

JANUARY 2020

# SCHOOL MINISTRY

# Mailing





# Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



## Lutheran Schools: A Light in the World



“ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you” (Is. 60:1).

**E**PIPHANY IS A SEASON OF LIGHT, which progresses from the bright star guiding the Wise Men to the shining dove at the Baptism of Jesus to the glory of the Transfiguration — a season that proclaims the mission of God’s people. In Lutheran schools, pastors and teachers are God’s emissaries who model this mission. It is through their faithful and diligent nurturing that children can come to know Jesus as their Savior, God as their Father and the Holy Spirit as the one who works faith in their lives!

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is blessed with a rich history of serving children and families in

Lutheran schools. It traces back to 1847, when Saxon and other German immigrants established a new church body in America, seeking the freedom to practice and follow confessional Lutheranism. The Rev. Dr. C.F.W. Walther was instrumental in the founding of the LCMS and served as the church’s first president, holding office from 1847 to 1850 and again later from 1864, to 1878. Schools were a prominent feature in the Synod’s first constitution. The founding church fathers stated, “In order for the congregation to become a member of the Synod, a provision for the Christian schooling of the children *must* be made.”

Thus, the Synod was started with 12 congregations and 14 schools. Twenty-five years later, 446 congregations and 472 schools served children and families. Today, 6,100 congregations, 1,950 schools nationwide and three international schools continue the rich tradition of Christian education. In a sermon delivered in 1870, Walther reflected on the growth of the Synod: “Our only real object was to save our souls, live in faith over here, to establish here the true and correct public worship and maintain a truly Christian school for our children.”

January is the time we observe Epiphany and celebrate the mission of Lutheran schools. Each year, National Lutheran Schools Week is celebrated across the nation. From Jan. 26 to Feb. 1, 2020, LCMS schools gather through many special activities to joyfully celebrate and share the mission of God’s people. With the light of Jesus in the world, schools across the nation continue to serve students by equipping them for a life with God, through faith in Jesus Christ.



# Computer File



## What is Next in Technology: Student Devices, Pt. 2

(HARDWARE)

**R**eflect on these two questions before you read the article to start thinking about how the topic has and continues to impact you, your classroom or your school.

**Question #1:** What led to this topic's relevance in education? Why was it assigned value in the classroom or implemented in the way it was?

**Question #2:** How are you using or implementing this topic in your classroom or school at present? If you are not directly interacting with the topic at hand, how is it impacting you in other ways?

Laptops and Chromebooks and tablets, oh my! Over the last few years, the number and variety of device options available to schools for use in the classroom setting has grown exponentially. At the same time, schools are no longer relegated to purchasing “consumer” devices off the shelf and “making them work” within the education setting. Instead, companies are increasingly choosing to develop devices specifically for use in the hands of students.

When it comes to making the decision to put devices in the hands of students, it is important to have a plan before choosing devices (see last month's *Computer File* for developing a plan) so that the device does not drive the implementation process. However, once a plan has been developed and you know what you want to accomplish with devices in the classroom, it is then time to pick the device that will work best for your specific situation.



So, what is that device? Well that is an interesting question that schools of all shapes and sizes struggle with every year as they look to bring in new devices or upgrade current ones. The only right answer for such a question is “the device that works for your school.” It may sound simple, but it is the truth. There is no one-device-fits-all model when it comes to making these choices.

With that in mind, we need to review two topics related to devices. First, we will investigate the devices themselves and the questions that need to be asked in order to pick a device. And second, we will explore the concept of infrastructure and why this is as important as the devices themselves.

### Devices

When we consider devices, and keep in mind that we are looking at “What Is Next in Technology” this year, there are a few options available to schools that expand what they are currently using. Honestly, in most educational situations, desktops and laptops (PC and Mac) are on their way out. Except for specific-use cases where individual computer pro-

grams that only run on certain types of devices (video editing programs on Macs, CAD programs on PCs, etc.), there are few situations where these types of devices will continue to have a major presence in education. Moving forward and looking to the future, lightweight devices such as Chromebooks and tablets (iPad, Android, etc.) will increasingly have a presence in schools at all levels. The change in the educational and industrial landscape that is driving this type of device adoption is solely related to all programs, services and apps moving completely into an online space, or “into the cloud” as many refer to it. Thus, as a result of this move, students do not need to have high-powered, expensive devices in the classroom if all they are using it for is to access the internet in order to accomplish everything that they need to as a student. Something as lightweight as a tablet or phone will suffice in most cases for the students of tomorrow.

All of that said, there are some key questions to ask when choosing the devices that will fit your specific situation and also future-proof your decision so that you do not find yourself with outdated technology within one or two years:

1. **What do you want students to accomplish when using the devices?**

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2. **Do they need access to specific programs that only run on one type of device?**

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3. **Is there a legacy device already in place that students are familiar with (Chromebooks, iPads, etc.), where switching device types would have a negative impact on learning?**

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4. **Does the device need to be rugged enough to travel with the student throughout the day or even off-campus in the evening?**

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5. **What student, teacher and parent controls are available for restricting access or monitoring student use?**

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6. **What is the life of the device and will it need to be replaced more frequently than other devices?**

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7. **If your budget impacts the number of devices or the quality of devices purchased, what do you want to focus on – quality or quantity?**

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8. **What else is needed if you purchase a specific device? (cases, styli, screen protectors, connection cables, wireless projection devices, GSuite for Education, Office365, etc.)**

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## Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the one item that is most underemphasized in the purchasing of new or replacement devices. Many schools installed a wireless network with access points and servers along with their first iteration of student devices, but often do not realize that many of the components likely need to be updated again when new devices are added. Technologies change and devices lose effectiveness over time, and as such, these infrastructure pieces need to be reviewed and included in any plan to put devices in the hands of students. If you are going through the process for the first time, be sure to take a long, hard and honest look at the infrastructure you need to support any devices you are looking to purchase.

If you ask “What Is Next” in infrastructure, the simple answer is better connectivity to the internet through new access points delivering higher quality connections and faster internet speeds through fiber lines. These increased speeds require new modems, switches, cables and access points in order to be most effective, all of which comes at an increasing cost.

Regardless of how you answered the questions related to devices, and whether or not your infrastructure is covered, there is one simple truth to remember when it comes to technology hardware in schools. The last and most important part of the implementation plan needs to focus on investigating and refreshing technology *before* it is needed. Waiting until the last possible moment when devices are dying and the infrastructure is failing will always result in more heartache for everyone involved and greater financial cost to the school. Thus, you need to ask yourself and your school “What Is Next in Technology” in order to make smart and educated decisions about how to continually move forward in putting devices in the hands of students.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

# Computer File

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# Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



JOYFULLY LUTHERAN 1 THESS. 5:16–24

FOCUS: Jesus. Others. You.

## Wise Men Visit Jesus

(MATT. 2:1–12)



### Before You Teach

In telling this story, let's not miss the JOY of the wise men when they saw the star that led them to Jesus (MATT. 2:10). After a long period of anticipation, the GIFT — Jesus — was in plain sight. They may not have known yet what lay ahead for them and for the world, but they were thrilled. The original Greek wording is linked to the reaction of Jesus' disciples when He appeared to them for the first time on the evening of the first Easter (JOHN 20). They didn't know the future, either, but their joy was boundless. It is our duty and delight to lead students to know Jesus better, so that their joy may be full and their witness may be equally compelling.

### Greeting

Dedicate time to greet each child upon entry into the classroom. **“Good morning/afternoon, child of God ... .”** The importance of these first few seconds ought not to be underestimated. Your joyful welcome sets the tone for the day.

### Gathering

**YOU WILL NEED:** a designated worship area; a table or altar; a Bible; a cross and/or an image of Jesus; a battery-operated candle; the songbook *Little Ones Sing Praise*.

Signal the children to gather in your worship area while singing “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful” (*LOSP*, p. 87).

## Tell the Story

**YOU WILL NEED:** *LOSP*; pre-cut star adhered to a tongue depressor or paint stirrer.

**Do:** Tell the narrative, interspersing the chorus of “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful” (*LOSP*, p. 87) where indicated by the star graphic.



Jesus, God’s Son, our promised Savior, had been born in Bethlehem. Wise men from the east traveled to see Him. They followed a star ★, placed by God in the sky, which led them to Jerusalem. There they asked many people, “Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the sky and have followed it here, coming to worship Him!” ★ When Herod, the king, heard this, he was very troubled. Calling together the leaders of the people, Herod told them about the star and the wise men’s journey following the star ★. Herod asked where this Savior was to be born, and his leaders told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea.”

Then Herod called the wise men to him, asking them when they first saw the star ★. They answered, and he told them, “Go! Search for the child! When you have found Him, send a message so I may also come and worship.” The wise men left, joyfully following the star ★ to Bethlehem and the house where Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus now were. When they went into the house and saw Jesus with His mother, they immediately knelt and worshiped Him. The wise men opened their treasures and gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. God then warned the wise men in a dream not to return to Herod, so they traveled back to their own country a different way.

## Remember the Story

### BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

**Pre-K & K:** “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him that he might save us” (Is. 25:9).

**Grades 1 & 2:** “This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Is. 25:9).

## ACTIVITIES

**Create:** Gifts for Jesus.

**YOU WILL NEED:** small peel and stick bows (available for purchase in bags); bingo dotters (option: sponges cut into circles and dipped into tempera paint); gift-box-size squares and rectangles cut from white paper. Guide children to use bingo dotters/sponges to print “polka dots” on the shapes. Add a bow to the top of each dotted paper. Display with the title “Our Gifts for Jesus.” See “Do.”

**Do:** The wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for Jesus. What gifts can we give, which cannot be bought? Examples: love, care, praise, thanks, sharing, kindness. Randomly add children’s “gift” words to the “Our Gifts ...” display (see “Create”).



**Sing:** Verses 5 and 6 of “Happy Birthday, Jesus” (*LOSP*, p. 88). NOTE: Substitute the words “Savior, Baby Jesus!” for “Happy birthday, Jesus!”

## Sending

**YOU WILL NEED:** A star to pass.

Gather children together in the “Sending Circle.” Review highlights of the day. Pray together. Pass a star, inviting children to pray as the star is received, or to quietly pass it along. Conclude with the Bible Words. Dismiss.



## Live the Story

Our lives are filled with many distractions. Let us keep our focus on God’s Gift to the world: Jesus, our Savior. Throughout this New Year, let us celebrate our Heavenly Father’s extravagant love, and prayerfully consider “What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?” (Ps. 116:12). Resolve to act in Jesus’ name to serve others, especially the children and families entrusted to your care. **J.O.Y.**



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

# Early Childhood Devotions

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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



## JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN Joy in the New Year



*“Time for a fresh start.” “Let’s hit the re-set button!” “Time to turn the page.” “Arrrgh — another year?!?” “Wheee! Here we go!”*

**H**ow do you approach a new year as a parent? Are you stressed? Optimistic? Confused? Exhausted? Frustrated? Or, maybe, excited?

What are you looking forward to in 2020?

A new year can be motivational for many people as they see a chance for change. What changes do you want to make as you enter the new year ahead — as you enter a new decade? Can you organize these changes into nice categories such as health, finances, social activities, family life and personal growth? Or are your thoughts more scattered or random about what lies ahead?

However you approach the new year, one thing for certain is that it can bring change. There will be simple and big adjustments as we journey into the new year. Change can be frightening, as we might not know what to expect — but it can also be exciting, as we may embrace a motivational moment which could improve our personal, family or professional life, impacting us in positive ways for years to come.

How do we start the new year right? How do we get off on the right foot?

Presently, many Lutherans welcome the New Year by holding New Year’s Eve services. In the not-too-distant past, churches even had New Year’s Day services. This began for the purpose of giving praise and honor to God for the gifts of the past year, and to seek His blessings and guidance in the year ahead. We don’t have to face the new year alone as we can welcome it joyfully in the presence of God and other believers in worship.

If your child has the privilege of attending a Lutheran school, it is likely that there will be prayers requesting God to guide them in the new year and projects asking students to think about the opportunities that God gives us every day as we joyfully celebrate that His mercies are new every morning — not just on the first day of January.

With the Lord we begin our tasks in the year 2020, knowing that Jesus will direct it and direct us. We can seek His counsel with a simple ask, knowing that Jesus will bless it in the morning, evening and at night. Every day, all along the way, Jesus will be near us, giving us joy as we commend to Him our time, talents and treasures in the year ahead.

## JOYFULLY UPLIFTING FAMILY ACTIVITY //

Gather the family together in a comfortable space, with no electronic distractions, and enjoy the family activity outlined below.

### PROJECT TITLE: PAPER PLATE AWARDS



#### PURPOSE

To engage family members in an activity that allows them to have some fun thinking about the strengths they see in their fellow family members and how these strengths might be expressed in the coming year.

#### PROCESS

Normally, awards are given out at the end of a year or conclusion of a season. This activity allows family members to think in terms of each other and what they are “most likely to do” in the year ahead.

- 1 Have someone obtain a number of plain white paper plates — the more durable the better!
- 2 Have colored pens, pencils, markers and crayons available for use by family members.
- 3 Sit as a family (around a table is best) and begin to think in terms of what each person is “most likely” to do in the coming year. It can be real things, such as most likely to get an A in math, most likely to sing a song in a show or most likely to make a great play for the team. It can also be fun or funny things, such as most likely to be last at the table for dinner, most likely to slip in the mud, etc. Be kind! Have fun! Enjoy!

4 Write these “Most likely to ...” awards on paper plates — one for each person in the family; use fun colors, draw pictures if you like.

5 Once someone is done with a plate, have everyone stop their work at the moment and let the presentation happen. Do a drum roll by pounding on the table or your lap. Laugh and enjoy this fun family time!

6 When all the awards have been presented, the family participants can take them to their rooms, or perhaps display them in a more public place in the home such as an entry way, kitchen or family room



#### PRAYER

Have family member hold their paper-plate awards in their hands or place them on the table in front of them. Have an adult or older sibling read the following prayer, phrase by phrase, with the rest of the family repeating the words.

**Loving Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of a new year. Let it be a blessing to us, as we walk these days ahead, with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Help us to trust You every day, knowing You will care for us, protect us and love us. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.**



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## Family Matters

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Writer: Dr. Steven Christopher Designer: Lisa Moeller

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# Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



## Special Education Throughout the School Year: January

**January can feel like a tough month for teachers.** Students are coming back from Christmas break, having to possibly relearn routines and content taught before break and, depending on what area of the country you're in, the weather may be bleak and schedules further disrupted by delays and snow days. Another part of this time of year for teachers includes the next report card and possibly another round of parent-teacher conferences. Back in November, we talked about some tips for discussing potential learning difficulties with parents. In January, some of those same discussions may need to occur, and you might start to think about retention for some students.

If there was an easy answer for the dilemma of whether a student may or may not benefit from repeating a grade, this topic would be much less controversial to address. Unfortunately, there is no crystal ball to help in this scenario, but there are some factors to consider in talking about this with parents and praying for the best answer to set each student up for success. One of the aspects to consider is whether the student is diagnosed with a learning difficulty that impacts her performance. If a student has a learning disability in reading for example, he may do significantly better in math class and other content areas classes with appropriate accommodations. In this case, reading may still be behind grade level, but there is an explanation for that discrepancy. In many cases, holding a student back when



there is a learning disability present will not result in the student catching up in that area. To address the specific areas impacted by a disability, specific targeted intervention and accommodations are likely needed. Being exposed to that grade level curriculum in the same way for another year is not likely to benefit these students. It may hold them back in other areas where they are ready for content from the next grade level as well. In cases where the student does not have an identified disability, consider what would be in place to provide different learning supports to the student if the grade was repeated. If the student will have the same teacher and be taught the same content in the same manner, it is unlikely that there will be a benefit in retention. If there is the opportunity for the student to have a different teacher and have additional supports in place when repeating a grade, he may be more likely to benefit in that scenario.

These considerations address students who are behind academically, but many thoughts of retention at young ages may be related to developmental milestones and maturity. These are definitely factors to consider, particularly for students in early childhood. For students who are physically or emotionally immature, repeating a grade may reduce the stress of them trying to keep up with their peers. Continuing to have this stress throughout their schooling may have more negative consequences as the child gets older and should be factored into the decision.



The child's chronological age should also be considered. Students who are younger than their grade-level peers may benefit from an additional year at that grade level if they are struggling academically or emotionally. On the other side, if students are already one of the oldest in their classes, they may end up being close to two years older than their peers if they repeat a grade, and that should also be a consideration.

For students with behavioral issues, there are additional factors to take into account with retention. Take some time to think about why those behavioral issues are occurring in the classroom or other setting. If the behavioral issues are a result of stress from not being able to keep up with schoolwork, that student may benefit from an additional year to learn the material, with appropriate supports in place. If the behavioral issues seem to stem from an issue related to the classroom environment, that student may not benefit from staying in that same environment another year. As students get older, they also may be strongly opposed to repeating a grade, and this will impact the potential effectiveness of retention. When a student is very resistant to repeating a grade, she may be more likely to find ways to not make it successful and make that year difficult for everyone involved. This may outweigh any potential benefits.

There are obviously many factors to consider in retention, and no easy answers, but at this time of year, please have discussions with parents about your concerns rather than waiting until April and May. Decisions should not be made

at this point, but if your concerns are that serious, parents should have an idea before the end of the school year. It is also recommended to make sure additional supports are being planned and implemented for the student at this point if questions about retention exist. These concerns and discussions should be documented going forward as well. There are different retention checklists and questionnaires available that may help in your discussions, such as *Light's Retention Scale* ([academictherapy.com/detailATP.tpl?action=search&eqskudatarq=8938-4](http://academictherapy.com/detailATP.tpl?action=search&eqskudatarq=8938-4)) and *The Retention/Promotion Checklist* by Jim Grant and Irv Richardson (Crystal Springs Books, 1998) ([amazon.com/Retention-Promotion-Checklist-K-8/dp/1884548202](http://amazon.com/Retention-Promotion-Checklist-K-8/dp/1884548202)). *Understood.org* also offers a free online questionnaire to help think through the many factors involved in this issue ([understood.org/en/tools/decision-guide/school-choices/move-up-or-repeat-a-grade?iq=0](http://understood.org/en/tools/decision-guide/school-choices/move-up-or-repeat-a-grade?iq=0)).



For more guidance and information on this and other special education related topics, reach out to us at Lutheran Special Education Ministries. Email us at [lsem@luthsped.org](mailto:lsem@luthsped.org) or visit our website at [luthsped.org](http://luthsped.org).

## Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

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Writer: Kara Bratton Designer: Lisa Moeller

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# Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



## Concussion Awareness

**A**s a parent, few things are more enjoyable than watching your children play, whether it's on the playground, the field or the court. By the same token, few things will cause as much instant anxiety as when we witness the injury of a child. When we were young and experienced a head injury, we were likely told to “shake it off” and pushed back into the game. Even today, when we have new information about the potential dangers of a concussion, our children may want to ignore such an injury to get back to playing. This is a time when we need to step in and teach our children how to keep their brains safe. We cannot, and should not, hover over our children like a helicopter, but we are wise to provide concussion awareness teaching.

Our children do not need to be playing an organized sport to experience a concussion. This brain injury happens when a blow to the head or body causes the brain to move or twist inside the skull. While most concussions are minor, some can cause other complications, and multiple concussions can be very dangerous. It is essential to teach your children to follow the recommended safety practices for the sports they love. Make sure coaches have been trained in concussion protocols and then make sure your children follow the directives of the coach. While teachers and coaches diligently watch for head injuries, it is a good idea to encourage your children to report any head bumps



and any body blows that cause their heads to snap back. These injuries happen quickly enough that adults watching might miss them.

Any head injury should at least temporarily remove a child from a game, allowing adults to monitor for possible symptoms of concussion. Even a brief loss of consciousness can be an indicator of a concussion. Clumsy movements and slow responses to questions provide further cause for concern. Watch for a loss of memory surrounding the event and mood or behavior changes. If these symptoms are present, do not hesitate to have your child examined by a healthcare professional. More severe symptoms might include uneven size of the pupils, slurred speech, agitation, vomiting or the inability to stay awake. These symptoms represent

an emergency. If the healthcare provider diagnoses your child with a concussion, that child should not play for a while to allow the brain to heal. Additionally, you should receive written instructions for safety measures for returning to school.

Effects from a concussion might not appear until hours or even days after the injury. Seek medical help if your child complains of a persistent headache, nausea, balance issues or blurry vision. Besides these symptoms, your child might experience confusion or unusual sensitivity to light or noise. Pay attention if your child protests that he just doesn't "feel right." A concussion will cause chemical changes in the brain that can result in unexpected symptoms.

In some instances, a child may experience post-concussion syndrome, a condition that can cause sleep, psychological and cognitive problems lasting for weeks or months after the initial injury. While this condition is rare, it is a reminder that we should not dismiss

the impact of a concussion on the developing brain of a child. A concussion is, after all, a traumatic brain injury.

In terms of team support, parents can join with coaches in keeping an eye out for possible concussion injuries during the game. Even low-contact sports can pose a risk for concussion. It should also be noted that helmets protect the skull from fracture but do not protect the brain from concussion. If your child falls from a bike and cracks her helmet, she should be checked for a concussion. Keep yourself trained in what symptoms to watch for and always support a coach's decision to remove a child from play.

The Center for Disease Control ([cdc.gov/HEADSUP](http://cdc.gov/HEADSUP)) has easy-to-understand handouts on concussion symptoms. Read over this information and review it with your child at the beginning of each sports season. Additionally, when your child has a sports checkup, ask the doctor to review this information with your child too. If handled correctly, this will not scare your child out of playing sports. Instead, like the repeated practice of a school fire drill, it will strengthen your child's awareness.

God, our perfect Creator, built our brains to be able to heal from most injuries. Brain plasticity refers to the characteristics of the brain that allow it to modify and adapt to changes, including recovery from injury. This adaptability is part of how our children learn and thrive in their environments. Being aware of concussions is a crucial way to support healthy brain development.

We are blessed to have playgrounds, fields and courts available for our children's enjoyment. Both unstructured play and organized sports contribute to our children having healthy, happy lives. Helping us to pay attention to injuries and symptoms are excellent ways that God keeps our children safe.



## Parent Pages

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Writer: Dr. Kim Marxhausen Designer: Frank Kohn

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# Professionally Speaking



**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Thess. 5:16–24

## Abstaining from All Evil

*“Abstain from every form of evil” (1 THESS. 5:22).*

**D**oes this month’s focus verse seem ignored today? With New Year’s just occurring, maybe some bad habits are being corrected or healthier choices are being planned. But overall, is this focus verse something that is being ignored?

Working backward in this verse, based on news and current events, it might be a struggle to determine what evil is and what it looks like. Couple that with challenges to most previously understood standards (life issues, sex, marriage, respect and obedience to authority, truth) and addressing evil is very difficult.

This difficulty is realized in our schools. What was once considered gossip about a teacher turns into a lynching of the person’s character and life. What was once considered a sound work ethic is now negligence in taking care of self and family. What was once considered the noble calling of working for the church is now undesired by many because of the lack of respect for these callings and the ugly repercussions of such lack of respect.

What is this “every form” that Paul references? Elsewhere in his epistles, Paul lists things that separate us from God. For instance, in 1 Cor. 6:9–10, Paul writes, “Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” However, the pervasive culture of the day defends those who see no wrong in actions such as these. All across the country, schools of *all* kinds are challenged with attacks that are undermining instruction, but even more concerning are the attacks



that negatively impact the future of our communities. Talking about 1 Thess. 5:22 becomes even more of a struggle with the unknowns of what is true and right.

And then there is abstinence. Abstinence? Hedonism is the way of our world. The Roman Empire seems to be more of a goal than something to avoid for our world today. Abortion was bad enough; now babies can be killed even after birth. Advertising is filled with enticing messages to indulge in novelty and luxury. Sex ... for marriage? Hardly. Young and old demonstrate blatant disdain for the institution of marriage.

One needs to consider how evil finds its way into our curriculum, our personal interests and our interpretation of mission. In his commentary, R.C.H. Lenski said that evil is something “active, malignant” [*The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Augsburg Publishing House, 1961)]. Having

a malignant tumor in one's body is a death sentence. It can kill quickly or it can take its painful time to kill ... but kill it will. Malignancies in our school curriculum like evolutionary talk in textbooks is sin crouching at our door. Wanting to have the best of resources but putting at risk sharing Christ with a diverse population empties the needed purpose of a Lutheran school. Goals of making one's school the premiere private school can lack focus on the cross of Christ.

For the health of body and soul, what should we do? What does "abstain from every form of evil" mean for a Lutheran school in 2020 and beyond? Let evil crouch at our door? Keep evil just an arm's length away? No. We need to STAY AWAY! Way away. "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil" (EPH. 5:15-16).

Here are two thoughts on applying this verse to our Lutheran schools:

**1.** Teach the truth of God's design for our lives. So much of what sets Lutheran schools apart is our commitment to God's Word. Nowhere is this commitment challenged more than our adherence to God's creation of life, to His creation of male and female and to Fourth Commandment teachings such as marriage and civil authorities placed in the support of the home (not in place of the home). This order is for the good of society. Generations know that God's laws are good. Challenges to this are not just obstacles but also intended evil. We need to boldly teach Second Table Commandments and teach them as God's direction for true love of our neighbor.



**2.** Support and encourage a culture of community that disciplines according to timeless truths and helps these disciplines to be entrenched into staff, student and parent interactions. Too much of a mouthful? Then think about ways in which a healthy community is taught and functioning within the school. In a time when individualism has so poisoned our world (arguable the seed for so much of progressive thought and action), we have a timeless truth that is imperative for faith and life: God has built us for community. As examples of community versus personalized, individualized life, the Bible teaches we "are being built up as a spiritual house" (1 PETER 2:4-5), we are one piece of "the body of Christ" (1 COR. 12:27) and we are worshipping together ["not neglecting to meet together" (HEB. 10:25)].

## Professionally Speaking // JANUARY 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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# Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



## “Rejoice always ...” (1 THESS. 5:16–24)



**Bible Story:** Wise men worship Jesus (MATT. 2:1-10)

**Focus:** When the wise men found Jesus, they were filled with joy. They gave Him their gifts, knelt down and worshiped Him.

**What it teaches us:** May we, too, be filled with joy as we worship Jesus, our Savior and King.

### Prepare to teach

› **Read** the Matthew account in different translations and a study Bible.

› **Think:** The church has a special name for the day the wise men found and worshiped the Child, Jesus. It is Epiphany (ee-pif-a-knee), and it means “to show.” The star “showed” the wise men where to find Jesus. How did they respond? They “rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (MATT. 2:10).

The star “showed” God kept His promise to send His Son to be the Savior of the whole world. Jesus was born, lived, suffered, died and came alive again to be our Savior too. We, also, respond with joy and thanks.

Note: If the star appeared when Jesus was born, it may have been two to three months or as long as two years before the wise men arrived in Bethlehem.

› **Pray:** Dear God, Send Your Spirit to fill us with the same joy the wise men felt when they found Jesus, knelt down and worshiped Him. In the name of Jesus, the Savior King, we pray. Amen.

## WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

### You will also need

- › *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House
- › Picture of Jesus (find one doing an internet search)
- › Pictures of the wise men traveling and worshipping the Christ Child

### Gather for Worship

Invite the children to the worship area. Sing (tune: “Are You Sleeping?”) **Come and sit down** (repeat) **on the floor** (repeat). **We will learn of Jesus**, (repeat) **sing and pray** (repeat).

**Invocation:** Use the same melody and sing: **We begin now** (repeat) **in God’s name** (repeat) — **Father, Son, and Spirit** (repeat). **A-men** (repeat).

### Opening Song

Show picture of Jesus. **Jesus loves each of us. We learn about Jesus’ love in the Bible** (show Bible). Sing, “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” (*LOSP*, p. 42).

### Bible Story:

Show a picture of the wise men traveling.

**When Jesus was born the first Christmas night, God put a star in the sky that shone bright.**

**The new star was seen by some men far away;  
They knew a new king was born on that day.**

**They packed their camels with gifts, food and clothes.  
The star moved and showed them the way they should go.**

**They traveled by night and slept through the day.  
Until the star stopped—Then, what did they do???**

Show the picture of the wise men worshipping Jesus.

**They went in the house and joyfully worshiped Jesus  
and gave their gifts too.**

**What the Story Teaches:** God sent His Son, Jesus, to be everyone’s Savior — even people from far away. We are glad He came to be our Savior. The wise men thanked God and worshiped Jesus. We do too.

### Time to Pray

**We thank You, God, for Jesus. We thank You for His love.**

**We know He is the Savior You sent from heaven above.  
We know He died to save us, came alive on Easter Day.  
Now we show our love for Him, pray and shout,  
“Hooray!” Amen.**

### Closing/Benediction

Sing (same melody): **Time to go now** (repeat). **Time to play** (or whatever activity you do next) (repeat). God is always with you (repeat). **Loves you too** (repeat).



## CURRICULAR MATERIALS //

IDEA STARTERS for integrating the Bible story and theme into STREAMS (curriculum)

### S Science and Nutrition

- > **Star; or tracks** (animal paw prints, wheel tracks, etc.)
- > **Use star-shaped cutters** to make cookies, star-shaped sandwiches

### T Technology

- > **The star showed wise men** the way to travel; use flashlights to see where to go in a dimly lit room and find a manger set

### R Reading and Language Arts

- > **Continue to use Christmas books;** transportation books: *Red Truck, Yellow Bus: A Book of Colors* by Scholastic Books (Children's Press, 2012); *TouchThinkLearn: Vehicles* by Xavier Deneux (Chronicle Books, 2015)
- > **Chant, "Jesus is born"** three times — starting out quietly and getting louder. End by raising arms and shouting, "Hooray!"

### E Engineering

- > **Turn riding toys upside down** and turn to see how wheels work; look at wheels on toys in the classroom

### A Arts (art, music and physical education)

- > **Use star-shaped cutters/sponges;** dip in tempera paint and make prints; use star stickers or glue construction paper pre-cut stars; use small cars, roll through paint, then on paper, to make tracks
- > **Add a verse** to "In a Little Stable" (*LOSP*, p. 81):  
**Wise men came to see Him;**  
**A-star showed them the way.**  
**Knelt down, gave Him presents;**  
**what a happy day!**



- > **Pretend to travel** (e.g., walk, run, riding toys, fly like planes)

### M Math

- > **Rote counting:**  
**1, 2; Jesus loves you.**  
**1, 2, 3; Jesus loves me.**  
**1, 2, 3, 4; Know something more?**  
**1, 2, 3, 4, 5; He died and came alive. Yeah!**

### S Social Studies

- > **Wise men** probably used camels to travel; how do we travel?

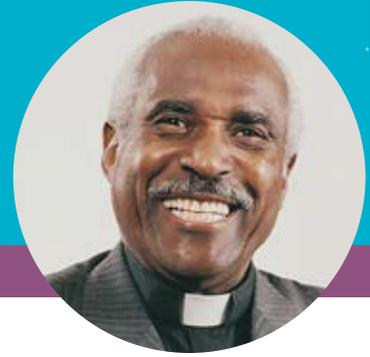
### CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

In the Bible story we saw the wise men knelt and prayed to Jesus. Make praying to Jesus part of your daily routine, especially at night. Ask me for sample prayers you might use.



# School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

## Resource:full

While the toy rooms, closets and other destinations for Christmas gift may be FULL, financial accounts may be drained. Financial experts announce that many families experience significant credit card and other post-Christmas debt. Whether the context is family, church or school, resources are limited. This month's *School Shepherd* invites the shepherd and his ministry partners to be ...

### RESOURCE:FULL

#### The Resource FULL Good Shepherd

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 COR. 8:9). As Creator and Sustainer of all creation, Jesus held every resource in His hands. Yet, He set aside His riches to experience the poverty of a human existence. “He became poor,” was “wrapped in swaddling cloths” (LUKE 2:12) and had “nowhere to lay his head” (LUKE 9:58). His earthly possessions were gambled away while He hung on the cross.

Yet, in His poverty, we became rich. The riches of His grace were poured out on each of us. We are rich in the forgiveness of sins, in life and in salvation. Because we have received the riches of His grace, we, like the Christians of Macedonia (2 COR. 8:1-5), are blessed to enjoy and share the financial and other resources that we have received.

#### Resource FULL School Shepherds

The rite of ordination often includes Paul's words to Timothy that the “overseer” (1 TIM. 3:1) not be a “lover of money” (1 TIM. 3:3) and be able to “manage his



own household well” (1 TIM. 3:4). The January 2019 *Supplement to Reporter* (LCMS publication) indicated that 55 percent of LCMS ordained and commissioned workers have experienced stress from financial concerns. Financial challenges rob from the joy of ministry.

Student loans from college and seminary, costs of raising a family, salaries that do not recognize the professional standards or meet the day-to-day needs and other factors all add to the challenge of managing resources. School shepherds are first of all wise stewards in their own home. Personal financial counseling or financial management classes may be helpful. A subsequent issue of the *Reporter* (June 2019) listed some

helpful resources for church workers, including the expertise of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

## Shepherding Resource FULL School Ministry

Financing of Lutheran school ministry is often complicated and humbling. Some shepherds are hesitant to serve in a church/school ministry because of the financial challenges. Financial challenges can easily distract attention from the ministry and mission of the Lutheran school.

Healthy church/school ministries celebrate the mission of the Lutheran school and look at the opportunities of bringing children and families into the kingdom of God. Rather than competing, the ministries of the church and school strengthen and complement one another.

The first responsibility of the shepherd of the church/school is to provide Word and Sacrament ministry. The shepherd is not the chief financial officer of the ministry. However, as a stewardship teacher and leader, he is to be aware of church and school finances and provide sound stewardship education and direction.

Church and school leadership and boards seek sound financial management of the ministry. Board membership includes leaders who responsibly and creatively fund the ministry. Parents are aware of the significant cost of a quality Lutheran school education and support the school with their tuition payments and tithes to the ministry. Sound financial planning looks beyond the immediate financial needs and develops a long-term plan for keeping the ministry financially viable.

LCMS School Ministry, Lutheran Church Extension Fund and many district offices can provide assistance in funding the Lutheran school and managing the resources to keep the school financially sound. Financially healthy school ministry typically includes three sources of funding: church support, tuition from families and third-source funding of annual fund donations or special funding endeavors.

“ Teach us to thank You,  
Lord, for love and grace,  
For life and vision, for a  
purpose clear,  
For Christ Your Son, and for  
each human face  
That shows Your message  
ever new and near.”

(LSB 788:2)

prayer

Stewardship of time and talent is developed and recognized in addition to treasure. Many Lutheran schools are blessed with a host of volunteers who bless the children and the ministry. The volunteers are recognized and thanked regularly.

## Dialoguing Resource FULLY

- › How has God provided for the financial needs of your church and school ministry?
- › How is wise management of God's resources taught to your Lutheran school constituents: parents, children and others?
- › How are God's generous givers of time, talent and treasure thanked in your ministry setting?



# Time Out for Directors

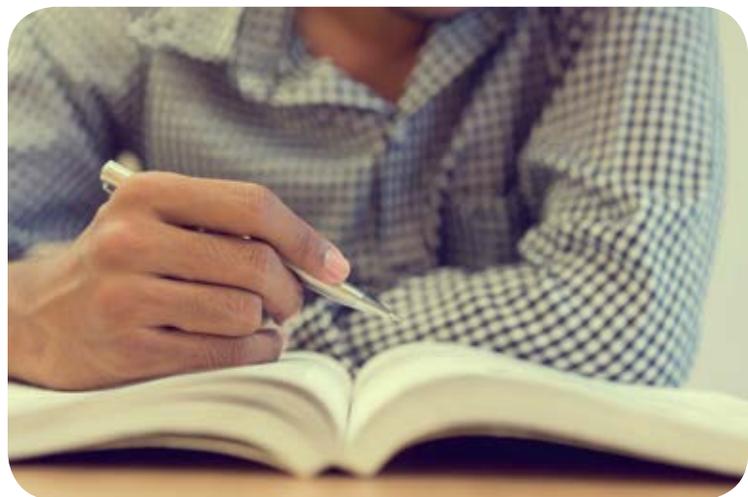
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



## JOY:fully Learning

**A** brand-new year — 2020 — is in front of you. Perhaps you have made goals, or thought about making them, for the purpose of personal betterment. Quite often goals, or resolutions, focus on health — physical health, such as healthier eating and increased exercise. It is true that leading a healthy lifestyle is important; it provides numerous benefits that enhance one's life in many areas.

As you watch television, browse social media or look in stores, you likely see a plethora of items that focus on a healthy lifestyle. You may find diet foods, healthy-eating cookbooks and numerous pieces of exercise equipment available for purchase. However, have you considered other types of lifestyle improvements that could be made? What other areas of your life also need attention and growth? Healthy eating and exercise are not the only ways to improve one's quality of living.



First, consider spiritual health. As an educator and leader in Lutheran education, your spiritual health is critical. You must be spiritually healthy so you can plant seeds of faith in your students and their families. As an educator, you must be familiar with Bible stories, theology and resources available that grow faith in your students. How are you, as a Lutheran Christian, growing in your own faith? Just as it is with exercise equipment, items left on a shelf do not bring any benefit. A treadmill that collects laundry will not serve the right purpose, nor does a Bible or devotional booklet that sits on a shelf. To fully receive the benefits of spiritual growth, one must be active.

How do you maintain spiritual activity? Working in a faith-based school is not enough — much more is needed. How are you JOY:fully engaged in building up your own faith? While regular worship and fellowship with other Christians is necessary for spiritual growth, time alone in prayer and Scripture reading is also paramount to being spiritually fit and active.

Many doctors and personal trainers share the importance of routine when it comes to physical exercise. For many people, exercising early in the day is a way they achieve their goals; they do not leave it until the end of the day when they may be tired or actually lose the time to accomplish their training. The same holds true for Christians. Being proactive in spiritual growth is necessary for the blessings of spiritual fruit to blossom. While many engage in biblical storytelling and faith-filled music in their daily activities as Lutheran school educators, making such spiritual feeding personal is necessary as well.

Secondly, the importance of growing professionally is significant. In today's fast-paced, competitive world,

there is much to be said about regular professional growth and development. Yes, you may have earned a college degree in education, but have you updated yourself with current pedagogy, strategies and research-based practices that meet the needs of today's students? Even young educators who have been in education for 5–10 years can easily become outdated if they do not keep up with current educational trends and practices.

Thankfully, technology has made growing as a professional easier now than ever before. Online courses, advanced degrees and certificate programs are available via many universities. In addition, low- or no-cost trainings are available online from a number of organizations. Spend some time searching online or via social media for opportunities that may interest you. And, if you are an administrator at your school, see what opportunities may be a good fit for members of your faculty and staff. Good leaders help faculty and staff grow in their professional development too.

Yes, this all takes time, as well as sometimes financial resources. Remember to have a positive-growth mindset of investment; you are investing not only in your learning and growth, but also in that of your students. Just as you faithfully share spiritual knowledge with your students, be sure to share professional knowledge with your colleagues. Collaborative environments are those where great achievement (for students and adults) is often present. Educators have a professional responsibility to continue to be lifelong learners.

Because of what Christ has done for you, you now have the opportunity to help others grow. Working in Lutheran education is a gift that is not to be taken lightly. Yes, ministry often has challenges; however, what workplace does not? Again, focus your mindset on positivity. Reflect on the gifts that God has given you. Not only have you received the free gift of grace and salvation, but you have been given the gift of being an educator. Not everyone is gifted with the art of teaching. Use your gifts wisely — use your gifts for Christ!

### **Dear Heavenly Father,**

Grant me a new year of growth – growth that benefits not only me, but also those around me ... those I serve and those I am close to. Help me with regular spiritual nourishment that grows my faith, and help me share that faith with others. Give me opportunities to learn new strategies and pedagogy that enhance my professionalism.

May all these gifts I have been given be used for Your glory!

In the name of Jesus. Amen.