



SEPTEMBER 2018

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

Contents

Alight

“Three Powerful Words”
Dr. Rebecca Schmidt

Computer File

“Innovating with Intentionality”
Jonathan Orr

Early Childhood Devotions

“REAL. PRESENT. GOD. Baptism of Jesus”
Dr. Judith Christian

Family Matters

“REAL. PRESENT. GOD. Present”
Dr. Steven Christopher

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

“Strengths of Students with Learning Disabilities”
Kara Bratton

Growing in Governing

“The Visionary Board”
Thomas Wrege

Insights & Ideas

Anniversary issue from September 1978

NLSA Powerful Practices

Hales Corners Lutheran School, Wisconsin
“Securing a Supportive Pastor”

Parent Pages

“Real. Present. God. Building Resilient Children”
Dr. Kim Marxhausen

Professionally Speaking

“Hey Leaders! Listen Up!”
Mark Muehl

School Shepherd

“REAL. PRESENT. GOD. God IS Real and Present in
Lutheran Schools”
Rev. Robert Riggert

Time Out for Directors

“Anxious Beginnings: Do Not Fear – God Is Near!”
Drew Gerdes



Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Three Powerful Words



This is a special year as we join The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Youth Ministry department in preparation for the 2019 LCMS Youth Gathering in Minneapolis in July. The theme of the Gathering is “Real. Present. God.” Together we can explore this beautiful message of promise and hope for children, youth and families in our churches, schools and communities across the nation. Lutheran Schools are hard at work preparing for another year of Lutheran education in more than 1,990 schools serving children from infancy through grade 12. Preparing rooms, organizing materials, designing workspaces, filling backpacks with fresh supplies and meeting new students and families all contribute to the excitement of a new year. Educators, children and their families have high hopes with this new beginning.

Are you excited about going to school? With the excitement and anticipation of all things new often comes trepidation — maybe a little fear or concern in children and adults. Will my friends be in my class? Will my teacher like me? Will I be able to do the work? Will I be on

the team? And, these feelings are not just for children and students — parents/guardians often have similar feelings. Will my child be successful? Will he be prepared? Can we afford the tuition? Administrators, pastors and teachers often have questions as well. What will my new class be like? What will my relationship with their parents be like? Will my new principal be supportive? Will the faith of students and families be strengthened?

Not surprisingly, it isn't long before we are confronted with the broken, sinful and messy experiences that real life brings to school. Inevitably, it is only a matter of time before the proverbial, “Do you have a minute? I have a concern.” What can we do? We pray and give thanks to a God who is real and who is listening. It is helpful to remember Psalm 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” We can take comfort in knowing that God is present, to be trusted and to be a refuge. Three powerful words are a part of this message. “Real. Present. God.” The only real God, the Triune God, is truly present in the person of Jesus who entered the real world to save us from our sin. Sin is everywhere ... in schools, in churches, in homes and in our world. Jesus took care of sin for us — His gift to us through faith.

As students flood through the doors for the new school year, we are reminded in Romans 8:28, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” When the homework assignments are misplaced, deadlines are missed, relationships are harmed and whatever the year brings, we know God is in control, our refuge and strength, a real loving God and very present help in times of trouble ... all kinds of trouble. Nothing is too big for God.

September 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| | | | | | | Childhood Cancer Awareness Month 1 |
| V-J Day, 1945 2 | Labor Day 3 | First Electric Lighting Anniversary, 1882 4 | Babe Ruth's First Pro Homer, 1914 5 | Jane Addams born, 1860 6 | National Days of Prayer and Remembrance (Sept. 8-10) 7 | International Literacy Day 8 |
| National Grandparents Day 9 | Swap Ideas Day 10 | Patriot Day 11 | Jesse Owens born, 1913 12 | Kids Take Over the Kitchen Day 13 | Holy Cross Day 14 | Locate An Old Friend Day 15 |
| World Play-doh Day 16 | Constitution Week 17 | U.S. Air Force Established, 1947 18 | International Talk Like A Pirate Day 19 | Upton Sinclair born, 1878 20 | St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist 21 | Autumn Begins 22 |
| 23 Lewis & Clark Expedition Returns, 1806 | Family Day 24 | Shel Silverstein born, 1930 25 | Johnny Appleseed born, 1774 26 | Samuel Adams born, 1722 27 | First Night Football Game, 1892 28 | St. Michael and All Angels 29 |
| 30 Gold Star Mothers' and Family's Day | | | | | | |

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



Computer File



Innovating with Intentionality

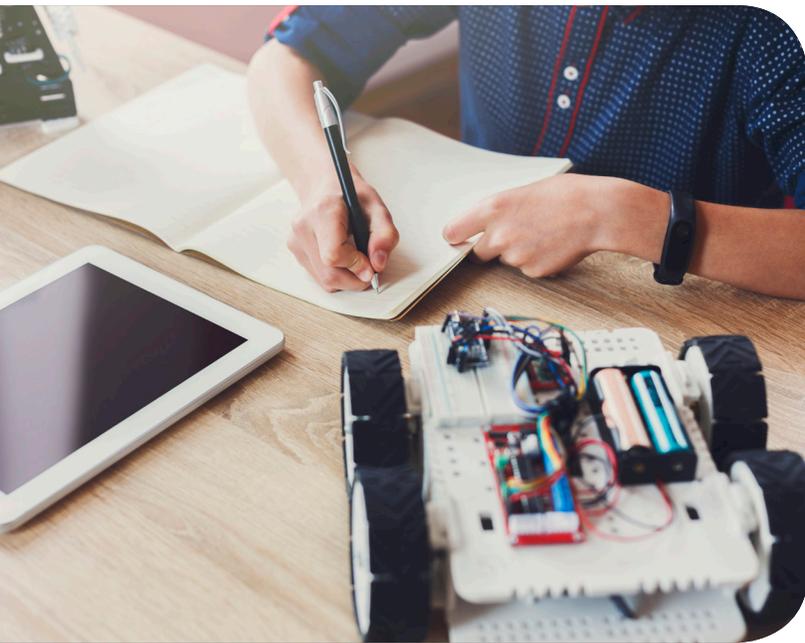


As we continue to move forward in the twenty-first century, technological tools are continually created and developed. Teachers have more technological tools and resources available to them than ever before. Many of these tools rise very quickly, and early adopters are just as quick to integrate them into their classrooms. While experimenting is exciting and necessary, we should always make sure that our learning goals for our students continue to be front and center.

For educators, it is important for us to recognize the learning goals that have been set for our students. That is why we became teachers in the first place, right? We love our content and we want to impart that passion and love of our content to our students. It is then our duty as educators to figure out the best possible way to help our students learn those content standards.

Example 1:

In high school Geometry, students are often tasked with problems that might have multiple solution pathways to get to the correct answer. Solving for the different parts of a right triangle and the various applications is a good example. Depending on what is given, there could be multiple ways to go about solving for the unknown angles and sides. Here, it is the job of the math teacher to help students not only to learn the mathematical procedures to solve for those unknown angles and sides, but also to help students see how to formulate a plan or various plans to solve for those unknowns. A powerful technique that can be used in math is having the students verbalize their problem-solving methods. When students hear themselves thinking aloud, they will often catch their own mistakes, and it can also help them to discover alternative solution pathways.



To make the verbalization even more impactful, other students can also hear and comment on their peers' work. For a teacher, if you were to do this live in a classroom, it could become very loud and difficult to manage. Also, it is difficult for a single teacher to listen to 20–30 students and give meaningful feedback during a single class period. This is where a technological tool can come into play and align with all the learning objectives outlined above. In the case described, there are many annotation tools that could be used: Explain Everything, ShowMe, or Doodlecast on the iPad; or Camtasia or Jing on Mac/Windows. However, all of them lack the social dialogue that we want to capture. That is where VoiceThread can really shine. In the activity above, each student can create his own slide, and then record his voice while he draws and solves the problem. VoiceThread will capture those thoughts, and other students can then play them back and provide additional comments or insights into the problem-solving process.

Example 2:

Robots are really fun to use in elementary classrooms. However, in my experience, when I see Spheros or similar products in classrooms, they spend most of their time in exploratory centers where kids might race them around the room with no other real purpose or educational objective. However, there are many content skills that can be learned and honed by using robots in

more directed ways. In ELA, students in a first-grade classroom might work on writing narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, supported by detail and using temporal words to signal event order. In this case, the teachers could use a robot to support and help the students learn how to write these types of narratives. After creating a path by placing some masking tape on the floor in a right angle and having a small hill for the robot to go over, a student could use her experience driving the robot and then write about what it did and in what order. Using the robot as a sequential manipulative will help students use words like first, second and third, as well as use appropriate descriptors like left, right, up and down. There are also opportunities for a direct STEM connection. Students can use the narratives they write to help them learn to code the robot to autonomously drive the course. Most robots can be coded using a simple block style “language” that helps the students understand order and logic — the same skills that ELA teachers are trying to impart to their students.

So often it is tempting to use new flashy tools to grab attention or entertain. We as teachers have the responsibility to design lessons for our classrooms and to implement technology to support that learning. It is important that we first look at the educational objectives that we want our students to learn and then consider the technology that can be used to support that learning, which should be natural and transparent, not forced and out of place. We need to keep the perspective that there is a balance between conceptual learning, tied to our learning standards and objectives, and exploratory learning, where students are allowed the freedom to explore and learn on their own. Remember, future employers want creative thinkers and problem solvers, but they also want engineers who have the ability to write a logical report and to do the calculations to ensure our buildings remain standing. Our challenge is to teach our students both!



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Computer File

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Writer: Jonathan Orr Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

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

Baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:1–17; Mark 1:1–11; Luke 3:1–22)



Before You Teach

Our year begins with the narrative of Jesus' baptism. We believe and teach and confess that Jesus is present in the specific place where water and the Word are administered by people who are the agents of God's promise. At Christ's baptism in the Jordan River, God the Father announced that Jesus was His Son, and at every Christian baptism since, God receives us into His family, declaring us to be His children, heirs with Jesus of heaven. With the children we teach and their families, let us celebrate this great gift of God's love now and throughout the year.

Greeting

Welcome each child upon entry into the classroom. **“Good morning (afternoon), child of God! I am so happy you are here today!”** Statistically you have 5 seconds to set, or reset, the tone for the day.

Gathering

YOU WILL NEED: A designated worship area (a table or small altar, an altar cloth, a cross or picture of Jesus, a Bible and a battery-operated candle).

Daily/weekly select a child or children to place worship items in your designated space. Signal children to come together while playing or singing a gathering song, such as “Gathering Song” (LOSP, P. 8).

Tell the Story

YOU WILL NEED: Bible, picture of Jesus.

SHOW AND OPEN THE BIBLE. **Dramatically tell about the baptism of Jesus.** In the Bible we read that a long time ago there was a man called John the Baptist who was preaching in a desert. His clothes were made of camel's hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. Many people left their towns and homes to see (**hand over eyes**) and hear (**hand to ear**) him speak (**hand to lips**) of God's promises, especially the promise of a Savior. Hearing (**hand to ear**) and believing the words of John the Baptist, they prayed (**fold hands**) for forgiveness for the bad things they did. They were then baptized by him in the Jordan River. John baptized with water for repentance (MATT. 3:11).



John told the people, “I baptize you with water, but someone will come who is much more powerful than I am. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

ASK: Do you know who that person might be?

Listen to responses and continue (ensure the correct response of “Jesus” is identified). While John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing, Jesus, God’s Son, the promised Savior, came to the Jordan River to be baptized. But John the Baptist tried to stop Jesus, saying, “Do You come to me to be baptized when it is really I who need to be baptized by You?” Jesus replied, “Baptize Me now; it is the right thing for us to do in order to keep God’s promise to His people.” John then baptized Jesus. Suddenly heaven was opened, and John saw (**hand over eyes**) the Spirit of God coming from heaven as a dove, and landing on Jesus. Then God the Father’s voice (**hand to ear**) came from heaven saying loudly, “THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE; WITH HIM I AM WELL PLEASED.” (**fold hands in prayer**)

PRAY TOGETHER

Dear God, thank You for sending Your Son to cover us with Your saving love. Bless us now and always with Your gifts of grace: water, Word and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Remember the Story

ACTIVITIES

Create: “Child of God” bulletin board. Have children draw self-portraits. Place them in pre-cut, differently shaped paper frames (e.g., triangles, circles, squares). Center a picture of Jesus on a wall or bulletin board. Surround with portraits. Repeat portrait drawing at the end of the year. Compare and contrast.

Do: Invite the pastor to talk about baptism as you and the children surround the baptismal font.

Sing: “Child of God” (*LOSP*, P. 98).

Sending

Carefully plan and implement a meaningful closing and exit strategy. Gather children in a “Sending Circle.” Share favorite things about your time together. Invite children to offer a brief prayer as a beanbag or cross is passed to each. Children may choose to silently pass the beanbag/cross along. As children depart, say to each, “**Remember, Jesus loves YOU!**”



Live the Story

Parents and primary caregivers are important partners in the care and education of children. The convenience of technology has led to few handwritten notes. Gift these important partners with an occasional penned note. Convey your gratitude for entrusting their child to your care. Add personal and positive comments about the child. Save concerns for preplanned face-to-face conferencing. Parents and other primary caregivers need encouragement too!



Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD. Present

The start of school!

As parents send their children back to school this fall, it is fun for us to think back to school beginnings of our pasts. We may have great memories of reconnecting with friends, of the opportunity to finally have a favorite teacher or of the chance to move up to another level in our schools, which provided us with new opportunities and responsibilities.

For years, one of the first things that would happen every morning at the start of school was roll call. The teacher would call out the name of students — usually in alphabetical order — and one by one each child would give the simple response, “Here.” The teacher would check off the name and proceed down the list. It was also a common practice for children to give the more formal response of “Present” when the correct name was called.

Present. It seems kind of obvious — the child is sitting in his assigned seat, and he is most likely already known to the teacher and classmates. It makes us wonder — why this would occur day after day, even year after year? As unnecessary as it may seem to us in this digital age, this acknowledgement, be it formal or routine, is a sign of participation in the community. Whether reluctant or willing, the person is in the room. With presence comes the expectation of participation. Presence is connection. Presence is relationship.

As another school year begins, we believe that God will be present in our classrooms, on our playgrounds, and in all aspects of our Lutheran schools. As we acknowledge the omnipresence of our God, we realize that He will be present in other schools as well — even though He may not be formally recognized.

We have the joy of celebrating the presence of God in our Lutheran schools as many days begin with an opening devotion and prayer. There are Religion classes where the Word of God is studied every day. Weekly chapel occurs where all people in the entire school, as well as parents and friends, are invited to come and be in the presence of God in worship. God’s presence is actively present in the mission projects that schools and school families support. Prayer opportunities abound throughout the day: before meals, before games, before special events, prior to travel on field trips and even before tests!

God’s presence is acknowledged in campus decor with crosses and Bible verses visually present in multiple locations in classrooms, halls and sidewalks. The very name of your child’s school, street signage, shirts and jackets, uniforms, as well as Web sites and other digital resources — all can acknowledge the presence of God in a Lutheran school setting.

May every child, every school and every church be blessed with the loving presence of Almighty God on the first day of school, and every day this coming school year!



FAMILY LINKS // Activities for families to reinforce Bible truths in the home.

Gather the family together in a comfortable place for study and discussion using the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER

Given by the person who was the first to start school this year.



FAMILY DISCUSSION TIME

(ask family members to respond to the following)

- 1) What is a favorite location of yours? (Why?)
- 2) What is a least-favorite location of yours? (Why?)
- 3) What is a place you have not been, but would like to visit someday? (Why?)

FAMILY STUDY TIME

Have someone in the family read: Joshua 1:5, then 1 Kings 5:56–58 and finally Ps. 23:1–4. Discuss the following questions:



- 1) What do these verses say about God's presence? (Share personal insights)
- 2) Which of these verses give you the most comfort? (Explain why)
- 3) Which of these verses challenge you? (Share the good and tough challenges)
- 4) How has God blessed your family with His presence over time? (Answers will vary)

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Field Trip around the House

Take a walk around your house, and on the first list below, write down the ways God's presence is noticeable in your home. (Notice such things as a cross on the wall when you come through the front door, a Bible on the coffee table, etc.) On the second list below, note ways in which your family could add new or different ways of witnessing the presence of God in your home.

The presence of God is noticeable in our home:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Ways in which we could make the presence of God more noticeable in our home:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER

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

Almighty God. Thank You for Your presence in our daily lives. Thank You for the gift of Jesus our Savior, who promises to never leave us nor forsake us. Thank You for the start of new school year. Bless the school year ahead. Bless those who teach and all students, everywhere. May Your presence be known in schools and homes every day. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Fearfully & Wonderfully Made

TOP NINE CONCERNS ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Strengths of Students with Learning Disabilities



When working with students with learning disabilities and other difficulties, it's pretty easy to pick out the areas in which they struggle. Areas of strength are sometimes less obvious, or even confusing, to educators. How is it possible for a student to be multiple grade levels behind in reading yet have amazing problem-solving skills? How can a young student figure out how to rewire electronics when he is severely dyslexic? The obvious answer to these questions is that God made each student with unique strengths and weaknesses, in the same way He created

everyone else. However, learning difficulties will sometimes mask the strengths of these student, so let's take a look specifically at strengths of students with learning disabilities.

To start, individuals diagnosed with learning disabilities are not people with low intelligence or a low IQ. Students with learning disabilities generally have average to above average intelligence with specific areas of difficulty, such as reading, writing or math. This may seem contradictory, but it reflects

the difference between capability and achievement. Students with learning disabilities may need to be taught the same skills in a different way, but they generally have the intelligence to learn and be successful.

Students with learning disabilities often show strengths in visual-spatial areas that may lead to careers as surgeons, architects and artists.

Karolyi, Winner, Gray and Sherman (as cited in Armstrong, 2012) found that individuals with dyslexia (one type of specific learning disability) have a greater capacity to identify unique three-dimensional objects, such as those created by artist M. C. Escher, more efficiently and quickly than their peers without dyslexia. Jack Horner, a successful paleontologist who advises Steven Spielberg for the “Jurassic Park” movies, is an example of an incredible visual-spatial learner with dyslexia. He struggles with reading and writing but has the ability to think outside the box and see concepts outside of book learning. In a similar fashion, many people with dyslexia show their superior visual-spatial skills in the areas of art or athletics.

The skills of creative or unconventional thinking and seeing the big picture are other common strengths found in students with learning disabilities. They are often able to find new and creative solutions because they have strong problem-solving and thinking skills, and they develop compensatory skills other than reading to learn information as many others do. Some people see the pieces and details without being able to see how they come together for the whole, but those with learning disabilities are typically skilled at putting these pieces together to see the big picture easily. This can be seen in the above-average entrepreneurial ability of those with learning disabilities. Warren (as cited in Armstrong, 2012) showed that at least one third of entrepreneurs have dyslexia compared to about 1% of managers in large corporations.

In addition to these strengths, individuals with learning disabilities are often very hard working and empathetic. These students have often experienced failure in academic areas, yet they have found ways to compensate for their learning difficulties either



on their own or through the work of dedicated teachers. Many successful adults with learning disabilities describe how they had to work harder to achieve their goals, yet they end up being just as successful, or even more so, than those for whom academics come easily. These individuals often have to overcome people telling them they “can’t” or trying to steer them in a different direction that does not require as much academic work. For inspiring

stories of individuals with learning disabilities and how they have used their difficulties to help them succeed, visit dyslexia.yale.edu/success-stories.

When we as educators help students with learning disabilities see their gifts and how God created each of them with unique strengths and abilities, they can see and believe in their own capabilities rather than only seeing the areas of struggle. These students often do not believe in themselves to begin with, so taking the time to discover areas of strengths and allowing students the opportunity to explore these strengths instead of only focusing on their weaknesses is crucial. There are times when out-of-school activities such as sports and art are taken away for after-school tutoring, but students with learning disabilities need time to nurture and develop their unique strengths as well as work on areas of difficulty. While the strengths discussed here may be general, take the time to see how each student, with or without a learning disability, in your classroom is fearfully and wonderfully made by helping them see these strengths as well!

For questions about specific students and their learning needs in your classroom, please reach out to Lutheran Special Education Ministries for help! Visit luthsped.org or contact us at lsem@luthsped.org.

Reference

Thomas Armstrong, “First, discover their strengths,” *Educational Leadership* 70, no. 2 (October 2012): 10–16. Available at ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct12/vol70/num02/First,-Discover-Their-Strengths.aspx.



Growing in Governing

GROWTH TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS



The Visionary Board



It is a new school year! Let's look at our "principal checklist" to see if we have been able to properly prepare for a wonderful nine months and beyond. Many have been in prayer and are filled with excitement for new learning, engagement and faith formation. Follow your mission. Develop your vision!

Boards should be in the habit of having higher-level conversations. Part of that process is to support the staff in creating a vision. Doing so is both telling and rewarding. The board receives data — both objective and subjective — to assist in making informed and wise decisions. This is foundational, and it is valued. The board can create annual goals, action plans and benchmarks that can be put in place. Looking back at these exercises and looking forward with purpose can be effective.

At the recent School Leadership Development (SLED)

18 conference, this definition of visioning was suggested:

"A reflective practice that leads to clarity and actionable results."

Reflective practice finds its foundation in spending time in God's Word and in prayer. We trust that He speaks to us through His Holy Spirit — as we set a sense of direction for the long term, a means to the future. As part of our quiet time with the Lord, we know that He will lead us, and we acknowledge that He is the source for all that we are and have. Our course is one where we collectively desire to honor Him in looking at the future of our decisions in ministry:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

Preparing Oneself

Reflection. "Be still" time (Ps. 46:10). In the Word every day. Use a resource like The Lutheran Study Bible, in which the scope of the notes included is incredibly powerful. Deep conversations. Prayer and journaling. "Put on your own oxygen mask first!" Looking at the bigger picture. As leader of your school, being confidently prepared to facilitate creating a vision.

Working with the Staff

Collaborate. Build trust. Create buy-in. Have dialogue. Gather ideas. Work through challenges. Create excitement! Utilize data. Work on relationships — always. Communicate with families. Listen.

Working with the Board

Communicate data. Share dialogue that has already

occurred. Hear recommendations. Examine the budget and resources. Begin to move toward a vision. Build a strategic plan. Act!

The Visioning Exercise

The visioning of the organization needs to be a total team effort, but one led by the head of school. Do this in your first set of meetings, before school begins. Follow these bullet points:

Staff

- ▶ **Write** these headings on your whiteboard: Re-visiting the past year, 5-year vision, 10 years out and 20 years out;
- ▶ **Brainstorm** together, starting with major accomplishments from the past year, and then dream big, but keep reality in mind as you fill the other columns;
- ▶ **Talk** through some of the items to make sure that each item is clear, and that each can be actionable;
- ▶ **Capture** the final product and place it in a format that can be published; and
- ▶ **Re-visit** the vision often.

Board

- ▶ **Share** the staff exercise final picture and vision with the board members;
- ▶ **Have** the board discuss the results and then brainstorm to either add or to break down the staff exercise into two or three manageable goals; and
- ▶ **Recognize** many of these might be higher-level discussion items — ones that could include policy,

fiscal responsibility, expanding upon the mission, growing the school and more.

Now the staff and board have some real data to work with and buy-in as well. Publish the vision. Re-visit these goals with other groups. Place items into a strategic plan. To make the vision actionable, an organized system of follow-through will show real progress and will encourage excitement. Give a copy to all staff and board members and ask them to use it often to pray for God to bless all efforts. Watch the progress through the years. Learn from the challenges as they arise. Visioning is a reflective practice. It helps all of us to work together to seek God's will.

Resources

- ▶ Visioning Exercise template
- ▶ Visioning PowerPoint
- ▶ *The Lutheran Study Bible*

Book List

- ▶ *Leadership Jazz: The Essential Elements of a Great Leader*, by Max Depree (newly revised, 2008);
- ▶ *Moses on Management: 50 Leadership Lessons from the Greatest Manager of All Time*, by David Baron, with Lynette Padwa (2000); and
- ▶ *I Am a Follower: The Way, Truth, and Life of Following Jesus*, by Leonard Sweet (2012).

Resources or continued conversations are available by contacting the author at thomas.wrege@zionwalburg.org.



Growing in Governing

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Thomas Wrege Designer: Frank Kohn

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Insights & Ideas

FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



Happy Anniversary *Insights & Ideas!*

Here's a little bit of history! In 1945, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) recorded 127 kindergartens and one nursery school in operation. Twenty-six years later, 52 nursery school programs were listed in the *Lutheran Annual*. In 1973 at the LCMS Synod Convention, the Board for Parish Services presented Resolution 7-03 titled “To Encourage Development of Early Childhood Education Programs.” The result was the vision of Melvin Kieschnick (LCMS Board of Parish Education) with *Project Young Child*. Joanne Eisenberg was its first director. One of her initiatives for equipping teachers was the creation of the *Insights & Ideas* newsletter, designed for educators working in the field of early childhood education in Lutheran schools.¹

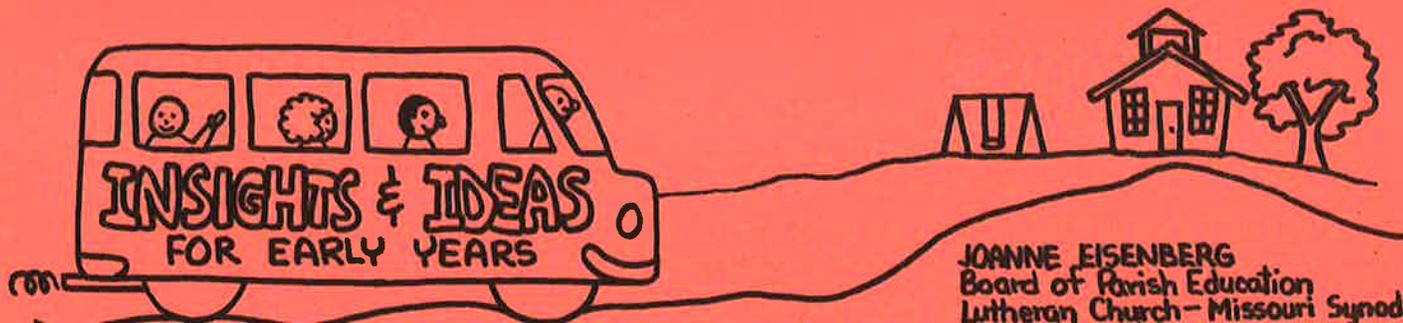
This school year we are sharing nine issues of *Insights & Ideas* from the 1978–79 school year to celebrate Joanne Eisenberg's inspiration and 40 years of talented writers and their remarkable resources for the Lutheran early childhood classroom.

¹ Judith Christian, “Early Childhood Education in the LCMS,” *Issues in Christian Education – A Publication of Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska*, Vol. 47, no. 2 (2014): 7–9.

1978 September

Joanne Eisenberg shared in her opening remarks about new teachers or retiring teachers, “... as we stand on the threshold of September, God has said, ‘here is another year, another opportunity.’” Forty years ago, in *Insights & Ideas*, Joanne was adapting the publication to meet the needs of teachers who were serving young children.

September is a month of getting acquainted and I can imagine the delight of children as they drew their own “Me-Dolls.” As I read through this delightful issue, I remembered the 4-sided easel that I opened daily in centers (I headed to Childcraft and did not opt to build my own!), the many process-based art activities that encourage children to explore creativity with multiple senses and the Color Day activities. Particularly insightful is Joanne’s note to readers to access the Lutheran Education Association’s DECE and thanking readers for sharing their ideas for future issues and with that the network of early childhood educators was born!



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IT'S SEPTEMBER? ALREADY?

SEPTEMBER, 1978

Someone once noted that when you are young, the days and years seem to drag. (Four year olds think they'll never be old enough for first grade.) But once you become an adult, the years roll quickly by.

This is especially true for teachers, who seem to live by the calendar year. Summer of '78 has faded into oblivion. The opening of school is at hand. Soon echoes of "Away in the Manger" and Easter "Hosannas" will cease and yet another school year will end. Will this 1978-79 school year be different from past school years?

Maybe this is your first year of teaching, maybe it will be your last before retirement. Whatever, as we stand on the threshold of September, God has said, "here is another year, another opportunity." And, just as we seem to see the children grow right in front of our eyes, so, we too, need to grow -- to learn more about young children, to try new ideas, to lean heavily on the Master Teacher.

INSIGHTS AND IDEAS is also making an effort to grow during the 1978-79 school year. We've added a TEACHER'S CORNER, a KID'S KORNER, and a monthly theme for each issue. Here's what's in store for the coming year:



- September -- God, the Young Child and Self-concept
- October -- God, the Young Child and the Teacher
- November -- God, the Young Child, Science and Math
- December -- God, the Young Child and Religion
- January -- God, the Young Child and Parents
- February -- God, the Young Child, Social Studies, Foods and Cooking
- March -- God, the Young Child and the Language Arts
- April -- God, the Young Child, Art and Music
- May -- God, the Young Child and Motor Perception

Blessings to each of you as we join hands to grow in the mutual ministry of serving young children and their families.



Equipment Ideas for the New School Year:

Three way easel from Childcraft (\$70) or "build your own" four-way easel (\$16). Pre-school Equipment for a Multi-Use Center gives diagrams for building not only easels, but also water tables, appliances for housekeeping corner, storage cabinets and other items with multi-purpose use. Stone Mountain Educational Projects Incorporation, Roaring Brook Farm, Conway, MA 01341. Cost \$3.

Art Helps:



- Painting with BRUSHES on ART PAPER is passé! Be creative, try paper bags, shelf paper, newspaper, cardboard, styrofoam food trays, shoe polish bottle applicators, sponges, dishmops, cotton balls, string, Q-tips, combs, spray bottles, hair rollers.
- Use spices in the tempera paint to paint the way your kitchen smells!
- Or, use spices to create a collage picture. Example: a yellow house could be done in curry with a red roof of chile powder and green grass of sage or parsley. Sprinkle spices onto a rubber cement-coated area.
- Combine tempera paint with hand lotion. It smells and feels good!
- Add powdered detergent to a cup of liquid tempera to help paint adhere to the waxy surfaces of cottage cheese and milk cartons, etc.

How Do I Feel? Simon (Pre-2) Feelings, negative and positive, are part of family life. "This book can be used nicely as a base for discussion of a child's emotions."

Mothers Can Do Anything Lasker (Pre-2) Women of many ages are shown in ways children can appreciate at vocations and avocations, blue collar and professional.

This Is My Father And Me Raynor (Pre-Up) Filmed in countries around the world. Book-list calls this a "photographic essay on the universal relationship between father and child."

Couldn't We Have a Turtle Instead? Vigna (Pre-2) Amusing illustrations and understanding tone will help with first pangs of jealousy. "A lighthearted treatment of 'I'm not sure I want a baby' theme."

Grandma Is Somebody Special Goldman (Pre-1) Easy words and soft pictures bring to life a present-day working grandmother who makes her grandchild feel just as special during an overnight visit as did any long-ago Granny.

Little Boy Who Lives Up High Hawkinson (Pre-2) "Engaging story in which a small Negro boy describes his view of the world from the window of his high-rise apartment. . . Simply told story and appealing pictures effectively depict some of the unique aspects of modern city living."

You Go Away Corey (Pre-1) Eight word vocabulary. "A pleasant way to reassure little children who worry when parents take time off for errands or diversion." "Enchanting pictures of typical family occurrences are irresistible."



Buddy Program:

Each Tuesday the fifth grade meets with the kindergarten. Each fifth grader is assigned a kindergartener for the semester. If the number of children is uneven we "share" buddies. Activities engaged in include reading stories, making booklets, writing stories, art projects, and working on learning games. Even trips are occasionally planned together. The benefits of this program have proved to be innumerable. The fifth graders learn how to give directions, develop a strong sense of responsibility and learn a great deal about four and five year olds. Besides drill in alphabet and numbers, the kindergarteners come to love their Big Buddies and look on them as brothers and sisters. Both big and little buddies learn patience, sharing, understanding and Christian love. It has the added dividend of giving the "slower" fifth graders a sense of importance and real achievement.



--Lelah Urban, Staten Island, NY

A Fun Way to Put on a Coat:

Lay coat or sweater on floor with collar at child's feet and the opening (zipper, buttons) facing up. Child puts arms straight into sleeve openings. When arms are securely in place, child flips coat over head. Avoids left arm in right sleeve problem.

Geometric Puppets:

Make shape puppets by gluing 2 pieces of construction paper together with a tongue depressor in between. Give shapes eyes, nose, etc. Use the following rhymes:

Square

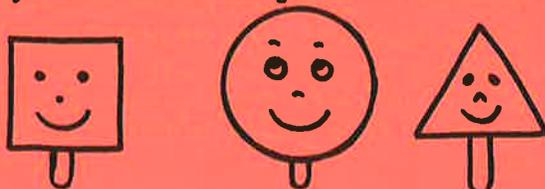
Sandy Square is my name
My four sides are just the same.

Circle

I'm Cindy Circle
Watch me bend
Round and round
From end to end

Triangle

Tommy Triangle
Is the name for me
Tap my sides
1, 2, 3.



--Marilyn Reck, Jackson, TN



Colors:

A fun way to teach preschool children their colors is to send a note home in advance of the day designated as "Color Day." For example, each child is asked to wear something red. Treats for the day are that color as well as art projects and other related activities. The children really enjoy having red milk, making red hats, looking for red all over the school and hearing the story of "The Red Balloon." Best of all, they have learned the color red for good!

--Kathy Koch, Twin Falls, ID

Children sit in small circle. Lay strips of colored paper or ribbon in front of each child. One child blinds eyes while another child, designated by the teacher, hides a color strip behind his or her back. As the child hides the strip, the class says: "Little Jack a Dandy, loved colored candy. Every time he took a bite, another piece went out of sight." Blinded child must guess missing color.

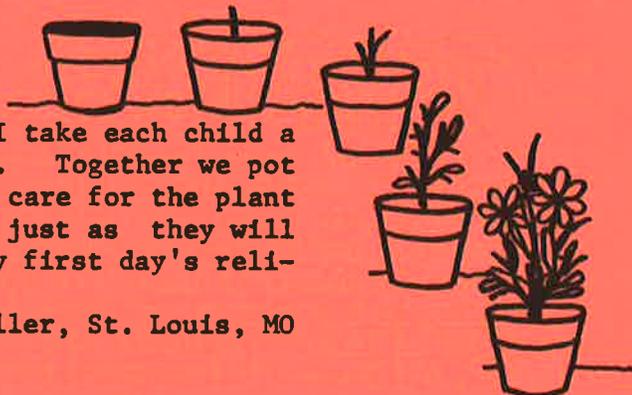
LEA-DECE

--Jeanette Robinson, Toledo, OH

More excellent color ideas can be found in DECE's Spring '78 publication, A Color Portfolio. "By the way, have you joined LEA?" Write LEA-DECE, Concordia Teachers College, 7400 Augusta Street, River Forest, IL 60305.

A Year to Grow:

When I make my home visits before school starts I take each child a small plant, a small pot, and some potting soil. Together we pot the plant and I remind the children that if they care for the plant as well as Jesus cares for them, it will grow just as they will during the year. Have also used this idea as my first day's religion lesson.



--Audrey Miller, St. Louis, MO

"ME-Dolls"

Collect old white sheets. Cut into 8 x 11" pieces. Children draw themselves on the sheet using magic markers. (Tape sheet pieces to table or magazine so they won't scoot around.) Be sure children make large figures. Volunteer parents stitch another sheet to the back of the children's drawing following the body outline and leaving an opening for stuffing. Trim, stuff with old nylons or polyester fiberfill, and sew shut.

I'm so glad I'm a part of the Family of God!

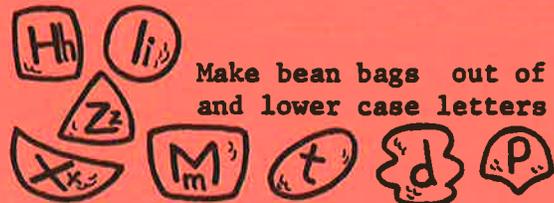
Family Portrait:

Cut large ovals from tagboard. Edge with black or brown magic marker for frame. Children draw their family with markers. Punch holes around edge and lace with yarn. Add family name.

We save the family portraits for family night. We invite the entire family, share photos and slides, a favorite story, some songs, sample some of our own cooking, etc.

McDonalds Hamburger chain furnishes its "Bubbleator" or large cold drink Jug, plus cups and napkins free. We purchase their juice concentrate, which is very reasonable.

--Sue Richterkessing, St. Paul, MN



Make bean bags out of felt in all sorts of shapes and colors. Put upper and lower case letters on each side. Teaches visual discrimination.

--Chris Lehl, Northville, MI

Use spray shaving cream on a table to introduce letters. One can of cheap cream will cover 21 children. Make sure you have plenty of towels for wiping hands.

Name Tag Tree:

Find a large branch and spray paint it. Set in coffee can filled with plaster of paris for weight. Decorate monthly. I use leaves, pumpkins, turkeys, bells, snowmen, hearts, kites, flowers and teeth made from construction paper and labeled with each child's name. This is fine for early recognition of names. Later, play hide and seek with the name tags.

--Kathy Sorenson, Bossier City, LA

Fun Learning:

RHYME TIME



I have a dog puppet I made out of yellow fake fur named "Yellow Fellow." He loves the color YELLOW and is used in conjunction with all sorts of color identification games. Later on, he is used for rhyming. Everything at his house rhymes (pink sink, red bed, blue shoe, wet pet, sad Dad, green screen, etc.). He also helps hold the book or page when I read poems. The children dearly love him and immediately "think" rhyming words when ever they see him.

Children sit in a circle with shapes cut from felt or paper placed in front of them. (Two or three children will have identical shapes.) I call out, "I see circles running around." Children with circles race around to see who gets back to their place first. May also be played with colors. Later I apply rhyming and say, "I see a color that rhymes with BED running around." When I say, "Fruit Basket Upset," the children change positions and thus have new colors/shapes.

--Laurel Schuster, Lombard, IL

TEACHER'S CORNER

1. We've had many favorable comments on the slide/cassette presentation, "Something Special." Copies are available from your local District Office. The music for the cassette was taken from the record, YOU'RE SOMETHING SPECIAL by Bill and Gloria Gaither. YOU'RE SOMETHING SPECIAL is one of a series of book/records for young children. The others in the series are I WONDER HOW IT FELT, I GUESS GOD THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING, IT'S A MIRACLE, GOD LOVES TO TALK TO BOYS WHILE THEY'RE FISHIN', THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE. Available from Impact Books, Division of John T. Benson Publishing Co., 635 Greater Circle Road, Nashville, TN 37228. Cost \$3.50 each.
2. A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM, by Claudia Fuhriman Eliason. The book is exactly what its title says, a very practical book with day by day activities about color, numbers, shape and form, animals, smell and taste, science, music, art, language, etc. C. V. Mosby Co., 11830 Westline Industrial Drive, St. Louis, MO 63141. Cost \$9.00.
3. WE ARE A FAMILY, a teacher's guide with a photo poster. Exploring Childhood, 15 Mifflin Pl., Cambridge, MA 02138. Cost \$9.50.
4. HOW TO RAISE MONEY FOR KIDS (Public and Private), Information on proposal writing and grantsmanship process, plus bibliography and foundation sources. Coalition for Children and Youth, 815 15th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Cost \$2.00.
5. WHY SCHOOLS BEFORE SIX? A cassette/slide presentation by James Hymes.
6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT, a new series of five sound and color filmstrip sets from Parents' Magazine designed to aid educators in establishing effective parent participation. The five sets are, "The Importance of Parent Involvement," "Working In the Classroom," "Parents and Policy Making," "Parent-Teacher Communication," and "Viewpoints on Parent Participation." These and WHY SCHOOLS BEFORE SIX are available for a \$5.00 rental fee from Mrs. Miriam Anderson, Board of Parish Education, 3558 S. Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63118.

Thanks to all who responded to the April INSIGHTS AND IDEAS request to share classroom tested ideas with other teachers. Keep those ideas coming!





NLSA Powerful Practices



Hales Corners Lutheran School, Wisconsin Securing a Supportive Pastor

How does one create a healthy and growing parochial school in today's day and age? Calling a senior pastor to lead your church and school is one of the most important decisions to establish that growing and healthy school. Once the senior pastor is secured, having a team ministry is key in having a supportive pastor. Seeking the man of God who leads the church and school begins with prayer. I think that if one gets caught up in the task of calling a leader, prayer often gets put on the back burner. This is a congregation's opportunity to join together in praying that God leads the call process. I believe that a healthy parochial school is not sustainable without a healthy church. This means that the process of seeking God's will in calling a senior pastor is paramount to the long-term, sustainable excellence in our schools. Certainly, exceptions of healthy schools without healthy churches are present in our church body; however, I would challenge if their success is sustainable.

Research indicates that the leader in any organization makes the difference in the success of that organization. For example, at our growing and healthy school, the governance model of policy-based governance mandates that the pastor is the leader of Hales Corners Lutheran Church in Wisconsin. As the spiritual leader of the church, the senior pastor is also the leader of the school. A successful connection develops when leadership is clear and agreed upon by all people. Hales Corners Lutheran Church and School began its path toward success when the pastor created a culture of positive team ministry. It's easy to say communication is important and also easy to take shortcuts when our tasks overwhelm our schedules. Pastor Keith and our pastoral



Rev. Keith Speaks, senior pastor, reads a story to children.

team have been so open to getting involved, and they seek ways to connect with school families. Open communication is important in looking for ideas and ways to increase connections. Sometimes a pastor wants to be supportive and needs specific ideas for involvement, just like it's good for all administrators and pastors to get out of their offices and spend time in the hallways and classrooms.

It is critical that leaders of the church know and believe the mission and ministry of their church as they begin their process of calling a senior pastor. It is quite difficult to "train" a leader in our system within the intricacies of a church and school. Knowing who you are is critical to success. For many years, our church and school focused and had unprecedented success with the motto,



Left: The Rev. Leon Jameson, pastor of Youth and Family, baptizes an infant at Hales Corners Lutheran Church. **Right:** The Rev. Chad Kogutkiewicz, associate pastor of Discipleship & High School Youth, visits Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, with students.

“lower the threshold, raise the bar.” This philosophy was to welcome people right where they were, regardless of background. When our former senior pastor retired, the Board of Directors made the decision to seek a leader who would continue the focus of welcoming people where they were and spending significantly more time with raising the spiritual bar of our parishioners. This was one of the ways we as a church determined some of the qualities and characteristics we were looking for in our next senior pastor.

Our church began the process of seeking the man who would lead our church and school after a long and healthy run from our retiring senior pastor. Leading a large church and school is different from leading a smaller church and school — not better, just different. Our Board of Directors established a call committee with this thought in mind. As a committee, they met and narrowed a list of candidates through their interviews. The committee went on a road trip to different locations to visit and the listen to the pastor preach in his environment. That process resulted in Hales Corners Lutheran calling a pastor from Michigan to shepherd our congregation. We were convinced that he was the right choice for us. He declined our call, which left our church devastated. How can someone we were so convinced would lead us tell us “No”? It was our arrogance showing. God had a much different and better plan. We began the same process again and the result was that Hales Corners Lutheran called Rev. Keith Speaks to be our senior pastor.

One of the first things that happened when Pastor Speaks joined us was a re-evaluation of our mission and

ministry focus which caused us to create a new ministry statement. Now our statement is **“As God’s family we are Called and Gathered to Worship, Grow and be Sent to make a difference in the world for Christ!”**

To make a successful transition, a relationship needed to be developed between this new-to-us pastor and the principal. As principal, I understand that my role is to lead from the middle of the pack. The senior pastor’s voice dictates agreed-upon mission and ministry within our church. It is critical for the pastor and principal to be leading the mission and ministry in concert with each other. The process typically takes a great deal of time to build the kind of lasting relationship necessary. At Hales Corners Lutheran, we were not given the luxury of “time” to develop that relationship. A crisis quickly arose which necessitated he and I spend significant time praying, planning and executing a plan. That crisis caused great stress for our church and school, including faculty and staff. While the crisis caused our pastor and I to become quite close in a short amount of time, I do not recommend that you create a crisis to create that relationship. In the years since that first crisis, we have grown to trust each other in our work through the Wisconsin Choice program and the blending of our campuses, and that is reflected in our appreciation of each other. We have been able to stand together in financial challenges. Our cost per student has risen dramatically. This could have been a situation in which Satan could divide and conquer our priorities. Instead, we face reality together! When Pastor and I disagree, we always disagree in private. The church and school both lose when a public quarrel happens between the pastor and the principal. Having unconditional love and respect for

one another dictates that we do everything within these boundaries to keep Satan from dividing and conquering the ministry by dividing the two core leaders. We spend a great deal of time in discussion of church and school direction, which means together we can shape mission and ministry within the church and school. In this manner, I can lead from the middle of the pack.

No matter how humans mess with the call process, I believe that God gets the person that He wants to serve in that location. As humans, many times we do not understand why. As Christians, we have faith that God is indeed in control and will use His servants in the way that He sees best. One key to a strong relationship is recognizing that the pastor and principal of the church have egos. Having an ego is not bad. Letting that ego control the situation results in leadership by emotions instead of sound decision making. As leaders, our egos must be checked at the door to enable us to find God's will, not our own.

Overall, when the church has a supportive senior pastor and principal on the same page, excellence in Christian education can occur. Our pastors understand what "ministry of presence" means to our school families and



The Rev. Christian Wood, associate pastor, reads a story to children.

faculty. Their presence among us is critical to a successful supportive system. The reverse is true as well. If the principal and teachers are not invested in the church, support would be difficult. Through the years, God has richly blessed Hales Corners Lutheran with strong pastoral leadership, whether through the senior pastor or our associate pastors. Our team ministry approach has enabled our church workers to serve our church and school families as together we seek to grow and be sent to make a difference in the world for Christ.



Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Real. Present. God. Building Resilient Children

“God will not give us more than we can handle.” Have you heard this before? It is a phrase that urges us to hold on during difficult times because surely God has checked to see if we have the strength to survive. The only problem with this phrase is that it’s not true. In fact, if we teach this idea to our children, we will be building the opposite of confidence and resilience. We do not want to teach our children to depend on themselves; that will set them up for failure.

It may seem strange, but what we really want to teach is that there is very little, if anything, that they can handle on their own. If we convince our children that they can do anything, they will likely end up disappointed and discouraged with their failures and weaknesses. If we teach them that God will protect them

from things that are too difficult, the first time they face something really challenging they will be disappointed in God.

We do not build confidence by teaching children that they can do anything. We build confidence by teaching them that there is always help.

It is a mistake to think that being resilient means a person can weather any storm and handle any problem. In reality being resilient means a person is not anxious about problems. This lack of anxiety does not happen because one is invincible. Rather it happens because we know that there is available help. Resilient people learn to depend on solutions that are outside of themselves. Those solutions might be found in a parent, a friend, a teacher or someone else who can be trusted. First and foremost, we want our children to trust in God.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling” (PS. 46:1-3).

God does not promise to refrain from giving us more than what we can handle. Our sin and our sinful world pretty much promise that we will face things that stretch us beyond our abilities. These verses from Psalm 46 teach us that God will not give us more than what He can handle. Now, that is a phrase that encourages and inspires confidence.



Instead of promising children that they can do anything, teach your children that they belong to God and they are precious to Him. Teach them how God is omnipresent, meaning He is always with us and helping us. Teach that God is omniscient, and therefore He knows everything perfectly, including our fear. And teach that God is omnipotent, having the power to do everything including solutions we cannot imagine.

When your children know the power of God, this will inspire confidence in difficult situations precisely because it will discourage your children from depending solely on themselves. When children try to handle everything on their own, they will develop either false confidence or anxiety. Neither of these will build resilience. False confidence will inevitably lead to failure. Anxiety will lead to the inability to act. Resilience comes from knowing there is a solution. True resilience knows that God is the answer and that He often provides the solution in the form of the skills He gives us and the people with whom He surrounds us.

Psalm 46 goes on to give us a simple direction that will result in resilience: “Be still, and know that I am God” (v. 10). This is challenging to teach and even more challenging to follow. When God grants us this stillness, He gives us a heart free of anxiety and a mind able to trust in His solutions. A still heart is able to be resilient through faith in God. Our challenge is to not depend on our own abilities.



“When your children know the power of God, this will inspire confidence

in difficult situations precisely because it will discourage your children from depending solely on themselves.”

This kind of stillness is not granted in one fell swoop. It is a stillness that God teaches slowly and surely over time. God will work through you as you study His word and pray with your children on a daily basis. God will build resilience as your children worship Him in church every Sunday, cultivating relationships with the people God places in their lives. Talk with your children about problems and make note of how God has offered protection and help. Most importantly, remind your children that God loves them no matter what — even when they are weak and distressed. God is real. God is present. God is the author of resilience.



Professionally Speaking



Hey Leaders! Listen Up!

The Psalms will be the influence for this school year's *Professionally Speaking*. Not only do the Psalms share laments and praise, but they also most certainly point us to Christ. The demands of school administration can lead to laments and praise ... and sometimes within the first moments of the day! This month, consider Psalm 78 and its implications for Lutheran School ministry.

“Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth!

I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old,

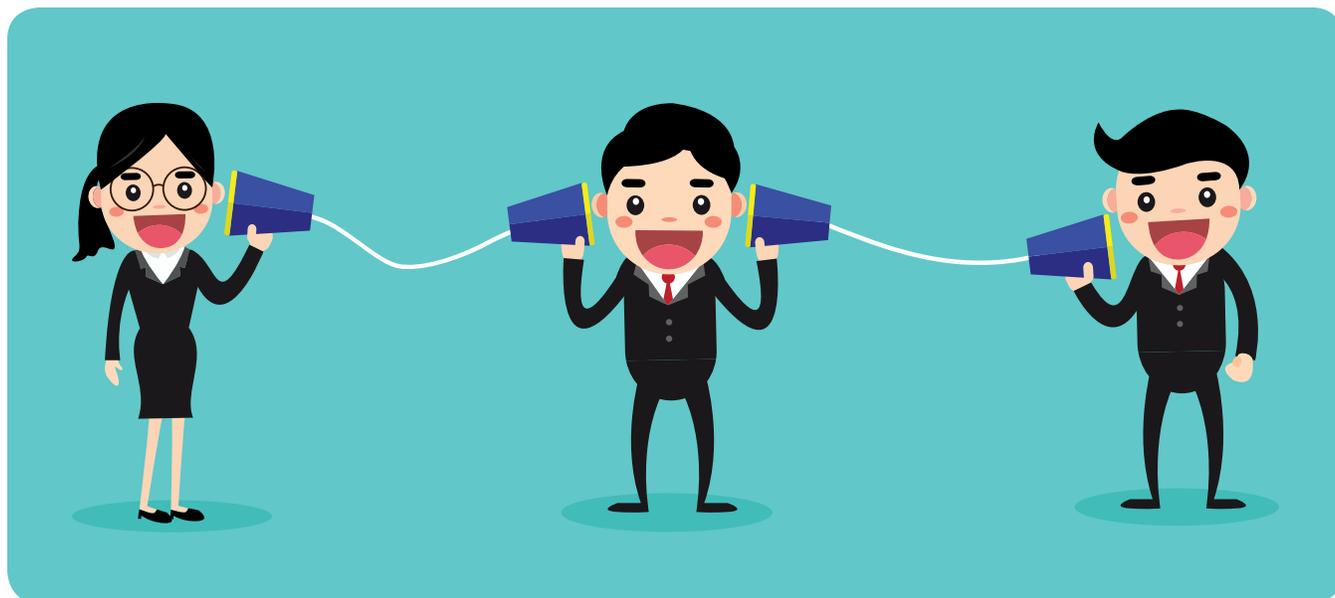
things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us.

We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation

the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done” (PS. 78:1-4).

When reading this Psalm from Asaph, one can hear a tone of urgency. “Give ear ...” is more than a request; it’s a demand for action. These verses stress the importance of diligently teaching the Christian faith to our children. As the children of today will carry the message to yet another generation, it’s imperative that the nurture of our children be one of our greatest priorities. Consider these main points of Psalm 78:

1. Listen and obey. Asaph’s exhortation “Give ear” has the same tone as a parent or teacher saying to child, “Listen to what I say AND obey.” The notion is for the child to pay close attention, lean in, be focused on the upcoming message. A coach uses a whistle, a teach-



er may raise a hand, and an emergency announcement may be preceded by an alarm. Asaph uses words ... and so does our God. Mere words? No. He uses His own words and His Son as the Word Incarnate.

2. Tell a story and share its meaning. Some stories need no explanation; some stories do. Jesus' stories (parables) caught the listeners' ears and led them to wonder, "What does this mean?" In Asaph's case, he told the stories of the Israelites. The stories shared God's care for His people and the cycle of judgment and mercy on the Israelites. Why share this story over and over again? We are just as poor at taking events to heart as the Israelites were!

3. Remember and share. Moses wrote, "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children" (DEUT. 4:9). The narratives of the New Testament and the Old Testament are for us to remember and share. Why? In these narratives, we see God's faithfulness, His compassion, and His tenacity in desiring all to know Him. When we fail to share what is known to be true, we contribute to a generation growing apart from Christ.

4. Repeat #1. All this listening! All this telling! All this sharing! We hear this from Asaph, but we also hear "Listen, Share and Obey" over and over from the prophets and Christ Himself — from the prophets, "Hear, O Israel" (E.G., DEUT. 6:4) and from Jesus, "Go ... make disciples ... baptizing ... teaching" (MATT. 28:19-20).

What do we do in Lutheran schools that heeds Asaph's admonition? What does "giving ear ... to my teaching" look like?

1. Know the story. If we are going to share the story, we need to know the story. The curriculum of Lutheran schools includes religion, history, literature and science. Test the curriculum for supporting of Asaph's encouragement. Is the religion curriculum rich with Bible stories, church history and explanations of each piece? Is history taught with depth and unbiased

presentation of the facts of historical narrative? Are students given the ability to see the historical Bible with history shared in other textbooks? Are literature selections supporting the Christian story? Does the science curriculum give opportunity to appreciate the complexity of God's handiwork and enjoy God's power and design?

2. Share the story. Teachers, pastors and mentors of all kinds in our schools (coaches, teacher aides, administrative assistants, custodians, cafeteria managers) hold the responsibility to share the story. And while they are encouraged to share, each needs to be diligent in knowing the story themselves (1 TIM. 6:20). Worship, Bible study and personal devotions need to be key in everyone's ability to share the story.

3. Practice telling and hearing the story. Coaches help players practice the skills to perform well in competition. Directors help musicians make the needed adjustments to share fine music. Our schools should demonstrate and provide opportunities for practice in telling and hearing the story. How do chapel services do this? Is the liturgy used to share the biblical truths of Christ and His love for us? Are musicals and other drama productions opportunities to uniquely share the Gospel? While there is much music to enjoy and appreciate, does our music seek only to entertain or also to carefully teach the faith to our children? English units that include preparing and presenting speeches are important in gaining confidence in speaking any message, including the message of the Gospel.

4. Obey the story. Lutheran schools include teaching listening skills — what does good listening look like? Respect is expected and taught, not out of authoritative need but because God demands it (Luther's explanation of the Fourth Commandment in the Small Catechism). We encourage worship because as we listen and receive God's Word about our sin and His Son, our Savior from sin. God actually gives what we poor miserable sinners need each day so that we can also share His mercy, forgiveness and love with others.

Professionally Speaking // SEPTEMBER 2018

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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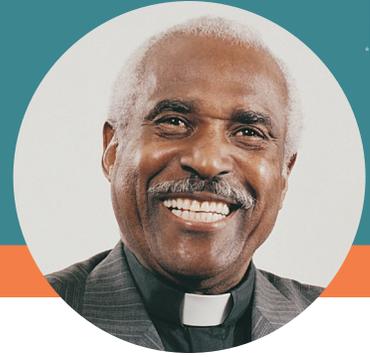
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School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD. God IS Real and Present in Lutheran Schools

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).



The theme **“Real. Present. God.”** unites Lutheran schools this school year in school chapel worship. The theme energizes Lutheran schools as they celebrate their ministry together in National Lutheran Schools Week. The theme also provides encouragement and direction for the school shepherd this school year.

The two-letter word “is” emphasizes a significant message in Psalm 46. The English translation of the simple verb shares God’s reality and presence. “God **IS** our refuge and strength” (v.1), “There **IS** a river” (v.4), “God **IS** in the midst of her” (v.5), “The Lord of hosts **IS** with us” (vv. 7A, 11A), “the God of Jacob **IS** our fortress” (vv. 7B, 11B) (capitalizations added for emphasis).

Confirmation lessons on the Sacrament of the Altar have forever emphasized the significance of the word “is.” Christ’s words of institution from the Upper Room, “this is my body” (MATT. 26:26) and “this is my blood” (MATT. 26:28), are rightfully taken as reality from the mouth of Jesus. Communicants receive the body and blood of Jesus “in, with, and under” (*Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*, copyright 1991 CPH, #291: 235) the bread and wine.

The inspired words of Psalm 46 have the same impact and power as the words of Jesus. God is our “refuge and strength” (v.1) and “present help in trouble” (v.1). “The Lord of hosts is with us” (vv. 7A, 11A). “The God of Jacob is our fortress” (vv. 7B, 11B).

Other Psalms also share the significance of “is.” “The Lord is my shepherd” (Ps. 23:1). “The Lord is my light and my salvation” (Ps. 27:1). Jesus is the fulfillment of all that is promised in the Old Testament. The Gospels share the earthly ministry of Jesus. From the shepherds who came to Bethlehem to see the Infant, to the broken and grieving who came to the Miracle Worker, to the followers blessed to hear His teaching, the witness is that “Jesus is present and real.” To the repentant thief, the confessing centurion and the faithful disciples and mother at the cross, the witness is that Jesus is present as the bleeding sacrifice and that His death is real. Those who witnessed the reality of Jesus’ resurrection were bold to proclaim that Jesus is the only source of salvation.

Lutheran school ministry takes place in the real world with real people. Contrary to the expectations of some, teaching and learning in a Lutheran school is not an

escape from reality. The devil is real and he seeks to destroy God's kingdom. The distractions of the world are real and tempting. The sinful desires of the flesh are real and seek to be satisfied.

The Good News is that God is real and present in Lutheran schools. God is present as His Word is preached from the pulpit, taught in school classrooms, meditated upon in staff devotions and shared in school chapels. God is present as the baptism-connecting invocation begins each school day and baptismal birthdays are celebrated. God is present as the staff gathers with the church at the Lord's Table. God's real presence is the foundation for Lutheran school ministry.

Lutheran schools welcome children and families from a variety of religious (or non-religious) backgrounds. As Lutheran schools seek to be inclusive and evangelizing, the focus on the words "real" and "present" becomes even more important. The words "real" and "present" direct the school shepherd as ministry leader.

Is the Word of God confessed as the "real" inspired, truthful Word that is taught to the students and staff?

Are baptismal promises "real" to each staff member and student?

Is Jesus taught as the only "real" risen Lord, who alone paid for the sins of each child and adult, and who alone offers us eternal life?



“ God Himself is present:
Let us now adore Him And with
awe appear before Him.

God is in His temple; All within
keep silence; Humbly kneel in
deepest rev'rence.

He alone On His throne Is our
God and Savior; Praise His
name forever! ”

(LSB 907:1)

Is the "real" mission of the school clear to every staff member and every enrolled family?

Is Jesus "present" in every class session and at every school activity?

Are children and families "present" in congregational worship where the means of grace are shared abundantly?

Are shepherd and staff "real" and "present" in the name of Jesus, joyfully and faithfully serving Him?

The school year is long. The challenges are many. The leadership of the school shepherd may be questioned and personal and professional doubts may arise. The words of Psalm 46 speak to the shepherd personally, "The Lord of hosts is with [me]" (vv. 7A, 11A).

The school shepherd is also privileged to share confidently with to each ministry partners the promise of Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength" (v. 1).



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



Anxious Beginnings: Do Not Fear — God Is Near!



It is here — the school year has begun! Throughout the past several weeks you have likely felt a number of emotions as you prepare, not only your classroom, but also mentally, for the work God has called you to do. Early childhood leaders have many responsibilities. Enrollment, staff management, parent meetings, budgetary oversight and student safety are just a few topics that you often ponder throughout the day.

School year beginnings are typically exciting! Kids are happy to get new backpacks and new clothes. Teachers are excited to share their summer purchases and implement new ideas into their classrooms. Parents are excited for kids to return to school so they, too, can return to their regular work or home schedules. The beginning of the school year brings many thoughts and feelings. Sharpened pencils, news boxes of crayons, fresh glue sticks and brightly colored classroom decorations usually put a smile on the faces of many people.

While the start of the school year certainly does bring an elevated feeling of excitement, there are often feelings of anxiety. Children may feel anxious about who their friends are or what will actually happen throughout the day in their new environment. Parents may feel anxious about leaving their little children at school for the first time. Teachers may feel anxious about starting the year off well and making sure parents are happy and confident in their abilities. And, for directors and other school leaders, anxiety may surround a plethora of topics. Will current enrollment support the proposed budget? Will Mrs. Smith remain healthy this year or will a long-term substitute be needed again? What if the new family that joined the church because of the preschool program doesn't experience the same positive relationships within the congregation?

Anxiety is real. Many people experience anxiety in different ways. For some people, daily walks are a

way for them to manage feelings of anxiousness. Other “anxiety-reducers” could include reading a book, cooking, spending time with family or prioritizing personal reflection and Scripture reading. While feeling anxious about something is normal, thankfully God has shared a reminder that is quite meaningful: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). When you begin to feel anxious and are nervous about something, know that God has it under control; God wants you to relax and know that He is looking out for you.

You may be familiar with the popular quote “don’t worry, be happy.” This is certainly true for Christians who know that God has rescued you from sin, death and the devil! And, for Christians, consider revising the popular quote to include, “don’t worry, pray!” When you begin to feel nervous, anxious about your work or life, or worried, know that God is walking alongside you. Focus your attention on Christ, for He has done marvelous things — and He always will! God is real. God is present. He is God!

While you may experience some level of anxiety from time to time, consider the following to help alleviate some of the worries that surround such feelings:

Be Diligent in Prayer!

As Paul wrote in 1 Thess. 5:16–18, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Begin and end your day in prayer, asking God to give you the words, wisdom and guidance through all that you will encounter. When you know God is walking with you, and often carrying you, you will have a different perspective when things do not go as planned. When worries begin to enter your mind, stop at any time of the day and pray.

Sing Praises!

David wrote in Psalm 147:1, “For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.”

As an early childhood educator and leader, you likely have the opportunity to sing with your students

often. Look for times throughout the day when you can either join in songs the children are singing or start one of your favorites and invite the children to join in with you. The voices of children singing praises to God will put a smile on your face and in your heart.

Relax with a Hymnal!

How often do you sit down and read through the meaningful words of hymns? For many people, singing or reading favorite hymns brings back beautiful memories of simpler times, of family members or of Christian upbringing. Enjoy a cup of coffee in the morning and read through some of the beautiful hymns that have been written. You may even find yourself humming or singing the familiar tunes. Keep a hymnal in your office or classroom for easy access should you need to spend a moment reflecting on the love and grace Jesus shares with you.

Encourage Someone!

Everyone needs encouragement. Some research shares that when you encourage someone or smile at them, it releases endorphins in your brain that help you feel better yourself. Who can you share a word of encouragement with? Who can you smile at? Hopefully you can brighten someone else’s day so she can return the favor to you when you may need it most. Staying positive and keeping a focus on others can help you overcome your worries.

Teaching is not easy; teaching God’s Word in a classroom filled with children is joyful and rewarding but also difficult work.

You can be certain that your vocation and hard work is pleasing to the Lord as you are sharing the Gospel message with children, parents, extended family members, staff and the community. While you may not always see the fruit of your labor, the Holy Spirit is guiding and directing your work. When times get tough, and they will, remember to “Be still, and know that I am God,” as the psalmist shared in Ps. 46:10. Keep your eyes on Jesus. He is real! He is present! He is God!



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