

# School Ministry Mailing



## School Ministry



DECEMBER 2016

# School Ministry Mailing Contents

## *Alight*

"Merry Christmas"  
LCMS School Ministry Office

## *Computer File*

"Cyberbullying"  
Matthew Bergholt

## *Early Childhood Devotions*

"Journey to Bethlehem"  
Dr. Judith Christian

## *Family Matters*

"Upon This Rock: The Rock of Peace"  
Dr. Steven Christopher

## *Growing in Governing*

"The Importance of Board Professional Development"  
Thomas Wrege

## *Insights & Ideas*

"Walls of Jericho"  
Calie Vera

## *Parent Pages*

"Upon This Rock: Love One Another"  
Dr. Kim Marxhausen

## *Professionally Speaking*

"Christmas – A Lesson in Teaching"  
Mark Muehl

## *Rattles & Prattles*

"God Rescues His People at Just the Right Time"  
Judy Williams

## *School Shepherd*

"Rock-Solid Shepherds Celebrate"  
Rev. Robert Riggert

## *Time Out for Directors*

"Ready or Not, Here We Come!"  
Cheryl A. Haun





# Alight



FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS

"FOR UNTO YOU IS  
BORN THIS DAY IN  
THE CITY OF DAVID  
A SAVIOR, WHO IS  
CHRIST THE LORD"

(LUKE 2:11 ESV).



Merry Christmas!

FROM YOUR LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY STAFF

## Alight

Vol. 47 • No. 4 • December 2016

**Alight** is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter  
Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Designer: Lisa Moeller

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line "Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry."

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



# December 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				National Christmas Tree Lighting <b>1</b>	Special Education Day <b>2</b>	First Heart Transplant, 1967 <b>3</b>
International Space Station Launch (US), 1998 <b>4</b>	Walt Disney born, 1901 <b>5</b>	Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution Ratified, 1865 <b>6</b>	Pearl Harbor Day <b>7</b>	America Enters World War II, 1941 <b>8</b>	Official Lost and Found Day <b>9</b>	Gingerbread Decorating Day <b>10</b>
Indiana Admission Day, 1816 <b>11</b>	Poinsettia Day <b>12</b>	Mary Todd Lincoln born, 1818 <b>13</b>	South Pole Discovery, 1911 <b>14</b>	Bill of Rights Day <b>15</b>	Boston Tea Party, 1773 <b>16</b>	Wright Brothers Day <b>17</b>
Steven Spielberg born, 1947 <b>18</b>	First Radio Broadcast from Space, 1958 <b>19</b>	American Poet Laureate Established, 1985 <b>20</b>	St. Thomas, Apostle <b>21</b>	First Gorilla Born in Captivity, 1956 <b>22</b>	First nonstop flight around the world without refueling, 1987 <b>23</b>	Christmas Eve <b>24</b>
Christmas Day <b>25</b>	St. Stephen, Martyr <b>26</b>	St. John, Apostle and Evangelist <b>27</b>	The Holy Innocents, Martyrs <b>28</b>	American YMCA Organized, 1851 <b>29</b>	No Interruptions Day <b>30</b>	Eve of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus New Year's Eve <b>31</b>

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





# Computer File



## Cyberbullying

Bullying is not new to education. Ever since students have been placed in a classroom together to learn, certain students have employed tactics to get what they want from others around them. However, bullying has taken on a completely different connotation in the electronic communication and social media environment. All who work in education now must be aware that interactions within the classroom setting are no longer contained to personal interactions between students; rather, they continue through other widely accepted means of communication. Thus, the prevalence of cyberbullying is something that many educational institutions continue to struggle with due to changing technologies and the prevalence of student devices (phones, tablets, etc.) at an increasingly younger age. Since the results of this new form of bullying are damaging and long-lasting, it is essential that we gain an understanding of cyberbullying and the many ways to combat it in our schools today.

### Defining Cyberbullying

The Oxford dictionary defines cyberbullying as “the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature” ([en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cyberbullying](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cyberbullying)). This is an accurate definition as it quickly gets to the core of cyberbullying, the act of bullying through the use of electronic communication. However, it is essential to note that the means of “electronic communication” have

changed drastically, which has resulted in an expansion in the ways in which students can be bullied. The rise of social media has created a hostile space for bullies to exploit, and, while this may not change the definition, it adds another element for individuals to be aware of in their exploration of the concept.



### A Short History of Cyberbullying

With the rise of electronic communication in the late 1990s and early 2000s, bullies were given a new medium in which they could continue bullying others outside of the classroom. Through spaces created for electronic communication like Myspace and online chat rooms, students were able to connect with each other outside of the school day. However, many of these early mediums allowed for anonymous postings, which led to the rise of bullying without having to take responsibility for hateful actions or words. Eventually, these platforms faded away and were replaced by more social and open mechanisms, such as Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. However, these more open platforms only served to embolden bullies to make their

“Thus, the prevalence of cyberbullying is something that many educational institutions continue to struggle with due to changing technologies...”

actions more public and hurtful. Most recently, the corporations running the major social and electronic media sites have come under increasing pressure to address the issue of cyberbullying on their platforms, and many are indeed rising to the challenge.

## Who Do We Turn to for Help?

After an incident of cyberbullying has been identified, the next most pressing question is where to turn for help. Most often, this is a knee-jerk reaction that occurs after the cyberbullying has taken place. However, some schools are looking to implement curriculum, policies, procedures and programs to address cyberbullying with students before it becomes an issue. Thus, there are two different ways to approach this question:

- 1 Proactive responses are actions taken in advance of a cyberbullying issue. These may take the form of programs (such as those listed in the resources below), speakers that come in to address students and their personal growth, or policies and procedures that are put in place proactively by school teachers and administrators to address any future issues. Whatever the case, these proactive steps give many different avenues to turn to if and when cyberbullying occurs.
- 2 Reactive responses are actions taken after a cyberbullying interaction has taken place. Teachers, administrators and school counselors play a critical role in these responses, as they are the ones who will be managing the response to the incident. In many cases, reactive responses are hastily put together to address the issue, but this does not have to be the case. Consultations and research into the resources below allow for a measured and appropriate response to cyberbullying after it has taken place.

Most importantly, we must remember to turn to prayer and God's Word. Allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through all of the students involved continues to focus the discussion on whom to turn to in these situations. Without His saving grace, our students would be unable to work through and grow from hurtful interactions with others.

## What Resources Exist to Address This Issue?

Second only to the first question is the need for resources to help students navigate cyberbullying. Due to the continued growth of cyberbullying amongst school-age children, there are many good resources and programs available that address the topic from various angles. The list below is certainly not exhaustive, but it is a good place to start:

- *StopBullying.gov* is an excellent resource provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which contains resources on bullying in general but

also specifics on cyberbullying (*stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/*).

- Common Sense Education has a comprehensive toolkit with additional resources for addressing cyberbullying both at home and in the educational setting (*commonsensemedia.org/educators/cyberbullying-toolkit*).
- The Cyberbullying Research Center (*cyberbullying.org*) serves as a clearinghouse for information, research and resources from around the Internet and around the world.

While all these resources are beneficial, it is important to remember that the first line of intervention must come from the classroom teacher. No one in the building knows each student to the level of their teacher, and these individuals are often the first to realize that something is going on outside of the classroom. Teachers must not shy away from addressing the issue of cyberbullying, both preemptively and once the actions have occurred. In the same way that bullying in the classroom or school is not tolerated, cyberbullying must get the same attention and response in order to be effectively dealt with. Then and only then will students realize that their online and physical lives are not separate; actions in either will result in the same results, and cyberbullying is no exception.

Remember that you as an educator are not alone when dealing with cyberbullying. You are not the first to deal with it, nor are you the last. However, it is important to develop policies and procedures to address cyberbullying so that you are comfortable addressing it in the classroom. And as always, check to see what others both inside and outside of Lutheran education are doing to see if their best practices can work for your ministry as well.



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

## Computer File

Vol. 16 • No. 4 • December 2016

**Computer File** is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • *lcms.org*  
Writer: Matthew Bergholt Designer: Lisa Moeller

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with credit the line "Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry."

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





# Early Childhood DEVOTIONS



FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

## LIFE TOGETHER

FOCUS: GOD ACTS AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME

*"Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock" (Is. 26:4).*

## Journey to Bethlehem

LUKE 2:1-20

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

Advent is the four-week time we spend each year reviewing the many Old Testament signs that point to Jesus' coming.

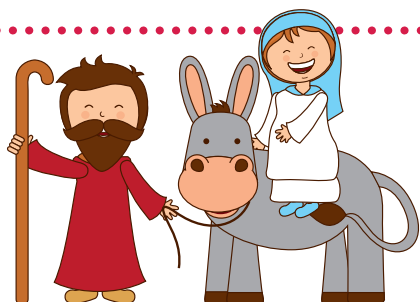
Those signs say, "Wait! Things are not quite ready. It's not time, yet." Then, "in the fullness of time" (GAL. 4:4), God acts. And still, 20 centuries later, we are surprised, as were the shepherds, the Wise Men and Jesus' own parents. The poet Jaroslav Vajda begins one of his hymns this way: *"The rescue we were waiting for has come most unexpectedly."*

The Christmas story is the launch of the great rescue event that God had been preparing for His people since the beginning of the world. As we lead children through the story of Jesus' birth, let us begin to help them see Jesus not just as a baby, but as the Infant King. He begins life as a poor child in a manger, but he goes to the cross and rises from His grave as the Savior of the world. In His own time — just the right time — God sent His Son into our world, for the mighty purpose of defeating sin, death, and Satan.

### Greeting

As children enter, greet each of them. Let them know their presence is valued and appreciated.

"Good morning, child of God ..."



### Gathering

You will need: Advent wreath with one pink candle, three royal blue candles and a centered large white candle.

Gather in or around the classroom worship center. Dec. 4, 2016, marks the second week of Advent. Light two (hope, peace) of the three blue candles on your Advent wreath while singing the corresponding verses to "Light One candle" (LOSP, p. 78). Sing the remaining verses as you light the pink candle (love) during the third week of Advent and the remaining blue (joy) during the fourth week. Place a white (liturgical color for Christmas) cloth beneath your Advent wreath on the day of your Christmas celebration and light the white Christ candle.

### Tell the Story

**YOU WILL NEED:** Three destination signs: "Nazareth", "Bethlehem", "stable". *As the story unfolds, show destination signs as indicated in bold.*

**OPTION:** For small groups, post destination signs around the room (or school), then walk from destination to destination as the story unfolds. With additional adult leaders, large groups can be divided to do likewise.

Around the time Jesus was to be born, the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, ordered all the people in the country to go to the place where they had been born so that

**Note:** Throughout the year, you will need the songbooks *Little Ones Sing Praise* and *Songs of God's Love*, both available from Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVOTIONS • Vol. 21 • No. 4 • December 2016

PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO, GETTY IMAGES, THINKSTOCK



they could be counted. Mary and Joseph lived in the town of (1) **Nazareth**, but they had to travel far away to a little town called Bethlehem. So they *walked, walked, walked* (alternately pat hands on knees or walk to destination sign) the long way to (2) **Bethlehem**. Many, many people had to come to Bethlehem to be counted. Finding no place to stay, tired Mary and Joseph slowly *walked, walked, walked* (alternately pat knees or walk to destination sign) until they found a (3) **stable** in which to stay. Now, the time had come for the baby to be born. Mary gave birth to the baby boy in the stable, wrapped him in cloths and gently laid him in a manger. According to God's plan, Mary named the baby Jesus. She remembered that God told her: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." Jesus is God's Son, Christ our Lord! Together shout: Glory to God!

#### PRAY:

(Advent week 1) Leader: Bring the light of hope.

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!**

(Advent week 2) Leader: Bring the lights of hope and peace!

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!**

(Advent week 3) Leader: Bring the lights of hope, peace and love! **All: Come, Lord Jesus!**

(Advent week 4) Leader: Bring the lights of hope, peace, love and joy! **All: Come, Lord Jesus!** (Christmas celebration) Leader: We speak the words the angels sang long ago on the night Jesus was born. **All (loudly): Glory! Glory to God! Glory to God in the highest! (Repeat)**  
**All (quietly): Peace. Peace. Peace to His people on earth.**

## Remember the Story

### BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (MATT. 1:21).

Gr. 1 & 2: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; ... and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6).



## Early Childhood Devotions

Vol. 21 • No. 4 • December 2016

**Early Childhood Devotions** is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Lisa Moeller

## Activities

**CREATE:** You will need small rectangular sponges; 5 inch by 9 inch white construction paper; 6 inch by 10 inch red construction paper; 3 inch by 7 inch tag board; green tempera paint; shallow dishes or meat trays; craft knife and glue. Create stencils by tracing words such as "peace", "joy" and "Jesus" or shapes such as a star or manger on tag board. Using a craft knife, cut stencil designs, making several copies of each. Place identical stencils by a single paint color. Pour small quantities of paint into shallow containers. Place a stencil on the precut white paper, demonstrate dipping a sponge into paint and dapping it on a stencil. Carefully lift the stencil. When dry, frame the print by adhering the imprinted white paper to the red or green.

**SING:** "Light One Candle" (LOSP, p. 78); "Away in a Manger" (LOSP, p. 83).

**DO:** Go on an Advent hunt. Visit the church sanctuary and have children identify items, or find items you have identified, which reflect the coming of Jesus.

## Live the Story

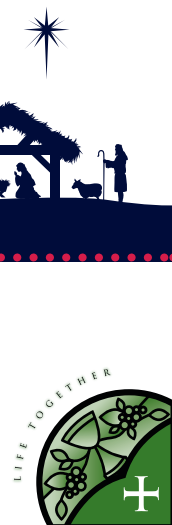
The quiet of Jesus' birth is often drowned out by the noise of holiday preparations. Our challenge is to maintain focus on the fulfillment of God's promise: JESUS! Classroom/school Christmas activities ought to emphasize the coming of Jesus, be developmentally appropriate and structured as part of the daily curriculum. Lower stress levels by remaining calm, adhering to your regular schedule and encouraging parents to do the same.

## Sending

Remind children that God sent Jesus to rescue us and all people from sin, at just the right time. Together repeat the words of the angels, "Glory to God in the Highest." Say to each child as they depart, "Jesus came for you!"

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line "Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry."

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





# Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

## Upon This Rock: The Rock of Peace



### **“WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS?”**

It's the time of year that we ask this proverbial question. We ask it with the intention of obtaining the best gifts for our spouses, children, friends, neighbors and co-workers. But it is easy to get fixated on the quest for the “perfect” gift.

Some of us start shopping early so as to have plenty of time to make sure our gifts are just right. Others listen carefully to hints and suggestions from our loved ones and then search determinedly to find those gifts. Some among us just flat out ask people what they want, and when we get a response, say, “OK, good, that's what I'm getting you for Christmas.” Finally, there are the thrill-seekers who intentionally wait until December 24 and then shop in a frenetic burst of energy, as if to prove that our method of getting ready for Christmas is as effective as any other.

Yet in the end, when the presents have all been acquired and opened, and there are smiles on faces all around, what does this focus on the “perfect” gift give us? Does it offer us a sense of self-satisfaction? Does it provide us with a merry Christmas? Does it give us peace of mind?

Christmas is about peace, but not the kind of peace that the world would seek — the ceasing of war and other types of conflict. Christmas is about giving, but not the kind that the world would promote — the acquisition of new and desired things, or just the right gift. Christmas is about knowing, but not the kind of knowing that the world desires — knowing that we did a great job of hosting Christmas events, or that we have done our very best to give those around us a merry Christmas.

Christmas is knowing that we have received the greatest gift from our Heavenly Father — His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, born to be our Savior, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the very Prince of Peace Himself. Christmas is celebrating the gift of the Christ Child, the one who would grow up to calm the storms. This Jesus would share calming words with His followers, remain calm as He suffered under Pontius Pilate, and accept His place on the cross — in our place, conquering death, so that we might live eternally.

May this sense of peace that can only come from Christ our Lord fill your hearts and homes this Christmas!

## FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

*Gather the family together in a comfortable place in the home for a time of family interaction and Bible study using the outline below.*

**OPENING PRAYER:** Have the person in the family whose birthday is the closest to Christmas share an opening prayer.

### CHRISTMAS SHARING:

Ask the following questions to open a family discussion on the topic of gift giving.

- 1) What has been one of the best Christmas gifts you have received? Why did you like it so much?
- 2) What has been one of the most exciting Christmas gifts you have given (or helped give)? What made it so special to give this gift?
- 3) What are you hoping to get for Christmas this year?
- 4) What are you hoping to give to someone else this Christmas?

### THE CHRISTMAS STORY:

As a family, sit down and read the Christmas story from Luke 2:1–20.

Take turns reading the verses with those children who are capable of reading, and share in the joy of this story of the greatest gift!



### THE GREATEST GIFT CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS:

The word of the angel to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night (LUKE 2:11) tells us about the first and greatest gift of Christmas: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”



### FAMILY PROJECT —

- 1) To celebrate this great gift, the family can create ornaments to display on the family Christmas tree or in another prominent place in the home.
- 2) Ahead of time, a parent or older sibling can cut out of cardboard or strong poster board the letters S A V I O R. Make them large, at least 6 to 8 inches (maybe even bigger!), and make them wide as well, so that they stand out and are strong.
- 3) Arrange to have glue, various colors of glitter, and other decorative items such as sequins, pom-poms, etc., as well as various colored markers in place for the project.
- 4) Make sure you have a string or ribbon to attach to the letters so that you can hang them on the tree or on a wall in the home.
- 5) As a family, decide how you want to decorate the letters, and let everyone take part in the project.
- 6) Once the letters are finished, choose where they will hang and place them in your home to spell out the greatest gift: our S A V I O R! Then end with the family echo prayer below.

**CLOSING ECHO PRAYER:** Have an adult or older sibling read the prayer below, section by section, with the rest of the family echoing each phrase.

Dear Father in Heaven. Thank you for Jesus our Savior, the greatest gift of all. Let this Christmas be one of joy and thanks to you. May these letters of the word S A V I O R remind us of this wonderful present that comes to us this Christmas and is present in our lives every day. In His Name we pray. Amen.

## Family Matters

Vol. 21 • No. 4 • December 2016

**Family Matters** is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Dr. Steven Christopher Designer: Lisa Moeller

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line “Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry.”

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.







# Growing in Governing



GROWTH TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS

## The Importance of Board Professional Development

We often speak of PD within our respective staffs, with teachers and support personnel. Should we also make sure we are continually learning about being effective with our Boards? The answer is a definitive “Yes!” Every meeting is an opportunity to learn together. It can be challenging, but fun at the same time. Also consider an annual strategic planning session, a retreat with other boards from your church or a gathering with another sister school governing board — all to assist with learning and growing. Probably the most eye-opening opportunity is to have a visioning session that allows for dreaming and great hope for the future!

Learning and growing is something we should strive for each day. In Ps. 25:4–5 we read:

“Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.”

All professional development should be shared through the lens of God’s Holy Word. It is through discernment, prayer, leadership and as much as possible — agreement in the spirit of unity.

### HERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING TOGETHER:

#### Put it on the agenda

Be deliberate. Make it an agenda item every month. Ask members to be willing to contribute, or have the principal find timely articles, engaging speakers or even have a book read together.

#### Writing Policy

One can’t assume that policy-writing is automatic. Be proactive, not reactive. Have a standard template. Talk together about why policy is a part of board governance and how it assists the school leadership in carrying out the program of education. Today there are many issues



of policy, and the nuts and bolts of writing policy (and procedures) that must be known and polished.

### Visioning activity

Part of the board's job is to look way ahead to the future: financial, facilities, personnel, programming, partnerships, creativity, innovation, unity, customer service and faith formation. An activity to carry out the visioning can start with the school staff, and can then be crafted into a living document where one can look to the past, live in the present, see what the future might hold. Once finalized, this document should be shared with constituents to show how the ministry is managed and how value continues to be added.

### Strategic Planning

There is an art and science to this model of planning. The NLSA Accreditation Action Plan is a good example. Usually a facilitator can do a good job of very effectively teaching this type of planning and of making it actionable.

### The Importance of Visibility and of Being Active

Being out there is a form of PD. When the board member understands her role, she can properly have conversations and represent the board.

### Re-Visiting of the Orientation

Each new board session should include this exercise as part of understanding both the individual and collective role. There will be times in meetings when the orientation material should be reviewed.

### Opportunities Will Present Themselves

As the year progresses, stop and have dialogue about opportunities, celebrations, challenges and new information.

### Network with Another Board

In the same way that teachers or staff members often visit other schools to network, so boards can similarly meet to discuss governance in Christian education.

We are always learning and growing. Christ taught His disciples and prepared them to witness to the world, as we read in Matthew 28. Having professional development regularly is just another way to equip one another to share the Good News of Jesus Christ!

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE



- **Jim Galvin**, at *GalvinandAssociates.com* — strategic facilitation process
- **Chuck Evans**, at BetterSchools LLC — strategic planning, board and staff training, fundraising and financial and market structure
- **BOOKS**
  - Stoesz, Edgar. *Common Sense for Board Members: 40 Essays about Board Service*. Brattleboro, Vt.: Good Books, 2011.
  - Stob, Leonard. *Mission-Directed Governance: Leading the Christian School with Vision, Unity, and Accountability*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Calvin College Press, 2011.
  - Center for Education & Employment Law. *Private School Law in America*. 2005.
- **BOOKLET**
  - Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Lawsuits: A Legal Guide for LCMS Congregations, Schools, and Ministries*, by the Alliance Defending Freedom for Faith, for Justice, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
- **Growing in Governing** Synod monthly resources





# Insights & Ideas

FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

## Walls of Jericho

Ah yes, another seemingly easy to interpret Old Testament story. But what if there's more to it? The people marched and the walls fell; their faith is so darn impressive. Perhaps this is true, but faithfully read we see that this story is more about God's action to render the walls to a pile of rubble than it is about a parade of well-intended people led by trumpets and shouting. The people took the spoken words of God to heart. God saw and responded to that faith of Joshua and his people.

To be sure, we have to be careful. We don't want to teach kids to think that if they just do what God says then He will give them what they want. God is not some cosmic vending machine waiting to dole out blessings just because his children listen on occasion. However, we can learn a lesson of how important it is to let our faith bare itself in our actions. The priests and people marched because their faith in God was so great that they knew He could accomplish what He said. So it is with us. God promises many things to us in His scriptures. Do we just play lip service to such promises? Or do we actually believe them and allow them to alleviate us from the pressures of work, relationships, stress and so on?

God does not just leave us up to our own efforts and strategies to find a way to navigate through this fallen world. Instead His divine strategy is laid out; the Bible gives us the battle plan for our lives. We will all encounter walls at some point in our lives — these are the very things distract us from the blessings and promises God has laid out. Praise God that whatever Jericho stands in from of us we know that ours is the victory, in Christ we are “more than conquer” (Rom. 8:31–39).

“God does not just leave us up to our own efforts and strategies to find a way to navigate through this fallen world.”





## Expressive Arts

Have the students act out the story of the battle of Jericho. First, read the story from the children's Bible, then, assign parts. You will need priests blowing horns, an army and Rahab. To make the story more dramatic, place cardboard blocks in a square with a student in the middle. The student in the middle can knock over the walls when it is time.

## Spiritual and Social Living

Have the students listen to the song, "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho". After listening to it once, teach the students the words to the song. You can find the song and lyrics on YouTube.

## Communication Arts

Introduce the lesson by showing the students the letter J. Ask if anyone knows what letter it is. Ask if any of the students have a name that starts with the letter J. Ask the students if they know anyone from the Bible whose name starts with a J: Jesus, Joseph, Jonah, Joshua.

Continue the lesson teaching the students how to write a J. If appropriate, have them practice writing the letter J. For younger students, allow them to color the letter J.

## Wellness

Many of our schools today have an indoor rock wall. If you are lucky enough to have one, instruct the students on how to use it, like the spies may have done to the walls of Jericho. If you do not have one at school, perhaps a local park might.

## Discovering the World

At the math table, set out piles of 7 small rocks or pebbles. Ask the students how many ways they can make 7. Have them draw a picture to illustrate their discoveries.



## STONE COOKIES

For a class treat, use rice crispy treats to build a model of Jericho.

For an individual snack, have each child build their own models of Jericho. Here's how:

### YOU WILL NEED:

Cheese in a can (spray cheese)  
Cheese-It crackers (or square crackers)  
Paper plates

Give each student a paper plate. Spray the cheese in a square on the plate and allow each child to use their square crackers to build Jericho.

## Book of the Month

*Jericho's Tumbling Walls.*  
by Curren, Joan.

St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001.

This book retells the story of the fall of Jericho (Joshua 3:1–4:24; 5:13–6:20).



## Words of Affirmation

*These are words that children desire to hear multiple times a day — words that lift them up instead of breaking them down.*

- “You are a great example.”
- “I am so glad God made you.”

## Insights & Ideas

Vol. 21 • No. 4 • December 2016

*Insights & Ideas* is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter  
Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Calie Vera Designer: Annie Monette

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line “Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry.”

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





# Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

## UPON THIS ROCK: **Love One Another**

*“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another” (1 John 1:7).*

.....

Social capital sounds like a type of government, but it is not. It is a way of describing how people work together to accomplish things they could not do as individuals. The world thinks it invented social capital, but as Christians we know better. Christ commands us to love one another. God built our brains to work better in groups. When we love one another we build relationships. These relationships support our faith, help us to persevere in difficult times and allow us to accomplish God’s work on Earth. God designed us for fellowship—fellowship with Him and with each other.

Young children do not have a sense for social capital. Their friendships are innocent and often temporary. Two children playing in a sandbox is a friendship. Friendships are more about convenience and similar play preferences than anything else. Young children are learning how their actions affect relationships with others. They are learning how to maintain relationships and what to expect from friendships. The development of social capital is fairly straightforward because actions that are kind are clearly different from actions that are mean. Children who share tend to have more friends than children who hit.

It is the later elementary and middle school years that make the

development of social capital a more complicated task. At this point children begin to be aware of motives and to think about people in terms of groups, or cliques. Cliques can be a good thing when they are made up of children who enjoy the same activities. We usually become aware of cliques when they become harmful, such as when the members of a clique begin to work to keep others out. Such children mistakenly believe that in order to have a group friendship there must be people excluded. The reason for







“ We usually become aware of cliques when they become harmful, such as when the members of a clique begin to work to keep others out. Such children mistakenly believe that in order to have a group friendship there must be people excluded. ”

exclusion does not have to be a stark difference; sometimes it is as simple as what kind of jacket you wear or what football team you like. In order to maintain this exclusion, children will often assign ulterior motives to those on the outside. At this point social capital becomes social deficit.

Creating groups of people who are “in” or “out” is a part of our sinful make-up. Hanging out with people who are like us makes us feel safe. As Christian parents we know that teaching our children to love one another is an important part of teaching the faith. We need to help them watch out for the pitfalls of cliques.

Help your children to understand that not everyone in their group of friends has to think, feel and act the same way. While similarity is comforting, diversity brings strength and new experiences. Encourage your children to get to know those who are different. The more they know about other children the more they will find in common with them.

If your child complains about another child, watch carefully for actions of casual assessment and quick dismissal. Children have a habit of making quick judgments about students and then withholding forgiveness. Their insistence that a child is weird, annoying or mean could be based on one instance or just the word of another child.

Teach your children that to love one another is more than simply avoiding unkind acts. To love one another means we welcome people because God welcomes us. God loves us even though we are sinners. We are to love others even when they make us uncomfortable.

Be especially careful of allowing children to criticize others by assigning motives to their behavior. Luther reminds us that following the Eighth Commandment means to “speak well” of others and “explain everything in the kindest way.” Our biggest challenge in this area may be the media. Our children are repeatedly exposed to examples of people speaking poorly about others and assigning negative motives. Remind your children that only God knows what is in a person’s heart.

Learning how to love one another is not just about sharing your faith. It also builds social capital by building healthy relationships. Social capital is clearly evident in people who are successful in many walks of life.

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1: 6–7).

Children who feel comfortable with differences are also children who feel comfortable sharing their faith with people who don’t know our Savior. Teaching children about fellowship is teaching children how to walk in the light. This is not work we do alone. This is the work of the Spirit nurturing faith.

### For Further Study

Here is a TED talk about social capital: [tinyurl.com/hrde7sy](http://tinyurl.com/hrde7sy)

## Parent Pages

Vol. 16 • No. 4 • December 2016

*Parent Pages* is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Dr. Kim Marxhausen Designer: Annie Monette

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line “Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry.”

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





# Professionally Speaking



## Christmas – A Lesson in Teaching

**What did Mary see?** An angel visiting at her front door. A bustling town so busy that there were no rooms at the inn. A barn full of animals. Excited shepherds worshipping her firstborn son and telling tales of angel choruses. The mother of our Lord saw a lot, and Luke says, “Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart” (LUKE 2:19).

What are you seeing this Christmas, and what do you treasure? The joys of sharing Christmas programs and student-led Christmas services are highlights of Lutheran school calendars. My wife and I include within our Christmas traditions Lessons and Carols at Concordia University Chicago and Christmas at the Embassy, presented by the music department of Concordia Lutheran High School, Fort Wayne, Ind. Each of these events beautifully shares the Christmas story and seems to create a connection with all who attend.

Why is it that Christmas tugs at our hearts? So many folks, even some non-Christians, connect strongly with Christmas. No doubt much of the tug is its “Immanuel” message (God with us). The reality of God in human form, the Creator walking with His creation, is “a great and mighty wonder.” Christmas is about promises fulfilled, hope for the future, peace that transcends human initiative.

Could it be that our love for Christmas comes from the full use of human senses in sharing the narrative of Christmas?

Consider the fact that most people are visual learners. When words are connected with images, learning is maximized (Gwen C. Nugent, “Pictures, Audio, and Print: Symbolic Representation and Effect on Learning,” *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 1982, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 163–174). Brain research also demonstrates that human eyes can register 36 thousand visual messages per hour, and that over 80 percent of all information that is absorbed by the brain is visual in nature. Some of the best communicators in history —



including our Savior (e.g., His parables) — taught using the power of the metaphor and image. (Consider reading more on the topic of visual learners on Tim Elmore’s blog: [growingleaders.com/blog](http://growingleaders.com/blog))

In light of these facts, it’s no small wonder that the Christmas narrative is so ingrained in our hearts. The image of angels breaking through the darkness of night and singing to a ragtag group of shepherds in the fields outside of Bethlehem is shared with hymns, carols, art and actors. A barn as the initial home for the King of Kings is depicted with manger scenes in homes, churches and even “live” settings outside of churches. Mary is shown caring for the Savior of the world while travelers from a distant



land arrive with kingly gifts — gifts of great riches, but gifts that also foreshadow the King's future death. You've "seen" this message shared in many ways over your life — in picture books, videos and programs.

Really, when all is said and done, Lutheran schools teach Christmas with all the wisdom and insights of 21st century best teaching practices! Images are everywhere in the Christmas narrative, and through our many senses, the message is shared in a variety of ways that become fixed in our hearts.

Hearing? Oh, those carols and hymns! We hear the Christmas story from Old Testament prophecy to angels' songs to reflections of Mary. While the words are familiar, many of the carols and hymns also eloquently share the authenticity of Christmas with words directly from holy writ. Which carols and hymns do you most enjoy? The solitude of "Silent Night"? The full Biblical historical narrative of "The Messiah"? The festive announcement of "Joy to the World"? Isn't it interesting that these carols never get old? Their message and music transcend generations.

Smell? Certainly there were many smells that were a part of that first Christmas, and most of those smells are not anticipated. But what about today's aromas? How do they connect? What's the big deal about the smell of gingerbread or the overwhelming aroma of cinnamon? It may not be the smells themselves, but surely just a bit of intentionality can connect Christmas traditions with the joy of the Christmas message. Smells that remind us of Grandma's house remind us that family is how God blesses us with community. Family is the cellular unit of a civilization, and family with mom and dad are the way that God furthers his world.

Touch? This sense might be the one that we need to work on the most. Thanks to pictures, we may be able to visualize and emotionally attach to the narrative of

Christmas, but touch means so much to the human condition. In the Christmas message is God in human form. He takes on skin and bones, and his mother touches him, holds him, cares for him. There's a physical bond with God and man, and it's one that is physically felt. Hugs, handshakes and sitting on Grandpa's lap are part of what creates the warmth of Christmas. Knowing the gift of touch and how the gentle touch of mom or the firm grasp of Dad are so meaningful in our lives, how does touch become ministry? Should part of Christmas be spending time in the neonatal section of the hospital? Do those with young children have a greater corner on the market of appreciating Christmas?

Taste? Most of the tastes that come along during Christmas season are purely secular. However, those "tastes" provide some of the memories we connect with Christmas. That's why it's important for "tastes" to be shared with stories. Wafer-thin sugar cookies that bring up memories of Grandma. Fruitcakes that make everyone enjoy their own version of "Why do we make these?" The greatest taste of Christmas is the greatest taste of every Divine Service. In the Sacrament of the Altar, we taste and see that the Lord is good. We hear the words of our Lord as we share of His Body and Blood, as we commune with our fellow believers and as we commune with the heavenly hosts. The angel's song of Christmas, the Gloria in Excelsis of the Divine Service, is joined with the saints and sinners of this time and place. Holy Communion is the highest point of the Christmas celebration.

Oh, Christmas is good teaching!

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (COL 3:16).

**Merry Christmas!**

## Professionally Speaking

December 2016

*Professionally Speaking* is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Chrissy Thomas

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line "Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry."

Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.







# Rattles & Prattles



A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS

## God Rescues His People at Just the Right Time

**Bible Story:** God sends His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior  
(LUKE 1:26–38; 2:1–20; GAL. 4:5).

### Before Teaching:

In his letter to the Galatians Paul wrote, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (GAL. 4:4–5). God had the perfect time in mind for His Son, Jesus, the cornerstone of the Christian faith to be born.

Jesus was born during the height of the Roman Empire, whose borders included all of the known world at that time. This made it possible for Jesus’ followers to take the Good News of Jesus’ saving work to all parts of the world. He lived the perfect life God demands. Then Jesus took upon Himself the sins of everyone who has lived, is living now and those who will be born in the future when He died upon the cross. He rose victorious on Easter. All who believe in Jesus saving work receive forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, are adopted into God’s family and are promised eternal life with God.

What Jesus did changed the course of history; yet his birth, life and death happened in a far off corner of the Roman Empire and were not noticed by many until Jesus returned to heaven.

Luke is the only Gospel that gives us details of Jesus’ humble birth. Luke wrote that God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman named Mary, who was engaged to be married. He told her God chose her to be the mother of the long-awaited Messiah (promised one and Savior). His conception was a miracle of God’s Spirit. Joseph, her fiancé, thought she had been unfaithful until an angel assured him this was not the case. Both Mary and Joseph (Jesus’ earthly father) humbly accepted the special work God gave them.



When it was time for Jesus to be born, Mary and Joseph journeyed from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered, as part of a Roman census. They probably planned to stay with relatives; but, Luke tells us there was no room. Early tradition indicates they stayed in a small cave that was probably used for the household animals. Here Jesus was born and swaddled, or wrapped in strips of cloth and laid in a manger — a feeding trough for animals.

It was a common Jewish practice to have musicians play at the birth of a child. If Jesus had been born in Nazareth, this would have happened. But, they were in Bethlehem. Instead, God sent a sky full of angels to some shepherds in a nearby field telling/singing that the long-awaited Savior had been born. They were so excited they went to Bethlehem to see for themselves and then shared the news with others as they returned to the fields.

As you share this story with the little ones in your care, may you like Mary and Joseph, receive Jesus and humbly accept the special work God has for you, such as sharing God’s story.

## Jesus' Time

### Getting Prepared

- Set up a Worship Center: a small, low table with rounded edges. Place a children's picture Bible on top. Set it against a wall or back of a shelving unit. Tape a picture of Jesus above it. Optional: altar covering, either cloth or laminated colored construction paper; a small wooden cross (only use this during Jesus' time; children may use it inappropriately) and two candles, e.g. cardboard tubes covered with laminated paper and pieces of red tissue for flames.
- Prepare visuals; use the patterns on the reproducible. Color the figures. Cut out; laminate; and cut out again. Tape to cardboard tubes for tube puppets or use them with a magnetic board or felt board. Place figures inside a Christmas' gift box with a removable cover.
- Songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989.

### Getting Ready

- Invite the children to Jesus Time, sing: **"Walking quietly, come and gather near. Walking quietly, Jesus' Time is here"** (LOSP, p. 8). Encourage mobile children to come and sit; caregivers carry and sit down with non-mobile infants.
- Sing a welcome song: use the melody of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."  
**Hello, hello, how are you; I'm so glad to see you, too. We will listen, sing and pray, learn of Jesus' love today.** (repeat first line) While singing, add the cross to the worship center and "light the candles".
- Point to Jesus' picture and sing a "Jesus Loves Me" song (LOSP, p. 41–42)
- Show Bible; chant or sing, using the melody "A Tisket, a Tasket".  
**A story, a story; it's time to hear a story. It's from God's Book; we know it's true. God gave these stories to me and you.**

### Telling the Story and Application

Show the Christmas box with the figures inside.

**God gave us a special gift at Christmas.** Sing using the melody of "Mary Had a Little Lamb".

**God gave us a special gift, special gift, special gift. God gave us a special gift; He gave us His own Son.**



**God chose Mary** (take out Mary) **to be Jesus' mother.**  
**God chose Joseph** (take out Joseph) **to be Jesus' earthly daddy.**

Take out the figures of Mary and Joseph. **One-day Joseph told Mary they had to take a trip.**

Sing and make the figures move: **Joseph said, "It's time to go, time to go, time to go." Joseph said, "It's time to go — off to Bethlehem."**

**Mary rode the donkey brown, donkey brown, donkey brown. Mary rode the donkey brown — off to Bethlehem.**

**When they got there; sing: Bethlehem was so crowded, so crowded, so crowded. Bethlehem was so crowded; there was no place to stay.**

Finally, sing: **Joseph found a quiet place, quiet place, quiet place. Joseph found a quiet place — where they ate and slept.**

Add animals; sing: **It was a place where animals stay, animals stay, animals stay. It was a place where animals stay and sleep all through the night.**

Sing: **Jesus was born that night, born that night, born that night. Jesus was born that night — born for you and me.**

**Mary wrapped Him nice and warm, nice and warm, nice and warm. Mary wrapped Him nice and warm, placed Him in-a manger.**

- Optional: during another Jesus' Time make up additional verses or read Luke 2:8–20 and use the figures of the angel and shepherds to share their story. Note: most likely you will make multiples of angels, shepherds and sheep.

### Song:

Choose one of your favorites or sing "In a Little Stable" (LOSP, p. 8).

## Prayer:

Invite the children to fold their hands and repeat the words after you. Infant caregivers can place their hands around the hands of nonverbal children and repeat.

**Thank You, God/ for giving us/ Jesus/ born to be/ our Savior. / Amen.**

## Closing and Benediction:

**Jesus' Time is almost over. Before we end, let's sing a goodbye song;** sing "Good-bye, Goodbye" (LOSP, p. 40). Encourage children to wave goodbye; "extinguish candle flames;" and put away cross. **Remember God loves you. When He looks at you He smiles. You are His special child. God sent His Son Jesus to be your Savior. Amen.**

## Integrating the Theme

### Literacy Activities:

#### ■ Read a book:

- Nelson, Thomas. *The Story of Christmas*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013.
- David, Juliet. *The Nativity Story*. West Sussex, UK: Candle Books, 2012.
- Simon, Mary Manz. *My March to the Manger*. Paris, ON: B&H Kids, 2011.

- **Finger Play:** Here's a tiny little bed (show open palm of one hand). Here's a sleepy little head (hold up forefinger of the other hand and place it in the center of the open palm). Sh-sh-sh! Baby Jesus is sleeping (wrap fingers of hand around "baby Jesus"). "Jesus is Born". Teacher's Guide, "Together with Jesus" a curriculum for Parents and Twos. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, p. 21.

### Art and Music:

- **Art:** Make a stained glass window. Cut two pieces of eight and a half by 11 inch pieces of contact paper for each older infant/toddler. Assist children as they place pieces of colored tissue paper on the sticky side. Add a black/silhouette copy of the reproducible of Jesus in the manger. Then, seal the picture; place the second piece of contact paper on top. Optional: add strips of black paper three-quarters of an inch wide to make a frame.

- **Music:** "In a Little Stable" (LOSP, p. 81); in verse 1, change "just like you and me" to "born for you and me" reflecting the story emphasis. Or, use a favorite.

### Math, Science and Social Studies:

- **Math:** reread the Christmas books and count the number of each animal.
- **Science:** Use the Christmas books — see Literacy above; or show replicas of animals in a classroom nativity set. Identify the animals, mimic their sounds; and since Jesus used the manger (feeding trough) for a bed, point out what they ate.
- **Social Studies:** God gives us families to love and care for us. God gave Jesus mother Mary and daddy Joseph. God gives us families, too. Reread the family book made during September. Add Jesus' family and update any changes, new sibling, grandparent coming to live, etc..

### Health, Safety, Nutrition and Large-Motor Activities:

- **Nutrition:** when serving snacks, be aware of any allergies and take time to pray, thanking God for the food before eating. Serve an edible manger: a half of a graham cracker topped with grated cheddar cheese; or, serve a birthday cake for Jesus, like small cupcakes.
- **Large Motor:** "walk" like Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem; "run" like the shepherds to find baby Jesus. Then, change to: walk fast, walk slowly, take big steps, take little steps; run as fast as you can, run slowly, run quietly, etc.; stop; turn around and go back, etc.







# Connecting with Families

*Make a copy of the letter for each family. Take time to sign each one and also include information on your congregation's Advent and Christmas services; invite them to attend.*

Dear Parents,

Christmas is a time of giving. As Christians share gifts with each other, they are reminded of God's greatest gift — His Son, Jesus, born to be the Savior of the world. Jesus was given to Mary and Joseph. Jesus grew just as your child is growing. What was His childhood like? Scripture does not share much information; but in Luke 2:52 we read, "and Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." As a devout Jewish family, Mary and Joseph did everything they knew to raise Jesus in the Jewish tradition.

When Jesus was 8 days old, He was circumcised. About six weeks later Mary, Joseph and Jesus went to Jerusalem to observe the Jewish purification laws. They took time to pray each day, especially at mealtimes. Each week they observed the Sabbath, both at a synagogue and in the home. As Jesus grew they participated in all the Jewish festivals. You may recall the story of Jesus going to Passover celebration in Jerusalem when He was 12 years old. Mary and Joseph set an example for us as we raise our children in the Christian faith — making our relationship with God the center of our lives.

Christmas is a perfect time to plan ways to focus on God's gift of a Savior. The children will not understand it all; but as they grow, they will learn to love, appreciate and look to participating in them. You may already have Christmas traditions from your childhood that you want to share. Here are some ideas:

- Read books that share the true meaning of Christmas. Three are:
  - Nelson, Thomas. *The Story of Christmas*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013.
  - David, Juliet. *The Nativity Story*. West Sussex, UK: Candle Books, 2012.
  - Simon, Mary Manz. *My March to the Manger*. Paris, ON: B&H Kids, 2011.
- Purchase a nativity set that your child can play with. With infants, make sure the pieces are large enough to meet the safety standards for choking. As you play with it, identify the pieces and pretend the story together.
- Set up a Christmas tree. Until your child is older, you might want to have a small one set up, out of reach. The tree points up to heaven. Jesus came from heaven to be our Savior. Place the nativity set at the base of tree along with the others gifts. Jesus, who grew to save us from sin and death make it possible for us to become God's children is the best gift of all.
- Plan to attend Christmas services celebrating the birth of Jesus, God's greatest gift.

Your child's teacher,

---

## Rattles & Prattles

Vol. 21 • No. 4 • December 2016

*Rattles & Prattles* is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Judy Williams Designer: Chrissy Thomas

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line "Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry."

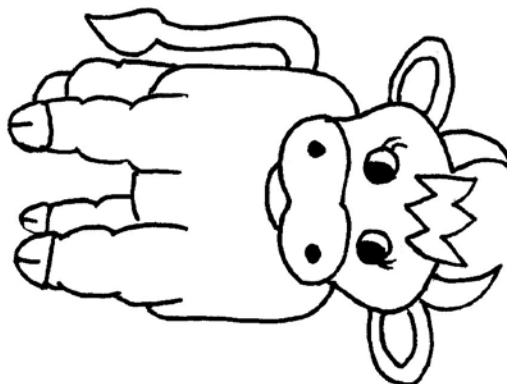
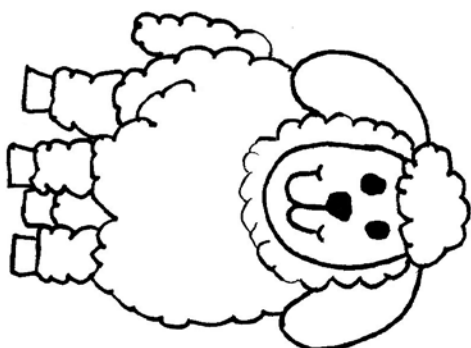
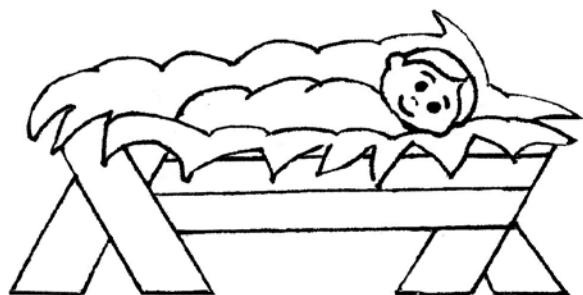
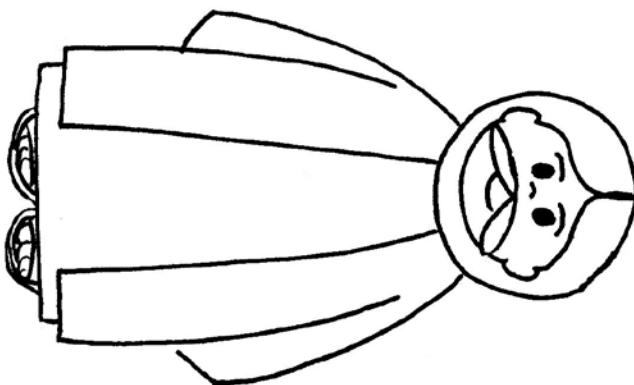
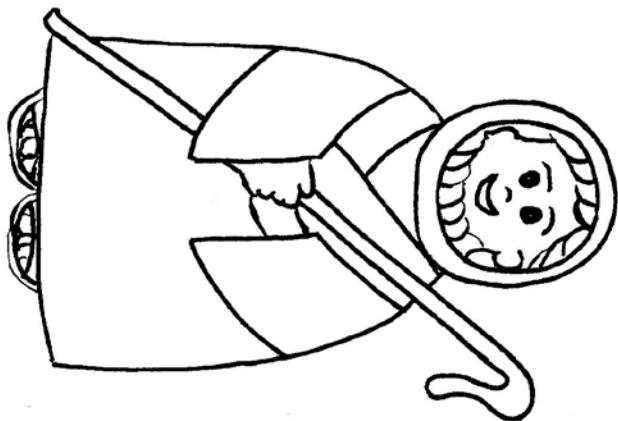
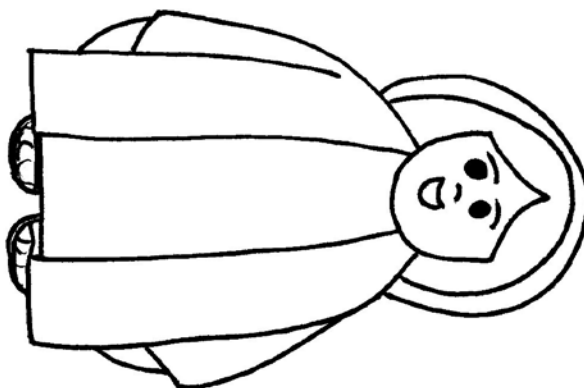
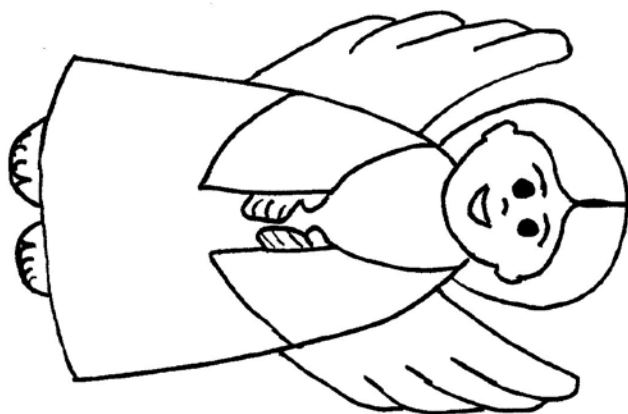
Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



DECEMBER 2016

# Rattles & Prattles

Use the patterns on this page and the next to prepare visuals to tell the Bible story and permeate God's story throughout the day.





# School Shepherd



## ROCK-SOLID SHEPHERDS Celebrate

The “Upon This Rock” school chapel theme provides an appropriate personal and professional application for the school shepherd. Christ-centered shepherds are ROCK solid. Lutheran school ministry is built on the foundation of Christ.

### Shepherds (Past and Present) Celebrate

Leviticus 23 describes Old Testament celebrations—Passover, Feast of First Fruits, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Trumpets and Feast of Booths. Numerous times God gives Moses and His people the directive to “celebrate.” The priests, the “shepherds” of the wandering flock of Israel, lead the celebrations.

Lutheran schools are celebration places. Recalling the role of the priests in the Old Testament, the Lutheran school shepherd is also robed and privileged to assume a priestly role of celebration.

### Shepherd and Celebrant in the Sanctuary

The pastor officiating at the Sacrament of the Altar is often referred to as the “celebrant.” The Sacrament is prepared and served in a sacred and solemn manner. The words of Christ are the focus and the power as we humbly and penitently receive the body and blood of Jesus.

However, the celebrant also celebrates. He celebrates with God’s people that Christ is among us. He celebrates that in this means of grace the body and blood of Jesus are given and received for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

Lutheran school celebrations begin in the sanctuary, where the means of grace are shared. The school shepherd encourages children, families, staff and everyone connected to the school ministry to gather together in worship.

*Reflection:* How is it evident that Christ is always the center of the celebration? What does it mean to be a worship celebration leader?

### Celebrate Daily

School shepherds emphasize that the celebrations which begin in the sanctuary through the Sacrament of the



*The Rev. David Buss celebrates with students during a quiz on the Ten Commandments at Baton Rouge Lutheran School in Baton Rouge, La.*

Altar always continue in the contexts of Lutheran schools. Lutheran schools are unique in their celebrations. Lutheran schools celebrate student achievements, athletic victories, and anything and everything else that any other school might celebrate. However, these celebrations always have the recognition that God is the giver of all gifts and our daily celebrations are a response to His grace.

Lutheran schools celebrate the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation in the name of Jesus, and the gifts that God gives to His church. Lutheran school classrooms begin each day in prayer, celebrating another day to grow in God’s grace. Lutheran school classrooms close each day celebrating God’s workings through the day. Lutheran schools celebrate the gift of new life when a school family





is blessed with the birth (and rebirth) of a child. Lutheran schools celebrate the gift of eternal life when a school family grieves the death of a loved one but remembers the promises of Jesus' resurrection.

Lutheran schools celebrate birthday and holidays. The school shepherd encourages and participates in these daily celebrations. The school shepherd is a voice and presence in celebrations and emphasizes that we celebrate "in the name of Jesus."

*Reflection:* What do you celebrate as you walk down the hallways of your Lutheran school? How could your school be a more celebrative setting?

### Celebrate Specifically

Every Lutheran school needs celebration events unique to its setting. Golf friends celebrate together at the annual golf outing. An annual banquet or auction may bring additional funds to the school, but just as important is the friendships and fellowships at the event. Significant school anniversaries and school worker anniversaries remind everyone of God's blessings and bring a spirit of celebration.

*Reflection:* What celebration events are on your school calendar? Who organizes and energizes the celebrative events?

### Celebrate Responsibly

While the school shepherd is a participant in celebrations and many times a celebration leader, it is important to always celebrate with respect for the pastoral office and its role. The school shepherd is responsible in the use of alcoholic beverages, careful in avoiding comments that may be offensive, open in associations with many individuals and generous in compliments.

### The Shepherds Celebrated and School Shepherds Celebrate

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen" (LUKE 2:20). The shepherds' quiet evening was interrupted by an announcement that changed the world. Thrilled by the celebration of angels, the shepherds went to Bethlehem to see the Savior, Christ the Lord. The shepherds' celebration was directed first to God, who had sent His only Son. Through the witness of the shepherds, the celebration went back to the fields, to friends, family and ultimately out to the world.

School shepherds, too, have been taken to Bethlehem through the truth of the Word. School shepherds have gone to Bethlehem, Nazareth, and ultimately to the cross and empty tomb of Jerusalem. School shepherds take the celebration of Jesus to the Lutheran school and from the school to homes, communities and into the world.

## PRAYER

Shepherds in the field abiding,  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
Yonder shines the Infant Light.

Come and worship, come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.  
(Lutheran Service Book 367:2)

## School Shepherd

December 2016

*School Shepherd* is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Rev. Robert Riggert Designer: Chrissy Thomas

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line "Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry."

Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations marked "LC" are from the *Large Catechism in Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, second edition; edited by Paul McCain et al., copyright © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.





# Time Out for Directors



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS

## Ready or Not, Here We Come!

**E**nrollment for the 2017–18 school year is upon us! Today's parents are beginning their search for quality preschools as early as October or November for the upcoming school year. Parents have already contacted many of our schools to schedule tours for next year and/or ask for updated enrollment information. Information for registration and re-enrollment will need to be in place before the Christmas break. Preparations for enrollment are tedious, yet some of our most important work is with our staff, our classroom environments and the strategies we use to accomplish curricular goals and/or project-based themes throughout the day.

Let's consider our most important asset: our teachers. The following is a list of criteria that parents will be thinking about when they tour our classrooms:

- Are our teachers offering meaningful classroom activities, or are the tasks/projects one-dimensional? Is there only one right way to accomplish the task?
- Do our teachers arrange the room in a welcoming, child-friendly way (easy access to materials, with spaces for individual, small- or large-group interactions), or is the room in disarray where children find it difficult to locate items? Does the environment lack opportunity for meaningful interactions and play?
- How do our teachers promote social-emotional health and handle disruptive behavior issues? Are there clear guidelines for acceptable behavior, or do the teachers raise their voices and tell children what to do rather than help them with problem-solving skills?
- How do our teachers teach religion during the preschool day? Is the day filled with showing and speaking the saving works of Jesus, integrating this throughout curricular activities?



**As families visit our programs, they will be looking and listening for quality in our Lutheran early childhood classrooms.**

Our teachers are so important to a parent's first look into our early learning programs. Their curricular activities and projects, their classroom environments and the social-emotional climate of the room speak volumes to our potential families. The reputation as a nurturing, Christ-centered early childhood program is essential to our marketing strategies. Staff reflection regarding our service as caring, Christ-centered teachers and the quality of our teaching needs to be on our "must do" list.

As families visit our programs, they will be looking and listening for quality in our Lutheran early childhood classrooms. A basic understanding of "quality" might be something that's good, as compared to something that's not good. Today's parents will take their understanding of "quality" to the next level, and they will be looking for a program of high value, a program that reflects excellence in the field of early learning and care.

Quality determines the effectiveness of our ministry to our young children and their families. A first look at quality begins with our teachers. Do we have a clear understanding of and commitment to the mission of the program: to share the Gospel of Christ and Christian love and compassion with our youngest learners? This mission calls for our teachers to reflect a servant heart and attitude.

The following questions and resources will help our teachers reflect on their mission and practice. When we reflect on our mission, we ask:

- Is our mission reflected in our approach to learning and in our communication with parents?
- Will parents see the love of Jesus in our classroom environments?
- Will parents be aware of the Christ-centered learning throughout the year and our curriculum connections to Christ?

## Resources

*In His Hands Manual* offers valuable insights into creating and sustaining mission-oriented programs for our early childhood educators. This resource is available at the LuthEd website ([luthed.org](http://luthed.org)): [bergholt-luthed.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/In-His-Hands-Complete.pdf](http://bergholt-luthed.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/In-His-Hands-Complete.pdf).

The following articles on quality early childhood programs are found on the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) website ([families.naeyc.org](http://families.naeyc.org)). These articles help us consider our approaches to learning and the climate of our classrooms through the eyes of a parent.

- “A Good Preschool for Your Child”: [families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/good-preschool-your-child](http://families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/good-preschool-your-child)
- “What You Do and Don’t Want to See in a Preschool Classroom”: [families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/what-you-do-and-don%E2%80%99t-want-see-preschool-classroom](http://families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/what-you-do-and-don%E2%80%99t-want-see-preschool-classroom)

- “What You Do and Don’t Want to See in a Toddler Program”: [families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/what-you-do-and-don%E2%80%99t-want-see-toddler-program](http://families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/what-you-do-and-don%E2%80%99t-want-see-toddler-program)
- “What You Do and Don’t Want to See in an Infant Program”: [families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/what-you-do-and-don%E2%80%99t-want-see-infant-program](http://families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/what-you-do-and-don%E2%80%99t-want-see-infant-program)

The final resource I consider beneficial in my work with teachers and families is *Evaluating and Supporting Early Childhood Teachers* by Angele Sancho Passe (available through Redleaf Press). The text is designed to provide support for directors, who in turn provide support for teachers. The goal is to enable our teachers to do their best work with our young learners and their families and to create a positive work environment for all. The following links will connect you with a description of the text and purchasing information from Redleaf Press. There also is a link to the text’s reproducible forms that can assist with director and teacher reflections on quality teaching and learning:

- *Evaluating and Supporting Early Childhood Teachers*: [redleafpress.org/Evaluating-and-Supporting-Early-Childhood-Teachers-P1180.aspx](http://redleafpress.org/Evaluating-and-Supporting-Early-Childhood-Teachers-P1180.aspx)
- *Evaluating and Supporting Early Childhood Teachers* reproducible forms: [redleafpress.org/assets/clientdocs/webcomponents/ReproPages\\_Evaluating.pdf](http://redleafpress.org/assets/clientdocs/webcomponents/ReproPages_Evaluating.pdf)

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven’” (MATT. 19:14).

Let the children come! We are ready!



## Time Out for Directors

Vol. 21, No. 4 • December 2016

*Time Out for Directors* is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Cheryl A. Haun, Ed.S. Designer: Chrissy Thomas

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the credit line “Reprinted with permission of LCMS School Ministry.”

Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

