in chapel offerings to buy the materials for 350 fleece blankets. Every student participated in the making of these blankets for homeless families in the Macomb Intermediate School District.

During one of our “Hearts for Jesus” campaigns, we challenged our students to raise money to benefit foster children in the State of Michigan, in conjunction with Wellspring Lutheran Services. Our generous families helped us reach our goal of \$3,000 and — as an added incentive — every student got the chance to duct-tape Principal Neumeyer to the wall!

Fundamental to the Immanuel school ministry is our preschool program. Janet Hilsabeck, Early Childhood Director, attests: “Immanuel is very passionate about



Left: Principal Neumeyer was taped to the wall as part of a Hearts for Jesus campaign. **Right:** Prayer blankets for area homeless families await delivery.

being unified throughout. At every weekend service as part of the opening remarks, we are reminded that: *All are family at Immanuel*. Some of the best evidence of this comes from testimonials of preschool parents who say being at Immanuel is like being part of a family. They tell other parents that our teachers will love your children as if they are their own — and they mean it!”

When our ministries work together and remain united in mission and purpose, the community experiences the church at its biblical core. We are the body of Christ, sharing the heart of Jesus with the community and serving those outside of ourselves. In the process of serving others, we see the value and passion of each other, and we truly want to make a difference in the lives of those whom God has entrusted to us. God continues to guide and lead Immanuel to be a place where everyone can *Experience Faith and Life Together* as a Community-Focused, Christ-centered, Home for All!



Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Plan to Succeed

No one would argue that children who can make and follow a plan don't have an edge on school and life. Planning makes everything from school projects and vocational goals to birthday parties much easier. Children who can plan are conscientious, and conscientious people are generally happier and healthier. Parents have always known that it is good to teach our children how to plan, but now science is telling us that one type of planning is better than another. Often we use forward planning to reach our goals, but reverse planning is more effective.

Reverse planning does not mean that you work in a mirror, but it does mean that you begin with the goal instead of the first step. When we begin with the goal,

we focus on the final product and this helps us to do better planning.

Let's see how this works as I do my weekly meal planning:

When I do forward planning, I go grocery shopping to get items I have noticed are needed. When it is time for supper, I look in the cabinets, refrigerator and freezer and see what we have. Then I fix supper. As you can imagine, sometimes I have to make a quick trip to the store for something I need, but generally we eat healthy meals.

If I use reverse planning, instead of starting with grocery shopping, I will start with the goal of healthy



meals. I will plan the meals, check on supplies and then make my grocery list. This results in better meal planning and more efficient work. It also means the clerk doesn't look at me funny wondering why I am back in the store so soon.

If we don't teach children how to plan, they will most likely learn forward planning. This will get them through school, but better planning will create better work and better learning longer term. Learning and practicing reverse planning will improve essential executive function skills like focus and flexibility. A child diagnosed with ADHD or a learning disability will especially benefit from the practice of reverse planning.

When information for the science fair or a class presentation comes home, this is a good time to help your child learn to do reverse planning. Put the due date on the calendar and have your child think about all the necessary steps to get to the goal. Ask your child to estimate the time and materials needed to complete each step. Have your child build in smaller steps and think about possible obstacles. Now step back and watch your child dig in.

Reverse planning not only increases success but also motivates a child to achieve the goal as the steps needed to reach the end goal now look much more doable. As each step is marked off the list, the motivation level rises. Contrast that with forward planning, which can leave important steps for the last minute, allowing discouragement to set in. Reverse planning also does more to improve your child's sense of self-efficacy as small goals are accomplished and good planning allows for more time for problem solving.

Young children can be taught reverse planning also. Bedtime rituals are a great way to begin this kind of thinking. Ask your child to think about the next day and plan for it by laying out clothes and shoes or checking on backpacks. Later they will think about goals on their own when they begin a plan. When children practice skills at home, they are preparing to perform them later. This early practice allowing for mistakes is essential learning time.



Reverse planning is a great way to get your children involved in family events. When they ask for a trip to the water park, make the planning of that trip their job. Have them research a date, think about and list the needed steps to be ready and then let them plan the family vacation. For added benefit let them plan the money side of the trip too. When they see what a vacation can cost, that provides an opportunity to build in a way they can work to earn money to contribute to the vacation budget. There are many good skills involved in this kind of planning, including organization, motivation and working together to create family memories.

“Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure” (PROV. 4:25-26).

God is the source of all wisdom and planning. When we look forward in the direction of the goal, we look to God for help in achieving the steps that get us there. We thank God for the blessing of His perfect plan for our lives.



Professionally Speaking



Counterculture Success

Some of the best teachers are people who struggled in school. However, some of the weakest teachers experienced a lot of success during their school days.

One might say that adversity strengthens us and that success can fool us.

SUCCESS CAN BE DECEPTIVE

In the Global Leadership Summit of 2018, Rasmus Ankersen (chairman of Danish Football Club Midtjylland) spoke to the struggles of gaining and maintaining success. He shared the assumption that good results come from superior performance. However, this is not a good assumption to make. As an example, he shared the success of the 2011–12 Newcastle football team — success which ownership attributed to new contracts and good performance. For many years prior, Newcastle had labored in, at best, 10th position. When 2011–12 was completed and the team finished 5th, management was sure the good times were going to roll. They didn't make any changes and were ready for years of success. Their assumption was the good standings came from excellent performance. In reality, when the following year found them finishing in 16th position, it was found that their success could largely be based on luck. Even though they had fewer shots on goals, fewer accumulated goals and a low goals-scored versus goals-allowed ratio, they had rung up a good year of wins in the season. Really, one could say, Newcastle got lucky and was blinded by success. Lucky rolls and some tight wins skewed the ledger to show success. The statistics told a different story. Since management was blinded by its success, it failed to see the winning year was due more to a trip,



a fall or a lucky post kick. Since then, Newcastle has continued its losing ways.

It might be argued that often *we* measure success in blind numbers too. A tick up in enrollment, a budget that exceeded revenue expectations, acknowledgements from peers and banner years for sports teams all can lead a school into blind expectations that whatever brought about the success will continue. Instead, the reality may be that the enrollment increased because of a conflict in another local school. Revenue may have been up because of an unexpected gift. Acknowledgements from peers, while deserved, may have simply been due to coworkers' ability to write the application. And the sports team? It sure helped to have the perfect chemistry with "that" particular group.

Leadership success can also be deceptive. A leader can fall into the lure that a created system of checks and

balances, objectives and assessments, and business savvy are the perfect system and everyone should follow suit. Or it could be the leader determines his system of working with people is always the right way to run any school. Communication tools, various meetings and special events might be the perfect blend of working with people, so, again, everyone should follow suit. It worked in Texas. It'll work in Springfield, Ill.

The lament of Asaph in Psalm 73 gives us a glimpse of what happens when our eyes turn toward our own success and measures that are earthly. "For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (v. 3). What Asaph saw with his eyes were successes and happiness. He was frustrated that "Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches" (v. 12). Asaph valued pleasure, prestige and possessions as measures of success.

REAL SUCCESS

It appears that, as Christians, we need to come to grips with a biblical teaching of success. It might just be that we need to look at something other than the ledger.

Rick Warren suggests "three antidotes" (pastors.com/temptations-success/, accessed Feb. 13, 2019) to what he calls "success temptations." His list includes integrity, generosity and humility. Each of these seems to stem from a driven character that is above board, seeks to improve the world around her and doesn't seek fame.

But maybe, just maybe, the answer is heard in the Psalmist's words of Ps. 106:47-48.

*"Save us, O Lord our God,
and gather us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name
and glory in your praise.*

*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!*

*And let all the people say, 'Amen!'
Praise the Lord!"*

Our success-driven world, including the challenges of proving success in our Lutheran schools, is cancer to our work. God calls us to faith, keeps us in faith



with His Word and accomplishes His will through our work with families. Does this mean if we aren't having Baptisms in our schools, our proclamation of the Gospel is not effective? Does that mean if discipline referrals are through the roof, the compassion of Christ is missing? Is our school ineffective if signs of sharing time, talents and treasure are seemingly inadequate for the goals of the school?

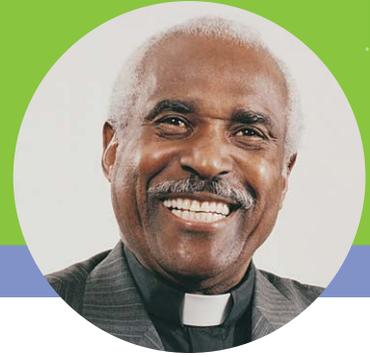
Maybe the signs of "success" are more driven by a counterculture perspective. Instead of turning to self-help, how about faith help?

- › **Look to Christ always ("Save us").** Pray to seek and align with God's will. Engage in Bible study because we know it's needed and because God will show us His Son and share that we need not take on undue burdens in our life. Our life is in Christ, part of the Body, the Church.
- › **Stay in community ("gather").** When things get us down, we could become reclusive and dig in our heels to do better. Rather, we are built for community. Our family, our faculty, our church, our town — each provides needed elements for our life.
- › **Praise God ("thanks ... glory ... Praise").** Praising God turns us outward, rather than inward. Paul shows this in his epistles. In jail and after shipwrecks, Paul was content in faith and confident of God's will in his life. Be focused on Christ, focused on something other than a stat.



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD. The School Shepherd: Real and Present to FAMILIES

What makes Lutheran school ministry unique? Certainly the confession is crucial — the truth of God’s Word, the power of the Sacraments and the message of God’s grace in Christ. Other unique features include the setting, often attached to a church building; the curriculum, which includes exploration of God’s Word; and the staff, commissioned to serve in ministry.

Also unique to Lutheran schools is ministry to the family. While the primary initial focus is sharing the message of Jesus with the child, the pastor in a Lutheran school setting is privileged to shepherd the child’s family.

Ministry to the family is scriptural. Proverbs 22:6 celebrates the significance of family, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not

depart from it.” Children are safely and lovingly nurtured by parents. Ephesians 6:4 emphasizes that the primary teachers of the faith are the parents, especially the father, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

In the book *Think Orange* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), author Reggie Joiner pictures the family as red since it is at the heart of God’s creation and design for His children. Joiner pictures the church as yellow because it is God’s light in the dark world. The blending of red and yellow produces orange. While few school classrooms are painted orange, the color brings vibrancy to Lutheran school ministry.

Families are more than customers of a Lutheran school. They are partners in the education and faith development of the children. School shepherds, administrators and teachers equip and encourage parents to be more than partners in the education of the children. Parents are leaders in sharing the faith with their children.

The school shepherd’s role in developing and delivering a family ministry in a Lutheran school is critical. The Shepherd shares God’s plan for His children. The school shepherd communicates the vision for bringing the Gospel to children and the family. When a family enrolls in the Lutheran school, they know that they are expected to be partners in faith nurture. The church and school will resource and assist them in their role.

There are many challenges to partnering with parents to nurture faith. The family ministry of the school was once expected and assumed, but that is no longer the situation. Many parents today have not experienced a church or Lutheran school background. They aren’t knowledgeable about the Scriptures. They



don't have a personal faith foundation, and Christ is not in their heart or in their home. They aren't comfortable personally sharing their faith with their children and aren't passionate about doing so.

The school shepherd becomes one of God's instruments in reaching the mission field of the family. If family ministry is not a strong feature of the Lutheran school, the shepherd voices God's vision. The vision is shared with church and school. The school principal and teachers become key partners in bringing the vision to reality. Church members live the vision as they welcome school families and seek to be a blessing to the families enrolled in the school.

Ministry to families begins with the attitudes: "Think family" and "How can we be more intentional about our witness to and support of families?" The attitude becomes action. Ministry to families is clarified in values and articulated in policy and publicity. Family enriching and connecting activities become part of the school life. Christian parenting sessions and series might be offered. Recreational activities for families are offered in the church and school settings.

The school shepherd is privileged to serve school children and their families. Occasionally the shepherd stands at the school doorway as children arrive in the morning or leave in the afternoon. Parents see and celebrate the friendly face and greeting of the pastor. With the assistance of the classroom teacher, the shepherd is

“ Oh, blest the parents
 who give heed Unto their
 children's foremost need
 And weary not of care or
 cost. May none to them and
 heaven be lost!”

(LSB 862:3)

informed of immediate and extended family celebrations and challenges: "Billy said his mother had a baby;" "Martha shared that her grandmother has cancer." The school conversations become the doors to pastoral care and sometimes become the doors to a relationship with Christ and His church.

Ministry to school families is often complicated by divorce and other family-dividing dynamics. The school shepherd's presence and guidance bring God's plan, God's grace and the Spirit's guidance into conversations. The school shepherd will want to be aware of Christian counseling services which may be a blessing to struggling families.

One school described themselves as this: Christ-centered, child-focused and family-connecting. The words may be different in your setting, but the goals should be the same.

Reflections:

- ▶ How does our school connect with and celebrate families?
- ▶ What are the needs of the families enrolled in our school?
- ▶ How can we strengthen and expand our ministry to families?



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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



Go and Let Your Light Shine

Giggles, piles of hand-drawn pictures, gunk-under-your-fingernails and hugs — these are all unique reminders of the work you do each day: ministry to young children through care education. Not all people are cut out to work with young children on a daily basis; if this were true, the field of early childhood education would be extremely popular. As a leader, if this were true, you would never have to struggle in the search for strong employees. However, you likely know the challenges that being an early childhood professional bring: physical and emotional work, sometimes long hours, redirection of challenging behaviors and increased demands by parents. The talent, patience and passion needed to serve in early childhood education is not something that is easily learned; rather, these gifts are given by God for the purpose of serving His people — His children and their families. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

The talent, patience and passion needed to serve in early childhood education is not something that is easily learned; rather, these gifts are given by God for the purpose of serving His people.



God has great foresight — He created you — so He knows the gifts you need for the work He has planned for you.

In Jeremiah 29:11, the prophet shares the words of the LORD: “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.” God put you into your position for a great purpose, and it is a purpose that is so wonderful it may be difficult to comprehend at times. There may be times when you question your work in early childhood education or as a leader. In such times, Satan is attempting to lead

you to doubt not only yourself, but also the handiwork of God. Satan believes that by tempting you with doubt, you will detour from God’s plans. Do not let feelings of doubt, anxiety or sadness overshadow the great ministry God has set before you. God’s timing is perfect!

Church work is not necessarily the easiest of professions. Combined with the role of early childhood educator, the work you do is sometimes a challenge, yet often tremendously rewarding. Do not let the small number of difficult times overshadow

the majority of highlights that occur in your role each day. It is important to look for the “glitter,” the small, yet shiny, specks of light that shine in many unique ways. Sometimes you need to look carefully for them, but these rays of light are there,

surrounding you with meaningful reminders of God's love, grace, mercy and forgiveness. God is real; God is present; He is standing right alongside you throughout the day!

As Matthew shares, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (5:14-16). Thankfully God provides you with many support systems which allow you to keep your light shining, even when the power-supply seems low or the weather appears stormy.

Because of sin, you will encounter storms, struggles and bouts of low energy. Life is not perfect on this side of heaven. However, God has promised, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 COR. 10:13). The Holy Spirit provides strength to weather the storms of life, to battle sin and to assist in the work of ministry to accomplish God's great tasks.

God's got your back; He is right alongside you every step of the way. God sends others into your day to provide support and guidance. Look for these people — partner with

them and surround yourself with the love and support they offer.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, and through prayer, God provides what you need to let your light shine. Even when you feel low, others around you can provide encouragement and a type of "booster" for letting your

light shine brightly. Have you ever noticed that by immersing yourself in "life" and "the moment" with young children, you can find warmth building in your heart? The giggles, love and innocence children share can certainly provide energy for you to continue your ministry work. The children you work with are gifts from God, too, set before you to show His love. When you look at your students, know that God's love for them is just as great as the love He has for you!

When you let your light shine before others, they are provided with an opportunity to see the goodness, grace, love, mercy and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. The words you share and actions you model point to Jesus. Lutheran schools share the caring Christ.

Lutheran schools are known world-wide for "wearing love," for showing others what it means to be a Christian. Love people until they ask "why?" "Why do you do these kind things for me?" "Why do you always help

me when I need support?" Well, it is actually quite simple: because God loves you, so sharing that love with others is what you do.

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Writer: Drew Gerdes Designer: Erica Schwan

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