

MARCH 2020

SCHOOL MINISTRY

# Mailing



THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Missouri Synod

School Ministry



MARCH 2020

## SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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# Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



## Lutheran School Champions

Last fall we shared the news of our 2019 National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) School Shepherd, Pastor Joseph Cunningham, who serves at St. Peter Lutheran Church and School in North Judson, Ind. Pastor Cunningham was nominated by the NLSA Validation Team at the time of St. Peter Lutheran School's NLSA site visit in Spring 2019. After his nomination was endorsed by LCMS Indiana District officials, a committee of well-respected pastors reviewed each application and prayerfully selected Pastor Cunningham from eight deserving individuals nominated for the award

In 2015, the Lutheran School Shepherd Award was established by NLSA to honor a faithful pastor who provides outstanding encouragement, support and service to his school. A pastor who is considered for this prestigious award understands and articulates a clear philosophy of Lutheran education and provides spiritual encouragement, guidance and support for the school entrusted to his care. **He is a champion for his school.**

Last month, Pastor Cunningham was presented with the NLSA School Shepherd Award during a service that also celebrated *National Lutheran Schools Week*. The church was filled with families and children. Congregation and community members gave thanks and praise for the ministry of the church and school and for its positive presence in the community. Student choirs sang with great enthusiasm.

Pastor Cunningham expressed his deep appreciation for his work with Principal Rhonda Reimers whose loving care for the children and families is at the heart of the school ministry. He described Miss Reimers as “a dedicated and tireless principal whose gifts shape our non-Lutheran faculty and staff, who supports our shared vision and who embraces the challenges that exist in a rural context.” Pastor Cunningham emphasized that every member of the ministry team is cherished: “We have a dedicated staff of teachers and support staff and delightful children to serve.”

Pastor Cunningham wholeheartedly shared, “This is our mission! I love St. Peter Church and School because God is using it as a vibrant witness of the Gospel and His love for this



And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.<sup>13</sup> (EPH. 4:11–13)

community. Developing a meaningful infrastructure of services and educational opportunities designed to combat poor physical and mental health issues is critical to the overall survival of a rural community. St. Peter is a vital connection to all these initiatives and provides a spiritual connection to these community challenges.” St. Peter Lutheran Church and School is a powerful presence in the North Judson community.

God richly blesses the ministry of Lutheran schools, and Pastor Cunningham joins past recipients of the NLSA School Shepherd Award who also deeply value Christian education.

- 2016 **Pastor Kevin Jud**, Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Hamilton, Ohio
- 2017 **Pastor Peter Schmidt**, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church and School, Waukesha, Wis.
- 2018 **Pastor Phillip Baerwolf**, Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, East Dundee, Ill.

We give thanks for our faithful school shepherds. God gives us His Son, Jesus, and shares the riches of His grace with us. In turn, Lutheran school champions share the Good News of hope, forgiveness, life and salvation in Jesus with all.



# Computer File



## What is Next in Technology:

### Assistive Technology

**R**eflect on these two questions related to this month's topic before you read the article to start thinking about how the topic has impacted 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?



When you take a step back to take a hard look at any classroom, it quickly becomes apparent that all students are created differently. This may seem like an extremely obvious statement, but how often do we actually pause and appreciate this fact and the repercussions it has on what assistance each student needs? Students are tall and short, have great eyesight or need glasses, can hear perfectly or need to listen differently, pick up ideas faster or slower, can sit still for hours or need to wiggle continually to focus — the list goes on and on. If you took an inventory of your own classroom or students, you would quickly realize that each and every student has a need that, when filled, allows them to learn more effectively and efficiently.

These needs could be physical, mental, emotional or some other kind that makes all the difference, positively or negatively, in their learning.

In today's technology-filled world, we can meet many of these needs through what the educational industry has termed "assistive technology." Assistive technology has been defined as "providing a means of reducing a physical impairment" (*dictionary.com*). While this definition allows for everyone to have the same understanding, it leaves much open to exploration when actually implementing assistive technologies in the classroom.

Seeing as this definition is extremely broad, especially when looking at how "technology" can be integrated, let's take a closer look at two broad areas and concrete examples for each.

## Physical Assistive Technology

Assistive technology in the physical realm takes many avenues — from personal technology such as hearing aids that interface with computers to classroom technologies like wiggle seats or standing desks. Thus, the list below is certainly not all-inclusive and is only meant to serve as inspiration to get you thinking about what assistive technology could help students in your classroom.

- Students with vision impairments can benefit from assistive technologies such as:
  - Increased font sizes on computer screens, projected text and printed items;
  - Specific fonts for vision impairments such as APHont, OpenDyslexic and Arial; and
  - Screen magnifiers and Text-to-Speech readers (built into most computers and web browsers).
- Students with hearing impairments can benefit from assistive technologies such as:
  - Hearing aids that connect via Bluetooth to computers or other devices projecting sound in the classroom;
  - Assistive Learning Devices (ALDs);
  - Teacher voice amplifiers or classroom microphone amplification; and
  - Visual notifications (lights, signs, etc.) for teacher or school announcements.
- Students with focus challenges can benefit from assistive technologies such as:
  - Fidget cubes or sensory toys; and
  - Active “wobble stools,” wiggle chairs or yoga ball chairs.
- Students with mobility impairments can benefit from assistive technologies such as:
  - Connected desk/chair combinations (Steelcase Node Chair, etc.);
  - Mouth stick, head wand or eye trackers for input interaction;
  - Speech-to-Text software (Dragon NaturallySpeaking, etc.); and
  - Smart speakers for voice control (Amazon Echo, Google Home, etc.).

## Learning Assistive Technology

Assistive technology in the educational realm most often falls into the modern concept of “personalized learning” as implemented by schools today. Structures such as Personalized Learning Plans, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans are often in place to help schools begin to understand the individualized learning environment that is most conducive to a student’s learning. From these and other structures, teachers and schools are able to invest in digital technologies that assist multiple students while still providing personalization opportunities for the students that require it. Again, the list below is not all-inclusive but should give a good starting point to get teachers thinking about how this could assist their students’ learning.

- **E-Books:** Electronic print books are able to be resized and recolored, and they give many other options that allow for students to read in the easiest manner possible.
- **GSuite for Education and Plug-Ins:** Seamless sharing and adjustments are possible with GSuite and Google Classroom, and the innumerable plug-ins that are available for Google Chrome allow for the ultimate customization of the user experience for students. Any and all modifications can be found by searching for the specific need in question.
- **Virtual Reality Headsets:** The ability to fully immerse students in a safe, controlled, 360-degree virtual environment designed for accessibility allows for a completely customizable experience (eliminating distractions, personalized learning, etc.).

With all of the examples described above, it is apparent that assistive technologies are extremely varied and that new ideas on implementation of everyday “technology” are creating new ways of helping students learn all the time. It is important that we as educators keep an eye out for these new ideas, as they may be the “one small thing” that helps a student learn best in the classroom.



# Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



JOYFULLY LUTHERAN 1 THESS. 5:16-24

FOCUS: Jesus. Others. You.

## The Praise of Children (Palm Sunday)

(MATT. 21:1-11; MARK 11:1-10)



### Before You Teach

There are a lot of songs and anthems for children's choirs about a donkey. Donkeys are humble, but useful animals. In the clamor of Palm Sunday, amidst the vigorous waving of palms and the loud shouting of "Hosanna," let's not miss the service of the donkey. Humble, but useful is what we, Jesus' present-day disciples, want to be. Individually and as a community, we want to be those whom Jesus uses to present Himself to the world. Our deeds are as important as our words.

### Greeting

Greet each child upon entering the classroom, establishing a positive outlook for the day. **Good morning, child of God! I am so very happy you are here to help celebrate a very special day: Palm Sunday!**

### Gathering

*Light your battery-operated altar candle and signal children to gather in your worship area.*

**Say:** Today we are celebrating the day Jesus went into the city of Jerusalem. We call this day "Palm Sunday," and it is a special day we celebrate every year.

**Teach and sing:** "Hosanna! Hosanna!" (LOSP, p. 94).



### Tell the Story


**YOU WILL NEED:** Palm branches, real or precut from green construction paper; crepe paper or ribbon streamers.

**Do:** Distribute palm branches and streamers, keeping a branch for yourself. Signal children to wave the branches and streamers where indicated by the 🌿 as the narrative is told.

Jesus and His disciples were walking to the city of Jerusalem. On the way, Jesus sent two of the disciples into a small town and said, "Go into this village.

Immediately, you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her. Untie both and bring them back to me. If anyone says anything to you about taking them, say, 'The Lord needs them.' And, both will be sent with you at once."

The two disciples did as Jesus told them. They brought the donkey and the colt to Jesus, putting their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit. A crowd gathered to see Jesus, spreading their cloaks on the road before Him. People cut branches from the palm trees  and spread them on the road or held them in their hands. Crowds of people, boys and girls, moms and dads, aunts and uncles, grandmas and grandpas, walked in front of Jesus and behind Him,  waving palm branches and shouting, "**Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!**" (Repeat with children.) When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was excited and curious. Many people wondered aloud, "Who is this?" Excitedly, the crowds shouted, "This is Jesus, from the city of Nazareth in Galilee!"

 "**Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!**" (Repeat with children.)

**Pray:** *Guide children to repeat each line after you.*

Hosanna to our King of Kings!  
Our praise to You we loudly sing.

Hosanna to our Lord of Lords!  
Whose never-ending love outpours.

Hosanna to our Savior King!  
Thank You for all the love You bring. Amen.



## Remember the Story

### BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

**Pre-K & K:** "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (MATT. 21:9B).

**Grades 1 & 2:** "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (MATT. 21:9B).



### ACTIVITIES

**Create:** You will need: Precut palm leaves, paint sponges, green tempera paint. Children sponge paint palm leaves. Display with the words, "Hosanna to the King of Kings!"

**Do:** Praise Parade. Have children listen carefully, following your directions as they march. Play a song of praise.

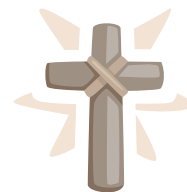
**Say:** Let's march to the music taking big steps; bigger steps; teeny, tiny steps; tiptoes; opposite direction; arms out to the side; to your seats.

**Sing:** "Hosanna! Hosanna!" (LOSP, p. 94). Wave palm branches while singing.

## Sending

**YOU WILL NEED:** A palm leaf to pass. See "Gathering."

Gather children in your sending circle. Review highlights of your day. Pray, inviting children to offer a prayer as the palm leaf is passed and received by each child in turn. Then say, **Hosanna to our King of Kings! Amen!** Repeat with the children. Dismiss, saying to each, **Jesus came for you!**



## Live the Story

Each day is another opportunity to sing and pray "Hosanna" to our Savior King. Each day we have opportunities to celebrate and share the extravagant love of our gracious God, in the person of Jesus. As we go about our daily activities, let us begin and end each day with prayers of praise and thanksgiving, celebrating lives lived in His grace.

# Early Childhood Devotions

VOL. 24, NO. 7 // MARCH 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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 as We Confess and Are Forgiven



### *“I’m sorry.”*

These are hard words to say when we truly mean them. Many of us are not comfortable acknowledging that we were wrong or admitting that we have hurt someone. When these words are spoken with sincerity, we hope that the one to whom they are said will understand the genuine honesty of these words and respond with words of forgiveness.

In the Church, we call this exchange “Confession and Absolution.” These are formal, yet descriptive, words for how we can approach God and how we should approach one another. This has been a long-standing practice during the time of worship in Lutheran churches all across the country. Sometimes the process of confession is spoken aloud and sometimes it is done silently. The pastor will then speak a reply which we term as “absolution.” These words represent a message of hope and comfort — as from God Himself — that absolves our

sin and guilt, removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west! It is a moment that releases us from burden, renews our spirit and gives us a fresh start.

The world today doesn’t follow this practice, although perhaps it once did. We hear of confessions as they pertain to the legal system — where an individual will confess to a crime and then plead guilty in the court. In our legal system, even with a confession, there is always a price to pay.

In the media, we may watch celebrities confessing to some wrong they have done with the hope that they will be forgiven by their fans. Well-known people will go on shows and share their story of wrongdoing. Even with such a heartfelt confession, there is often a price to pay.

How do you handle hurt against one another in your family? Some families just ignore it. Some take it lightly. Recognizing both the wrong and the forgiveness is a great process to teach our children. We might not use the formal words of confession and absolution with young children, but we can teach them the practice of owning up to their hurtful behavior and to teach them to speak words of forgiveness. This is an especially powerful teaching process when parents or other adults put it into practice with children when they themselves have done something wrong.

It is a joy to know that if your child attends a Lutheran school, they can grow in their faith by experiencing this process of confession and forgiveness. It can occur every day among students, faculty, staff and parents as they connect with each other in the classroom, the hallways, the playground and parking lots. Joyful forgiveness can abound!



## JOYFULLY UPLIFTING FAMILY ACTIVITY //

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

### ACTIVITY TITLE: FORGIVENESS ILLUSTRATION

#### PURPOSE

To engage family members in an activity that allows them to reflect on things they feel they need forgiveness for and to illustrate God's ability to wash away our sins.

Items Needed: large glass jar, liquid food coloring drops and small bottle of bleach



#### PROCESS

Have a parent or adult family member fill the glass jar about 1/3 full with water. A parent or adult family member guides the activity and reads the following:

- 1 “Today, for a family activity we are going to show how God forgives our sins and washes them away so that He sees them no more.”
- 2 “We will begin by thinking of this jar of water as our life. The water represents the way we are supposed to be — clear and clean, without sin or wrongdoing.”  
“Does anybody else have a thought of how this half-jar of water is like our life?”
- 3 “Our life doesn't stay clear. It gets messed up. We don't live as we should. Our clean and clear life gets all cloudy and dark. Like when I don't listen as I should. [Place a drop of food coloring in the water.] Or like when I forget to forgive someone. [Place another drop of food coloring in the water.] Or when I drive too fast. [Place another drop in the jar.]”

- 4 “I'm going to ask each of you to now take a turn and share something you have done wrong. As you say it, place a drop of food coloring in the water.”

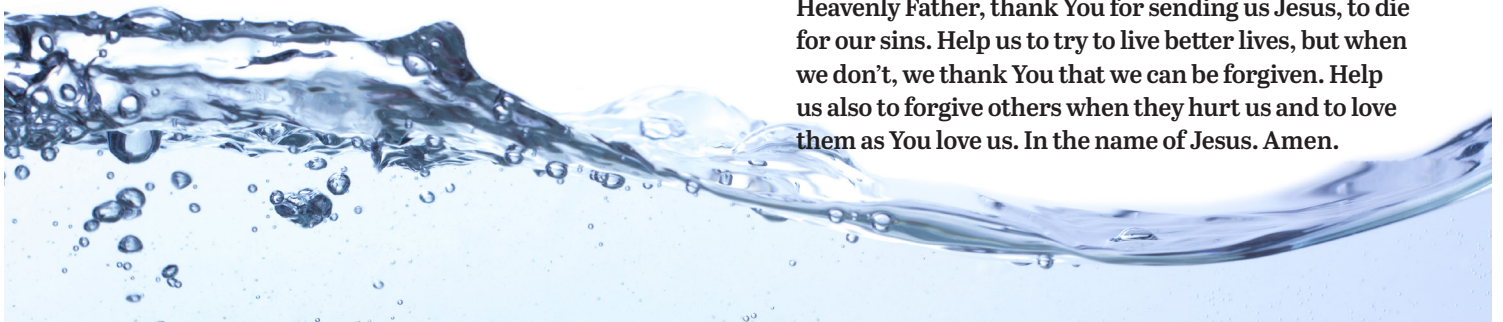
Now that several family members have taken turns dropping various colors into the water, it should be looking pretty yucky and cloudy.

- 5 “Wow! So, this is what happens to our lives. It is supposed to be clear and clean, but we messed it up.”
- 6 “But it doesn't have to stay that way! God wants to make us clean, and the way He does that is by forgiving us! We say, ‘I'm sorry’ to a friend. [Pour a little bit of bleach into the jar.] God forgives us! We ask a family member whom we hurt to be forgiven. [Pour a little bit more bleach into the jar.] God forgives us! We say to God, silently in our heart, that we are sorry for the wrong things we have done. [Pour even more bleach into the jar.] And we are forgiven! [You may have to keep pouring more bleach into the jar — depending on how much food coloring was dripped into it — but eventually, as more bleach is poured into the jar, it will finally clear the water.]”
- 7 “Wow! It is clear again! That is how God forgives us in Jesus Christ. God loved us so much He sent Jesus to die on the cross for us, and our sins are washed away! God sees us as clean again.”

#### PRAYER

Have family members all sit or stand in such a way that they can touch the glass jar. Then have an adult or older sibling read the following prayer, segment by segment, with the rest of the family repeating the words.

**Heavenly Father, thank You for sending us Jesus, to die for our sins. Help us to try to live better lives, but when we don't, we thank You that we can be forgiven. Help us also to forgive others when they hurt us and to love them as You love us. In the name of Jesus. Amen.**



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## Family Matters

VOL. 24, NO. 7 // MARCH 2020

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: March

**Earlier this year in the *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* series**, we discussed providing accommodations for students in your classrooms. Since then, you may have tried a number of these in your setting and kept track of what worked well, what did not work well and what students are still struggling. You may have already gotten to the point of realizing that certain students need more than just accommodations, but you are struggling to know what may be working and what is not. This month, we will look at ideas for progress monitoring and its importance for student success.

Progress monitoring is like wearing a fitness tracker, like Fitbit. Many people wear one around their wrist to become more aware of their activity level and to try to meet a goal for how many steps they have taken in a day. However, if you wear one of these and never look at the information it gives you, should it be a surprise that you are falling behind your daily goals and you don't have an accurate idea of how many steps you really are taking? Sometimes, these devices become fun accessories more than being utilized for their intended purposes. This is similar to progress monitoring in many cases. Teachers have been told to do it by their administrators, a textbook series or the public school district that is evaluating a student, but what purpose does this data actually serve in helping students? Like a fitness monitor, progress monitoring can



provide helpful information, but it requires more than simply giving the assessment.

If your classroom curriculum or practices do not already include progress monitoring tools, look into options such as Acadience Learning (formerly DIBELS), aimsweb or EasyCBM. These three options are efficient and economical. Both Acadience Learning and EasyCBM can be used for free, although there are options that may add some cost, depending on your needs. These measures are all curriculum-based, so their content covers skills that students should learn over the course of a school year rather than covering specific units and chapters. This is ideal for comparing scores from one progress monitoring measure to the next since students are being assessed on similar skills each time. If scores trend upward, you know a student really is progressing and it is not a fluke that they happened to know the material on that one assessment.

A fitness monitor is not very effective at tracking your fitness or steps goals if you only put it on sporadically, or if you do not look at it throughout the day to see where you are in relation to your goal. Likewise, progress monitoring is not effective for showing student growth if the measures are not given consistently and if the data is not reviewed



for individual students. For struggling students, the recommendation is to use progress monitoring for the specific areas of difficulty about twice a month in order to see if students are progressing in those areas. Particularly if the student is receiving targeted intervention for an academic area, it is not helpful to wait too long to see if the intervention is working and resulting in improvement or if the student continues to struggle. If three assessment results in a row do not show progress, it is time for something to change to facilitate success. That is equivalent to the vibration or alert you receive from your fitness monitor telling you that you have been sitting for too long and need to get up and move! Appropriate changes for students who are not making progress may be increasing how often the student is receiving the intervention, how long the intervention is lasting each time or making sure that the intervention is following an evidence-based practice as intended.

The other important consideration for progress monitoring involves tracking the results. Too often, teachers do this activity at home or on the weekends, and students do not consistently get to see their progress. Involve the student in setting goals for each measure based on the recommended score for that grade level, and also have the students graph their progress themselves as they

complete each assessment. It has been shown many times that students are more motivated to improve and make greater academic gains when they are aware of their current performance and have the opportunity to graph their results.

Improving students' academic skills may not be as simple as looking at a fitness monitor and deciding to get out of your chair and move, but the analogy helps emphasize the importance of using data at certain intervals for struggling students.



If you would like further suggestions for how to utilize progress monitoring tools, or how to provide effective interventions for struggling students, please contact us at [lsem@luthsped.org](mailto:lsem@luthsped.org) or visit our website at [luthsped.org](http://luthsped.org).



# Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



## Hiking for Health and Happiness



**W**hen I taught kindergarten, one of my favorite field trips was hiking at our local nature center. When we began the hike, the children instantly calmed down. Walking outside seem to help their attention spans as the guide would occasionally stop to show us animal tracks or dens. Each tour offered so many things to see, hear, touch and smell. When we returned to school, the children were eager to talk and draw pictures of their experiences, assuring me that our field trip resulted in deep learning

There are so many things in today's world that keep us indoors and push us toward the use of technology. It is sensible for families to look for things that balance that

trend by encouraging all to walk away from screens and enjoy God's creation. Hiking together offers families an activity that works for a wide range of ages. Families enjoy the beauty of the outdoors, while thousands of short interactions between siblings and parents improve family bonding. Hiking is full of family positives with nearly no negatives in sight. Let's consider the benefits of hiking in three applicable categories: bodies, brains and emotions.

### **Bodies**

Walking is healthy for your heart and your bones. In addition, it can calm extreme moods like anxiety while encouraging better sleep. When you

allow your children to climb on things and explore, you are also adding exercise called *heavy work* that helps children with their balance and body awareness.

### **Brain**

Experiencing the sights, sounds, smells and touches of the outdoors are great for the development of sensory integration skills. These experiences will help the brain to process sensations and to use them for learning instead of allowing them to distract your child. Sensory integration improves attention and focus.

The talking you do on a hike will improve language development and thinking skills. There are many

opportunities along a hiking path to learn about nature. If you don't recognize what you see, take a picture and check on it later. Show your children how to learn from observation.

The experiences of a hike, along with family interaction, will do much to improve your children's executive function skills. For instance, to follow the path, your children will have to practice some inhibitive control. Checking a map will boost divided attention, and making decisions about which trail to follow will increase cognitive flexibility. All of these skills, practiced on the hike, will then be performed better later in the classroom.

### Emotions

Because hiking is a flexible sport, it allows your family to stop and rest or explore. Once you get halfway through a hike, you are committed to finishing it, so it also builds stamina and shows children that persistence is both possible and rewarding. Keeping track of hikes conquered and setting goals to do longer, more challenging hikes as your children mature will also show them how they are growing and getting stronger. These are priceless lessons that build grit and resilience. This kind of grit will carry over into competitive sports and supply your children with the confidence to work hard to improve skills in every area of life.

When hiking with kids, keep your expectations flexible and your backpack full of water and snacks. You will be amazed at how a short rest with a bit of water and a granola bar can re-energize your crew. Plan a short family devotion at the destination point of your hike. Likewise, your family can form a choir to belt out favorite Jesus songs as you trudge through woods or fields.

Consider some talking games to pass the time. The games *I Spy* and *20 Questions* work well, but you can also start an adventure tale and let each family member take turns adding to the story. To make it more challenging, require that the storyteller use props spotted along the way. Found items, such as walking sticks or birds' nests, added to the story will help your children to feel they are part of the adventure.

Family hikes are also an excellent opportunity to build strong emotional skills by learning to reframe



situations that pose struggles. A hot day can be re-framed into a chance to take more rests. A scrape on the knee is a reminder that family members take care of each other. Unexpected rain is a great excuse to get muddy. Hikes offer many opportunities to find the blessings in simple problems, replacing grumpiness with gratitude.

Hiking can be an easy family activity by taking advantage of walking in local parks. It is also a family activity that will travel with you on nearly any vacation. It promotes physical health and family spiritual health as it offers so many opportunities for discussion, problem-solving, storytelling and praising God.



# Professionally Speaking



## SCRIPTURE: 1 Thess. 5:16–24

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

# Peace

“Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.” — Ronald Reagan

“It isn’t enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.” — Eleanor Roosevelt

“Nobody can bring you peace but yourself.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely.” — Paul (1 THESS. 5:23)

**A**bility. Work. Self-achieved. God. As the old Sesame Street song goes, “One of these things is not like the others.”

Peace is largely unattainable, yet it is sought in desperate ways. But these quotes address the crux of the issue. Reagan’s desire for peace came in communication, in relationships, in a thoughtful and honest conversation. Roosevelt shared an attitude quite prevalent today: peace starts with believing it is possible but only happens with the individualistic effort of each person. Emerson echoed Roosevelt’s challenge by introspective thought — create peace within yourself so it can happen for all.

But Paul? When we consider our life in Christ, peace is not something that generates from self, but rather it only comes from the source of peace Himself: God.

Stress is a by-product of being a Lutheran school administrator. Being a Christian in an increasingly secular country is also stressful.

An Internet search and some social media interaction occurred, and “Stress and De-Stress: Perspectives on Mind, Body and Spirit” [Sudi Kate Gliebe, *Lutheran*

*Education Journal* 155, no. 3 (2014)] became a direction for March’s *Professionally Speaking* newsletter. Gliebe walks the reader through stress regulation. She speaks to handling emotions. She talks about not dealing with stress from an emotional standpoint. Without getting into great detail, she quotes Garnefski and Kraaij (2007) in identifying the following cognitive emotion regulation strategies: “Self-blame, Other-blame, Acceptance, Catastrophizing, Rumination, Putting



into Perspective, Positive Refocusing, Planning and Positive Reappraisal.” Aren’t we leaders guilty of these strategies?

**Self-blame?** The dedicated, diligent leader is always quick to blame self. We’re taught not to look at others but rather as the Pogo cartoon infamously quotes, “We have met the enemy and he is us” [Walt Kelly (1970)]. We can be our own worst critics. Other-blame? Parent? Board? Teacher? Student? There are plenty of directions for blame to be directed in our less-than-peaceful task of administering a school.

**Acceptance?** “It’s the way it is.” How often we throw our arms up into the air and say, “*c’est la vie*.” After all, we know it’s a sinful world and, on this side of heaven, trouble will be obvious. And “*c’est la vie*” allows for a “devil may care” attitude when things DO fall apart.

**Catastrophizing?** “We’re going to have to cut staff.” “We’ll need to cut benefits to stay open.” “The world just doesn’t want a Christian education.” “If the school closes, what am I going to do?” It doesn’t take much for an administrator to take the position of Elijah and lament (paraphrasing), “I’m done, Lord” (1 KINGS 19:4).

**We teach Christ as the answer.** He is the all in all. In Him is abundant life (JOHN 10:10). We also know, KNOW, that His promises are sure and that peace comes in Christ.

These words from the essay’s summary bear consideration: “Biblical meditation is anchored in the Word of God and stands apart from eastern mindlessness. Indeed, biblical meditation involves disciplining the mind and filling it with Scriptures. Biblical meditation is never passive; it is closely related to Bible reading, prayer and other spiritual disciplines (Whitney, n.d.). Although largely neglected by contemporary believers, Christians from previous generations considered meditation essential to spiritual growth, imperative to withstand pressures and tribulations” (Gliebe, “Stress and De-Stress”).



As Gliebe arrives at meditation for faith and peace, she lists three important parts: thinking, feeling and doing. As she shares this conclusion, she rightly connects a secular definition of meditation with a biblical, Christian application of meditation. Using Paul’s encouragement to consider things that are honorable, pure and lovely (PHIL. 4:8) to control our thoughts would be a breath of fresh air to the challenges of administration. And what about meditation in the affective realm? Bible study and prayer including time to reflect with friends in Christ the ups and downs of life can grow one’s hope, peace and joy in the Lord. Finally, meditation is behavioral — it requires disciplined action. The monastic life of Luther’s time included morning prayer (at daybreak), prime (about 6:00 a.m.), tierce (about 9:00 a.m.), sext (about noon), nones (about 3:00 p.m.), vespers (early evening) and compline (before going to sleep). What is your time for meditation and what do you do? If there isn’t a set time, maybe it’s time to set one up now.

## Professionally Speaking // MARCH 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:** Palm Sunday (LUKE 19:28–40; MATT. 21:1–16; MARK 11:1–10).

**Focus:** A week before Jesus’ arrest, beatings, crucifixion, death and resurrection, many welcomed Him as the promised Messiah: “the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God” (LUKE 19:37).

**What it teaches us:** As we think ahead to Jesus’ passion and resurrection, we take time to join the people who welcomed Jesus, the promised Savior, in the parade the first Palm Sunday.

### Prepare to teach

- **Read** the story in the Gospel accounts and, if possible, a study Bible.
- **Think:** As Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem, the people waved palms and shouted “Hosanna” (MATT. 21:9). He was fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy from Zech. 9:9 — God’s kept His promise to send the Messiah. “Hosanna” is Hebrew for “Save us, we pray” (SEE PS. 118:25). That is exactly what Jesus, the promised Messiah, did. He suffered, died and came alive again to take away the sins of the world.
- **Pray:** We thank You, Jesus, for Your love. We’re thankful You came from heaven above. We’re thankful that You came to be ... the Savior God promised for all to see. Amen.



“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  
... Hosanna in the highest!” (MARK 11:9–10)



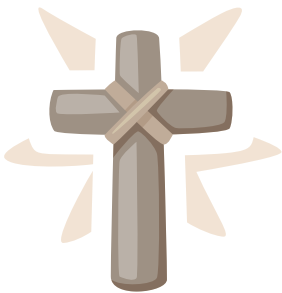
## WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

### You will also need:

- › *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House
- › *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, copyright © 2001 Concordia Publishing House, pp. 126–27
- › **Picture of Jesus** (find one doing an Internet search)
- › **Pictures of Palm Sunday:** 1) disciples finding donkey; 2) Palm Sunday parade

### 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). **Amen** (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

Read the story from *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, pp. 126–127, or use the rhyme below; show picture #1.

**One special day, Jesus knew exactly what He would do.**

**He asked two helpers to go into town bring Him a donkey, shaggy and brown.**

**When Jesus saw the donkey, He sat on its back walked slowly into town, just like that.**

Show the second picture.

**People saw Him coming, cut branches from a tree, waved them all around and sang happily.**

**Hosanna! Hosanna!  
Jesus! Jesus!  
We love You!**

Repeat and invite the children to “parade” around the room, saying **Hosanna! Hosanna! — Jesus! Jesus! — We love You too!**

**What the Story Teaches:** The people were happy to see Jesus, the Savior, coming. They even had a parade. They waved palm branches and sang, “Hosanna.” We're happy Jesus came to be our Savior.

### Time to Pray

**Dear Jesus, we know You are our Savior King. Happy songs to You we sing. Amen.** Wave and sing, “Hosanna! Hosanna!” (*LOSP*, p. 94).

### 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

- > **God gives us eyes to see;** the people saw Jesus riding on the donkey. Take a walk; what do we see in our room/outside?
- > **Parade to eat:** 2 halves of graham cracker to make a road; add a strip of Easy Cheese by Kraft; set people (e.g., teddy grahams) in the cheese.

### T Technology

- > **Apps:** Check out appropriate screen time apps for young children.
- > **Web:** Utilize *parentschoice.org*; include website in parent newsletter.

### R Reading and Language Arts

- > **Fingerplay:** **Peek-a-boo. Peek-a-boo** (repeat); **I see you; Peek-a-boo** (repeat); **Jesus loves you.**



- > **Board Book:** *The Eye Book* by Dr. Seuss (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1999). Take pictures and make classroom books to look at (e.g., Favorite Toys, Favorite Foods, Our Families).

### E Engineering

- > **Use toy figures** (people, trees, etc.) and make a parade for Jesus. Afterward, manipulate figures to act out the parade.

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

- > **Paint** with palm fronds and sing Hosanna and Hallelujah songs.
- > **Piggyback song:** (tune: “Are You Sleeping?”) **God gave me eyes** (repeat) **that can see** (repeat) **the blue sky, up so high** (repeat). **God gave me eyes** (repeat). Create additional verses using various body parts.

### CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

We know children love screen time, but parents need to help them use what’s best. To help you choose, check out *parentschoice.org*.

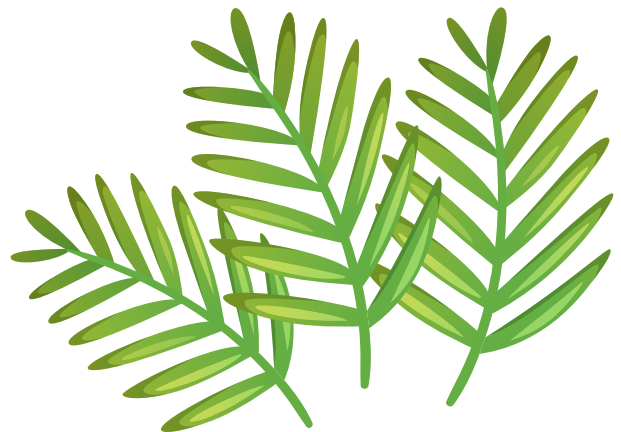
- > **Wave scarves,** streamers, or pretend palm branches and have a parade for Jesus while singing praise songs (e.g., *LOSP*, pp. 68, 94).

### M Mathematics

- > **Counting:** Draw happy faces on fingernails. Raise fingers, sing (tune: “Ten Little Indians”) **One little, two little, three little children, Four ... Ten children sang to Jesus.**

### S Social Studies

- > **Eyes:** people saw Jesus and praised Him. Look in mirror and “notice” eyes. God gives us eyes to see each other.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



# School Shepherd



TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS

THEME | JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

## Hope:fully

**W**hat are your hopes for your Lutheran school? Do you hope for an increasing enrollment? Financial stability? Staff vacancies filled? More volunteers? Our hopes vary depending on our circumstances and setting. Lutheran schools are always hope FULL. The hopes of Lutheran schools are more than temporal wishes. Lutheran schools are hope FULL in Jesus.

St. Paul's words in Romans 15:13 direct our hopes to the Hope. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

### HOPE-Giving Good Shepherd

Our expressions of "hope" are often little more than wishes: "I hope it doesn't rain for the field trip." "I hope we have a good attendance at the school carnival." The psalmist speaks for the Old Testament believers: "My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word" (PS. 119:81). God's promises of the Messiah were certain. Abraham could hope in the ultimate sacrifice God would send through his family. David's hope for a descendant who would occupy his throne victoriously and eternally would be fulfilled. The hopes of the Old Testament believers were fulfilled in Jesus.

The disciples on the way to Emmaus experienced diminished hopes: "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (LUKE 24:21). Hope was alive in the resurrected Jesus who walked with them. "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (LUKE 24:27).



In the resurrection of Jesus, the Father created for the world a hope that cannot die. Jesus is the hope that brings the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Jesus is the hope for every child, family, teacher and all connected to the Lutheran school ministry.

## HOPE-Receiving School Shepherd

Sometimes, things seem hopeless even for school shepherds. Personal situations involving health, finances and so on drain us of hope. We may look at our own family situations — marriage, children, parents — and sense hope diminishing.

School and church dynamics affect our hope barometers, as we answer questions that can be crucial and draining: Will our school survive? Can the tension among the staff be minimized? Will all the positions be filled with qualified staff with servant hearts?

When things looked hopeless, Job could still proclaim in faith, “Though he slay me, I will hope in him” (JOB 13:15). God’s promises in Christ are always true. Our hope in Christ is always certain. Assured that God in Christ will not fail or disappoint him, the school shepherd can be the messenger of hope to the Lutheran school.

The school shepherd is blessed to be the public messenger of hope. More often, he is the messenger of hope to the child who feels bullied by peers, the faculty member struggling in a marriage, the parent who lost a job, or the volunteer who admits to struggling with depression.

## Hope FULL Lutheran Schools

Hope FULL Lutheran schools base their ultimate hope in Christ. “My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness” (*Lutheran Service Book* 575:1). In the Lenten season, we are certain in the resurrection of Jesus. The message of the hymn reminds everyone in the church and school that our hope is in Jesus.

Hope FULL Lutheran schools have a spirit of hope. Paul prays, “By the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (ROM. 15:13). In the midst of imprisonments and persecutions, Paul was a messenger of hope because of the Spirit’s work in and through him. While Lutheran schools deal honestly with the realities of ministry in a sinful world, they plan and proceed hopefully.

“Lord of all hopefulness,  
Lord of all joy,

Whose trust, ever childlike,  
no cares could destroy;

Be there at our waking, and  
give us, we pray,

Your bliss in our hearts, Lord,  
at the break of the day.”

(LSB 738:1)

The spirit of hope is expressed in positive attitudes and atmosphere. School and church leadership speak of the eternal hope that is the foundation for temporal hope. Temporal hope gains direction and shape with a ministry plan. Dreams become reality as the Spirit directs and blesses: What are the hopes for the next school year? For the graduates of the school? For the families who enroll children in the school? For the next generation?

## Dialoging Hope FULLY

- › How is the hope in Jesus taught and shared in your Lutheran school?
- › What factors may distract us from a hope FULL ministry or rob us of hope?
- › What makes you hope FULL about your school ministry?



# Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



## THE AGE-OLD QUESTION: What's Your Curriculum?

**A**s an early childhood educator, do you often feel like a “jack-of-all-trades”? Do you feel like a mother/father, health-care provider, educator and police officer all at the same moment? Or, do you perhaps feel like a high-level engineer with all of the environment and curriculum design that you find yourself doing each day? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are likely a good early childhood educator and leader! It’s true that early childhood educators make more minute-by-minute decisions than a brain surgeon. The field of early childhood education is fascinating and complex, yet at times simple and beautiful. When you add in the ministry component, it’s absolutely delightful!

A question often asked not only by parents but also by fellow educators is “what curriculum do you use?” This can potentially be a loaded question because there are many different possible responses. Based on the age of the children you work with, your background and your philosophy, there are many different types of curriculum frameworks and resources that could be utilized.

This issue of *Time Out for Directors* will briefly share an overview of components that could be used in developing a response to questions about curriculum use. As a leader in early childhood education, it is important for you to be well-versed on the topic and be able to articulately explain the philosophy and practice of your classroom and program. No matter what curriculum materials you use, or the philosophy you have, all should be in line with your Lutheran, Christian faith — that’s what makes your school a Lutheran school — a JOY:fully Lutheran school.



### A Curriculum of Faith

It is important for Lutheran schools to have alignment in theology and biblical teachings. Materials available through Concordia Publishing House (CPH), LCMS School Ministry and other ministry arms of the LCMS provide some of the richest resources to help teach the faith. Yes, there are many other materials and resources available, and they can be wonderful supplements to what is currently available through CPH. Using faith-based materials that are in alignment with your church and school mission is important. When some educators do not have specialized training in LCMS teachings or faith-based environments, the use of LCMS/CPH materials becomes even more important.

### Learning Goals

Parents, and some educators, often ask what specific milestones or concepts children should exhibit,

or learn, at specific ages. While there is certainly a spectrum of what children can do, there are common milestones that are appropriate. Each of the 50 states has published common learning goals for early childhood education. These goals provide alignment in a progression of learning and development that starts at infancy and continues into elementary school. It is important that educators and leaders are familiar with these learning goals and use them to guide instruction, planning and learning environments.

## Social & Emotional Learning

Today, perhaps now more than ever before, there is great emphasis on the need for children to learn appropriate social and emotional skills. These skills help children, not only in their current development but also into adulthood. Grit, positive character, responsibility and self-control are characteristics that even adults need. There are many different social-emotional curricular resources available today — complete programs, but also resources that can supplement already-in-place classroom practices.

## Cognitive Learning

God's marvelous work is certainly evident when one thinks of the human brain, its development and how it processes information! Only God could create something so powerful and beautiful as the human brain. In coordination with Early Learning Goals, early childhood educators can begin planning for opportunities in which children play in a way that invites learning in a variety of cognitive areas, such as math, literacy, science and physical movement. The beauty of early childhood education is that many of these cognitive areas are woven together through the daily routine and classroom environment. It is important to know which skills and milestones are developmentally appropriate at the various ages and to strive to provide opportunities for children to engage in play that includes them.

## Play-Based Learning

In any early childhood classroom, play, along with Jesus, should be at the heart of all that is done. This should be a type of play that invites learning! As children engage in a holistic learning environment where

they focus on JOY-filled and play-filled activities, they learn skills in physical development, social intelligence, academic learning and, because you are at a Lutheran school, spiritual development. While few early childhood educators would argue against play-based learning, many have a difficult time fully agreeing on what an experience should exactly look like. Take some time and research ideas on how child-initiated free play, guided play and instructional play all have important roles in a child's learning environment. Note that play should not end at preschool graduation! While additional academic content areas are introduced and taught in greater detail, play should still be part of what children do in kindergarten and first grade!

## A Variety of Philosophies

If you did an Internet search of early childhood curriculum, philosophies or frameworks, you would find a plethora of options to read through: Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Creative Curriculum, Waldorf and many more. While these all have strong contributions to the development and learning of children, they do not contain a faith-based component. With Christ at the center of your Lutheran school, remember to maintain that focus regardless of your specific philosophy. Spend time with your faculty and staff and create a philosophy statement that cascades from your church/school mission and vision — they should be in alignment.

As you consider the important pieces mentioned above, reflect on how they each contribute to who you are as an overall ministry and educational program. With the ever-increasing competition, both from public and other faith-based programs, you need to be articulate in your practices, philosophies and how you best serve children and utilize research-based practices that contribute to high-quality learning.

Know that Christ is with you in all you do. As you remember your faith-filled purpose and fix your eyes on sharing the Gospel message, you will quickly find it easier to include faith-filled stories, examples and real-world applications in all you do. Jesus isn't just for Jesus Time — He is for all-of-the-time! Be intentional in how you JOY:fully share the Good News daily in complement with your cognitive, play-filled learning!