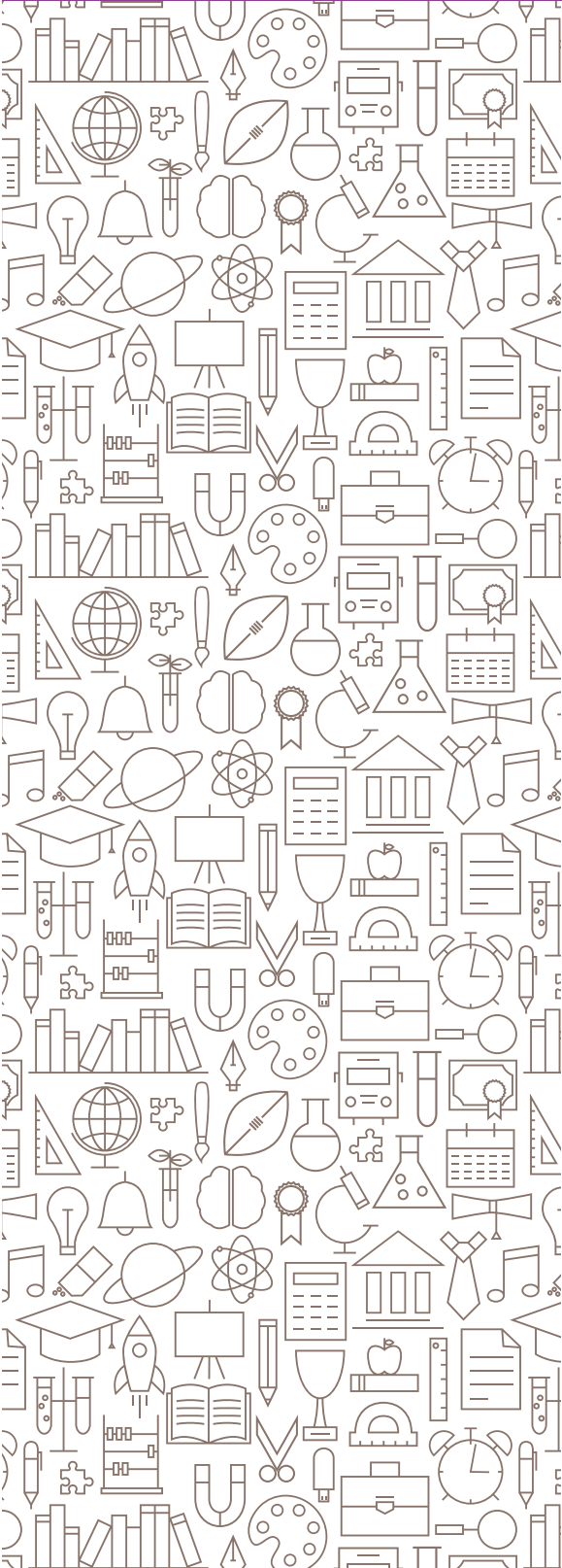




APRIL 2020

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing





APRIL 2020

SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



Adapting Practices Amid the Coronavirus Pandemic

Cold and flu season has long been an annual event impacting schools, which are tasked with caring for the health and welfare of students and families. The standard process has been to publish and practice good health and safety procedures and to keep children home until a return to good health is established.

However, now we have a novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, which is a respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, China, that has now spread to nearly every country. Much is still unknown about the virus with regard to how many have mild or asymptomatic infections and how long they can transmit the virus. The numbers change daily, and the exact dimensions of the pandemic are still difficult to define.

What we do know is that the standard practices in place are no longer strong enough to address and contain the global impact COVID-19 has on every aspect of day-to-day living, including on schools.

Many resources are available to assist churches and schools in caring for their faculty and staff, children and families, and the community. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has made a number of resources available at lcms.org/coronavirus, including a guide called “Congregational Planning for Pandemics.” It’s a place to begin the conversation around strategies to best serve families.

The guidelines are broad in nature to assist congregations in developing plans that best fit the needs of their individual ministries. It is important to remember that handling the spread of a serious contagion like the coronavirus is primarily a task for public health agencies. Any directives from the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and local governmental organizations should be followed. State departments of education and state



early childhood licensing departments are also resources for information regarding the decision to close a school for an extended period.

Our Lutheran schools are independently owned and operated by a church, an association or a Recognized Service Organization. Policies involving school closing and reimbursement of tuition are developed, approved and implemented by the governing authority of the local church and school. Factors to consider when deciding to close involve a review of church and school finances, monies in reserve to cover tuition expenses, compensation of the director and teachers during the closure, and the impact on families.

Additional resources to guide schools through this challenging time are available on LuthEd.org, through the LEA LEADNET Listserv and in the LuthEd Facebook group. Also, LCMS district offices continue to share local and pertinent resources with their schools, so it is important to be included on any district distribution lists that exist.

Together, we join in prayer, firmly believing that whoever “dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!’” (Ps. 91:1–2).



Computer File



What is Next in Technology: **Data, Data, Data**

Reflect on these two questions related to this month's topic before you read the article to start thinking about how the topic has impacted and continues to impact you, your classroom or your school:

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

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



If you were to read any of the "top 10" lists that are being written today about what is coming next in education, you would find the concept of data use. While the use of data in education is most certainly not a new concept, the manner in which it will be used looks like it will revolutionize education and learning in the coming years. That may seem like quite a statement, but there is a growing body of evidence that new technologies will drastically change the manner in which data is analyzed and applied to make informed decisions, especially within in the classroom.

To put ourselves in the right frame of mind to reflect on this, we first need

to take a moment to think about how we use data today and how it has been used in the past. If your school is like most current educational institutions, all of the student data that you have is scattered and saved in different locations. It is not compiled in one central location, so it is not impacting student learning.

Before you get defensive, let me explain. Think about the potential data sources generated by a student over the course of a single school year. The possibilities are endless, from individual questions on homework assignments, to work in an online learning program (such as Discovery Education, IXL or Google Classroom), to student-specific standardized



testing results. Take this and apply it to the entirety of a student's time in a school, and you begin to understand how many possible data points there are that both impact and show a single student's educational learning experience. Now, this may seem like an extremely deep dive into the possible data model that makes up a student, but that is exactly the point. The manner in which data is used today to drive learning is superficial in that it only takes into account extremely high-level data points, such as standardized testing, end-of-course exams and date-ranged summations of grades (quarterly report card grades, etc.). Even if these are all used to impact the learning trajectory of a student, more than likely they are still not aggregated in a single system and as such are manually analyzed by teachers or others to develop a plan for student growth. Historically, this was no different, and it's likely even more superficial and dependent on the input of the individual teacher to determine the learning needs of each student. Thus, you can begin to see the immense challenge with data and the manner in which it is used today.

So, where are we going with this? As mentioned earlier, recent advances in technology are exploring new ways to collect, organize, aggregate and display educational information on individual students to ultimately drive effective individualized learning. Imagine for a moment a system that tracks every student's individualized responses for every element of their learning. Such a system would be able to show student mastery of skills, along with the specific areas of learning where additional instruction is needed. The concept of "badges" and mastery-based education begins to work on the resultant display and path for learning, but the data is ultimately what drives these systems. Thus, such a system would be extremely beneficial in showing teachers what needs to be reinforced in real time, as well as year over year in all areas of instruction and learning.

This may not seem so far-fetched if you have ever interacted with a program such as IXL or Duolingo. In each of these online programs, student learning is driven by how they have interacted with review questions in the past. If the data shows that the student is weak in one particular area, additional targeted questions are given to reinforce that specific area prior to moving on. By addressing learning gaps, students are able to have a more complete and targeted instruction path. These two programs are a small glimpse into how such a system could be imagined for student-learning data.

One piece of the puzzle that's needed before moving forward with such a data system is a robust way for machine learning



(artificial intelligence) to work through and organize the many types and pieces of data. Without an automated computer system to speed up the process and detect patterns, the analysis of the data would still be relegated to a teacher or administrator interacting with the system. Until this is available, we would still be in the same place we are today with the only advantage being that we now have the data in one location.

While a single automated and machine learning-driven system for tracking all relevant student data is still a few years down the road, it is up to schools to figure out how best to move forward with data. After seeing where we are going and reflecting on where we currently are, it may seem like a daunting task, but fear not! Steps that can be taken today will go a long way in helping instruction accurately reflect student-learning needs. Make progress on entering all data into an electronic system. Make sure all classes are working off the same standards and assessment schedules. Ensure teachers have time to review data on students both throughout the year and between academic years to facilitate the conversation about continued student growth. These and other data strategies will continue to serve students and schools well until systems and structures are built to ultimately bring all the data together to better facilitate individualized student outcomes.

Computer File VOL. 19, NO. 8 // APRIL 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Matthew Bergholt Designer: Erica Schwan

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Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN 1 THESS. 5:16–24
FOCUS: Jesus. Others. You.

Easter Resurrection (Jesus is Alive!)

(MATT. 28:1–10; MARK 16:1–12; LUKE 24:1–12; JOHN 20:1–18)



Before You Teach

“Alleluia” is the joyful word that adorns our Easter praise. It’s the Church’s cheer for the risen Lord, and erupts in word and song for 50 days — from Easter day to Pentecost. Children need not only to learn its meaning, but also to shape their lives in a posture of praise. St. Augustine understood that when he wrote, “A Christian should be an Alleluia from head to foot.” It is our privilege to begin to instill in children the knowledge and will to live the alleluia during and beyond the Easter season.

Greeting

Dedicate time to greet each child upon entry. Statistically, the first five seconds after a child’s arrival establish a positive attitude for the day.

Gathering

Light your battery-operated candle. Follow your routine, signaling children to gather in your worship area.

Say: *Jesus lives! Alleluia!* Repeat with the children. Sing the refrain to “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing” (LOSP, p. 56).

Tell the Story

YOU WILL NEED: A precut construction-paper sun, adhered to a tongue depressor.

Do: Raise the sun, signaling children to speak the words *That’s amazing!* where indicated by asterisks *.

Early Sunday morning, the third day after Jesus had died and was buried, Mary Magdalene went to the place where Jesus had been buried. Although it was still dark, she saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.* She ran and went to Simon Peter and John, other disciples of Jesus, saying, “They have taken our Lord, Jesus, out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid Him.”* So Peter and John ran to the place where Jesus had been buried. Peter entered the tomb first, and then John. They saw that Jesus was not there.* They did not understand the Scripture (Bible)



in which it was written that Jesus would rise from death. Confused and afraid, Peter and John left and went back to their homes. But Mary stood and cried outside the tomb. Stooping down, she looked into the tomb and saw two angels in white.* The angels

were sitting where the body of Jesus had lain.* They spoke to her saying, “Woman, why are you weeping?” Tearfully she replied, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” Then, turning around, she saw Jesus standing, but did not know that it was Him.* Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you crying? For whom are you looking?” Thinking Jesus was the gardener, she said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Jesus away, please tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Then, Jesus said, “Mary.”* Amazed, knowing the sound of His voice, Mary turned to Jesus, saying “Rabboni!” which means “teacher.” With a joyful heart, Mary Magdalene then left and ran to the disciples, shouting, “I have seen the Lord! I have seen the Lord!”* Happily she told the disciples everything she had seen and heard. Jesus is alive!*

Say: *Mary Magdalene hurried to tell the disciples the good news that Jesus was alive. Like Mary Magdalene, we cannot keep this amazing news to ourselves. Who can you tell about Jesus?*

Pray: *Signal children to repeat each phrase after you.*

Jesus, You have arisen, all of my sins forgiven.
Alleluia! is my song. I praise Your name all day long.
You came down from heav’n above. Thank You, Jesus,
for Your love! Amen.

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “The Lord has risen indeed” (LUKE 24:34).

Grades 1 & 2: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (JOHN 11:25–26).

ACTIVITIES

Create: Painted Stones.

YOU WILL NEED: Brightly colored acrylic paint, gathered or purchased smooth stones/rocks (to purchase, go to *Amazon.com* and look for “smooth stones”).

Each child selects and paints a stone. As they work, review the Easter narrative. Surround your altar cross with the multicolored painted stones when they are dry.

Do: Celebration Station: Distribute precut streamers. Chant and clap:

Jesus lives, my sins forgives. Alleluia! Shout, “Hurray!”
Jesus lives, my sin forgives. Alleluia! Praise His name!
(Shout the phrase!)

OPTION: “Train” around the room/school while chanting and/or singing.

Sing: “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” (*LOSP*, p. 96).

Sending

Gather children in the “Sending Circle.” Loudly proclaim together: **Jesus lives! Alleluia!** Pray, inviting children to offer words of thanks and praise for the amazing love of Jesus. As children exit say to each, **Jesus goes with you!**

Live the Story

We are resurrection people! “Alleluia” is our song! Let us daily speak and live our “alleluias!”



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Early Childhood Devotions

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Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Lisa Moeller

NOTE: You will need the songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

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Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

Joy as We Celebrate Life



We don't like death, however and whenever it comes.

Sometimes death seems to slowly surface in our lives through an illness or the natural aging process. Other times it is thrust upon us in the form of an accident or unexpected health failure. However it arrives — we have all experienced it, or will experience it.

For the followers of Jesus, the death of their friend came suddenly. On a Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem hailed as a king. On Thursday night, He was arrested, and by Friday morning He had been judged and condemned to death. Friday afternoon, He was hanging on a cross and then dead before sundown.

By Sunday morning, some of the women who followed Jesus felt compelled to attend to the dead body of their friend and headed to His borrowed tomb. When they arrived, they noticed the stone that sealed the tomb had

been removed and assumed someone had stolen the body. They went and told the other followers of Jesus, and Peter and John took off running toward the tomb. John, most likely the younger of the two, ran faster and got there first, but stopped at the entrance to the tomb; however, when Peter arrived he went right into the tomb and found it empty.

How about that Peter! He charges into the tomb, to where death resides and sees no evidence of death. No body. The burial cloth folded up. The strips of burial linen lying limp on the ground. Death was no longer present.

Peter went in — he faced death without hesitation. We can approach death as Peter did — charging toward it, bold and unabashed. We can have such confidence and even joy, as we know that our earthly death is not final. Because Jesus rose from the dead, He conquered death — and death is no more! There is life that will follow this earthly life — eternal life with the Heavenly Father and all believers! Knowing and believing this can give us confidence and joy as we live out life on a daily basis, even in the face of an earthly death.

It took these two disciples and the rest of the followers of Jesus a little while to figure out what had really happened — that Jesus had risen from the dead! When they understood and believed, they shared this message, and it changed the world. This message continues to change lives today!

In the emptiness of the tomb, we find the fullness of life. Where there was once death, life now reigns. Joy is the gift that new life gives — it is ours now and forever.

JOYFULLY UPLIFTING FAMILY ACTIVITY //

Gather the family together in the kitchen, where there are no electronic distractions, to enjoy the family activity outlined below.

ACTIVITY TITLE: BAKING OPEN TOMBS



PURPOSE

To engage family members in a fun activity that allows them to enjoy each other's company and to think about the resurrection as they create a visual of the open tomb.

Items Needed: Have a parent locate all the items listed below:

- A package of Bridgford frozen rolls — thawed
- 25 large marshmallows
- ¼ cup melted butter or margarine
- 6 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- Baking pan and parchment paper

PROCESS

- 1 Separate the rolls and press them into flat circles.
- 2 Place a marshmallow in the center of each roll, and pinch the dough up around it.
- 3 Roll the marshmallow-filled rolls into round balls.
- 4 Brush each ball with butter and sprinkle it with cinnamon and sugar, as desired.
- 5 Let the rolls rise for 30–45 minutes.
- 6 Bake the rolls on a baking pan on parchment paper at 350 degrees for 15 minutes, until golden brown.
- 7 When they are done cooking — just like the tomb on Easter Sunday — these rolls will be empty! Eat and enjoy!

Special Note: Special thanks to Ridell Wright, second-grade teacher at Mt. Calvary Lutheran School in Diamond Bar, Calif., for sharing this recipe that she has used in her classroom for over 25 years as she has taught the truth of the resurrection of Jesus!

PRAYER

Have family members all stand together in the center of the kitchen. Then have an adult or older sibling read the following prayer, segment by segment, with the rest of the family repeating the words.

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending us Jesus, to die for our sins and then rise to give us new life! Help us to celebrate the joy of the resurrection every day. Let us share this Good News with others, so they, too, can share in our joy. In the name of Jesus, our resurrected Lord. Amen.



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Family Matters

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Writer: Dr. Steven Christopher Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Special Education Throughout the School Year: April



Along with spring break for your school during this month, April is a time of celebration in our Lutheran schools as we teach students about the death and resurrection of our Lord and the salvation that this brings to us. While certainly taught throughout the rest of the year as well, one lesson that may come up especially around this time is that of grace. Easter is a perfect example of **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**. Sometimes, however, showing grace in our classrooms is difficult, particularly with those students who seem to know exactly how to push our buttons. Looking at some challenging student behaviors through a different lens may help us practice this idea of grace in our classrooms.

It is usually pretty easy to look at student behavior and come up with an idea about why the student is acting a certain way. Sometimes these ideas may be correct, but at other times, it's difficult to objectively look at the behavior and figure out the reason behind it. Behavior is communication. This is not always positive communication, but through behavior, students are communicating

something, whether they realize this or not. Undesirable behavior is satisfying some kind of need the student has, and this leads to a response from you and/or other students and adults. Taking a step back and looking at the possible reason for or function of the behavior is the first step in changing behavior.

Behavior typically has one of these functions: escape, attention, tactile or sensory. Students wanting to escape may be trying to avoid a certain task or activity, a certain setting or a certain person in the environment. They may run out of the classroom or setting or act in an undesirable way during a certain time so that they get sent out of the room and do not have to complete that task. Behavior that is related to attention produces attention from a specific person or group of people, and that encourages the students to behave in that way even more. Students interrupting the teacher and making jokes to get everyone in the class to laugh or who want to get in trouble to go see the principal may be looking for this attention. Behavior that serves a tactile function is generally related to the desire for a specific item. For example, pushing classmates out of the way to play with a certain item would meet this function. The sensory aspect of behavior is sometimes embedded within these other three areas, but it represents behavior related to either avoiding or gaining a particular sensory experience. The behavior may mimic behaviors with other functions, but the reason could be different. A student may run out of the crowded and noisy lunchroom because the noise and people overstimulate that student, not because he or she is trying to avoid lunch. Determining the function of behavior may take some time and some trial and error to ascertain, but it is essential to moving forward.



Once the function or reason for the behavior has been determined (or a good guess has been made to start with), a replacement behavior needs to be selected. Replacement behaviors have to serve the same purpose as the original behavior or the undesirable behavior will continue to occur. These behaviors are about meeting the same need but in a more appropriate way. For example, if the student is seeking attention, there needs to be an opportunity for that student to get attention, but only for appropriate behavior. If the behavior intervention and replacement behavior do not result in that student getting attention for something positive, the undesirable behavior that gives him or her attention will continue. It is also important to consider that some students may need to be taught the behavior that is more appropriate. It is easy to assume that students know what the appropriate behavior should be, but many only know what *not* to do. Effective replacement behaviors shift the payoff for students so that the function they seek only occurs for positive behaviors, and there is no payoff for the undesirable behaviors. Initially, there may be an increase in the behaviors you're trying to address as the student learns what will and will not be reinforced. It takes patience and some trial and error, but when the match between function of the behavior and replacement behavior is there, ultimately there will be an increase in

the behavior you want to see and a decrease in the other behavior.

This is a broad overview of the steps of identifying and replacing undesirable behavior, but this ties into God's grace especially during the seasons of Lent and Easter. We should try to extend the same grace to our students by taking time to understand their behavior and come up with appropriate solutions that might require a little more problem solving.



Lutheran Special Education Ministries is happy to help you explore these ideas further and provide suggestions for the behavior challenges you see in your classrooms. Please contact us at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at luthsped.org and let us know how we can support you in your ministry!

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made VOL. 3, NO. 8 // APRIL 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Kara Bratton Designer: Lisa Moeller

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Are You Guilty of Sharenting?



“**S**harenting” is the chronic overuse of social media by parents sharing information about their children. When I was a parent of young children, sharenting was pretty much limited to school pictures in lengthy Christmas letters full of news and bragging. Since the dawn of social media, we have experienced a significant cultural shift to the sharing of sometimes intimate details posted in photos and video clips for the world to see. It is time to take a look at the good and bad of such sharing.

Social media has brought much joy to our lives. It creates a virtual small-town atmosphere that allows us to share information with friends and relatives in

real time. Parents can ask questions, get good advice and be reassured that their child is not the only one struggling with behavior. Churches and schools also make good use of social media to advertise events and bring families together in an online experience. I have admired pictures, laughed at video clips and even offered prayers for children, all because of the blessings of social media.

Just like a bragging Christmas letter, social media sharing can create a less than accurate image of our children as being perfect. The impact of this can leave children wondering from day to day if they live up to that image. While the dreaded Christmas letter was once a year, posting happens on a daily basis. It is also good to consider what children are being taught about building relationships. We need to be honest and admit that we are often providing entertainment at the expense of our children. Infants and toddlers cannot give permission, but undoubtedly school-aged children can have a say in whether or not a picture or a clip should be posted for all to see.

There are some more significant concerns at stake. It is easy to inadvertently share personal information that will influence what ads your child will see. These ads may expose them to some things that do not match your family’s values. Humorous clips or pictures that you mean as light-hearted teasing can be repurposed by cyberbullies to cause your child untold grief.

A digital footprint is forever, and childhood may be the best time to learn discernment about what

information to share and how to share it. Your intent is likely to share a slice of life with friends and relatives, but some people have a more sinister use for the information you post. What you post can be used for identity theft or digital kidnapping, resulting in innocent pictures posted on child porn sites. One unofficial survey in Australia found that nearly half of the 45 million images on such sites originated from family posting on social media.

Other research tells us that one in four children report being embarrassed by what their parents share, and children express strong reactions to oversharing as early as age nine. I was intrigued by a study of more than 200 pairs of parent/child interviews that showed that children indicate rules about posting are necessary twice as often as parents. It is not often that we see children asking parents for rules!

New technology tends to urge us to jump in with both feet as we explore the benefits of a new way to communicate. We revel in the technology that makes it easier to share pictures and video clips in many formats. And who among us can resist posting about a winning game, a stellar recital or an academic accomplishment? Proud parents are going to post! However, we are beginning to see some of the downsides to constant sharing on social media. A few guidelines will help you to be wise with sharing and also model good judgment for your children as they grow into tweeters, pinners and posters.

- 1 Alert your school-aged child when you are getting ready to post their picture, video or other information. Consider giving your child veto power, and use this as an opportunity to teach them to make good choices about information sharing.
- 2 Avoid mentioning your child's name, location or birthdate.
- 3 Do not post pictures or videos if your child is not fully dressed in them.
- 4 Decide, as a family, on basic social media sharing rules, and hold each other accountable.
- 5 Set up notifications to alert you when your child's name shows up in a search engine indicating a stranger might be lurking.
- 6 Consider using a private, invite-only site for sharing pictures and videos, avoiding social media posting.

While God's gifts to us are always good, each new offering from the world needs to be viewed with caution and discernment. When you model this discernment and talk about it with your children, you are giving them the gift of using God's guidance to make good choices in the world.

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Parent Pages

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Writer: Dr. Kim Marxhausen Designer: Frank Kohn

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY



Professionally Speaking



SCRIPTURE: 1 Thess. 5:16–24

Faithfulness

“He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it”
(1 THESS. 5:24).

F **faithful?** It’s not really a concept many people understand or experience. Faithful in marriage? The divorce rate for first marriages is 50 percent and the average age at first marriages is higher now than in the past ([apa.org/topics/divorce](https://www.apa.org/topics/divorce)). Even in a lengthy marriage, faithlessness may be displayed in a variety of sins that impact the relationship.

Faithfulness in terms of loyalty? Brand loyalty used to be a thing. For farmers, Deere versus Case IH. For trucks, Ford versus Chevy. For colas, Pepsi versus Coke. The list goes on.

We experience faithfulness and loyalty, often the lack of these, in our churches and schools. The days have gone when generation after generation maintained membership in a specific church, let alone a denomination. Perpetual church shopping, searching for something, is ongoing (but, of course, that’s better than no connection with a Christian church at all).

But faithfulness is a key part of realizing the blessings of faith in Christ. As the theme verse for this month declares, “He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it” (1 THESS. 5:24). Acting out words with actions is what faithfulness is all about.

The Bible is filled with an ongoing testimony of God’s faithfulness (even as His people were NOT faithful). As an example, consider Abram. Abram is chosen by God (GEN. 12:1) and promised to be a great nation. One of the specific promises was land. God reminds him of this promise already in 12:7. And in 12:10, we watch as



Abram demonstrates his faithlessness by lying about his wife. In 13:14, God again reminds Abram of His promise, His covenant with Abram of land and offspring. This reminder comes as Abram and Lot divided up land for their families’ use.

Jesus’ promises are sure because we know His death and resurrection are sure (1 COR. 15). Jesus was faithful to His words, “the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again” (MARK 8:31). Proven with a variety of resources,

the historical proof of Jesus' death and the empty tomb are catalogued for all to deal with.

We can be confident that if these promises are sure, so is the certainty of other promises from Jesus.

If He says, "I am with you always" (MATT. 28:20), we can be sure we are not alone. If God is with us, this fact surely brings peace and confidence.

If Jesus says, "I will send to you [the Helper]" (JOHN 15:26), we can be sure that the Spirit is working in the hearts of His people.

If Jesus says we are more valuable to Him than lilies and birds, then we can be confident of our daily needs being provided (MATT. 6:25-30).

So, what about our schools? Our schools, though existing in a fallen world with sin-filled leaders, have opportunities to model faithfulness. Though these opportunities are minute compared to the magnitude of the promises that God has and will fulfill through Jesus, our schools do teach faithfulness. Through consistent procedures, safe environments, respectful communication and a presence that is more than academic, Lutheran schools teach faithfulness. When promises are kept, when commitments are honored, when we do what we say, we're demonstrating faithfulness.

Consider the value of discipline or behavior plans for understanding faithfulness. The cause and effect of decisions and actions help teach the basics of faithfulness and dependability. Obedience and honesty are two important parts of any classroom or school behavior expectations. Disobedience and lying hold consequences that encourage better behaviors — behaviors that will help students be trustworthy.

Consider the value of safety for understanding faithfulness. Schools are places of routine, and routines give security. Growing up has much that can be feared. Having routines to cover the day-to-day help us adapt



to the changes that continue to arise. Fire drills and all the other safety drills help grow a sense of security. If daily routines are consistently taught and enforced, students gain security — security that can support the many changes that occur while growing up.

Consider the value of communication for understanding faithfulness. Say what you do, and do what you say. Clearly articulating purpose and mission are big concepts that need demonstration. Teaching from such grounding statements helps teach faithfulness.

Consider the value of presence for understanding faithfulness. Student attendance teaches responsibility and accountability. Punctual attendance also demonstrates dependability. Responsibility, accountability and dependability are key pieces to faithfulness. Teacher attendance demonstrates to students the same things. But teacher attendance at student events (sporting events, fine art events and the like) share a faithfulness deepened to include love and care.

Praise be to God as we can teach the important characteristics of the God who is holy and ever-faithful ... even as He is faithful to us, His lowly servants.

Professionally Speaking // APRIL 2020

A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



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

Bible Story: Crucifixion and Resurrection
(LUKE 23:1–24:12).

Focus: Jesus’ saving work (i.e., suffering, death and resurrection from the dead) is the Good News for everyone.

What it teaches us: Jesus came to be the Savior of all people no matter their race, age, culture or what time in history they lived. God’s people respond in joyful thanks and praise.

Prepare to teach

› **Read** the story from various translations and, if possible, a study Bible.

› **Think:** Jesus, God’s Son, willingly and joyfully left His home in heaven and came to earth to live as one of us. He suffered, died and came alive again to redeem all people. [“Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross” (HEB:12:2)].

› **Pray:** Use the prayer suggested in the story outline.



WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

You will also need

- › *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House
- › Picture of Jesus (find one doing an Internet search)
- › Two pictures of the Bible story: crucifixion and resurrection

Gather for Worship

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

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

Opening Song

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

Bible Story

Show picture of Jesus’ crucifixion.

Jesus loves us all; loves you and me.

Bad soldiers planned mean things to do. They hurt Jesus, and said mean things too.

They nailed Jesus to a big wooden cross — There Jesus died; He did it all for us.

Friends took Him down, washed and wrapped Him carefully.

Sadly, put Him in a grave — so quietly.

But, they were in for a BIG surprise. In just three days, Jesus came alive!

Show picture of the resurrection.

Cheer: repeat three times, getting louder each time. **Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive!**
Shout: Hooray! (Parents & Twos curriculum, CPH)

Sing: “Do You Know Who Died for Me” (*LOSP*, p. 93) Use verses: loves me so, died for me, came alive.

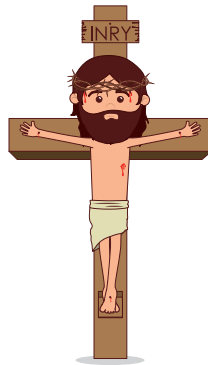
What the Story Teaches: Jesus loves us so much. He was willing to be hurt and die for us. Jesus didn’t stay dead. He came alive again on Easter Day.

Time to Pray

Use the sentences in the above paragraph as a prayer focus. Preface each sentence with **We thank and praise You, Jesus, for loving us so much ... In Your name we pray. Amen.**

Closing/Benediction

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



CURRICULAR MATERIALS //

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

S Science and Nutrition

- > **Sensory Table:** Hide crosses (in sand, shredded paper, uncooked rice, popcorn, etc.). Find crosses and use chant from the story presentation.
- > **Serve Hot Cross Buns:** Use frosting to make cross shapes on rolls; or make cross shapes from peanut butter playdough. Check online for recipe.

T Technology

- > **Electric keyboard:** Borrow a small keyboard from an upper-grade classroom or parent. Play low, sad notes to reflect sadness when Jesus died. Play high notes to reflect happiness of Easter when Jesus came alive.

R Reading and Language Arts

- > **Read board books:** *Jesus Rose on Easter Morn* by Gloria McQueen Stockstill (copyright © 2003 Concordia Publishing House), *The Easter Day Surprise* by Jane L. Fryar (copyright © 2008 Concordia Publishing), “Baby Touch and Feel” series (DK Children).
- > **Action Poem:** **We can smile and clap our hands. Jesus is alive! We can and pray to Him. Jesus is alive! He is here and everywhere. Jesus is alive!** (Earl Gaulke, CPH)

E Engineering

- > **Make cross shapes** using items with different textures (e.g., tree cookies, blocks, cut pieces of sandpaper)

A Arts (art, music and physical education)

- > **Art:** create texture collages.
- > **Music:** “Do You Know Who Died for Me” (*LOSP*, p. 93) and “I’m as Happy as Can Be” (*LOSP*, p. 60)
- > **Physical Education:** sing “Say to the Lord, I Love You” (*LOSP*, p. 18) and use the actions. **We love Jesus; He’s our Savior.** Make up additional actions.

M Mathematics

- > **Sorting:** Use real or laminated-paper crosses. Make sets of three crosses of different sizes and sort by size (e.g., small, big, bigger).

S Social Studies

- > **All People:** **Jesus died for everyone, everywhere.** Sing “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (*LOSP*, p. 94).
- > **Emotions:** Use poem **When Jesus died, it was so sad** (use index fingers to make sad lips). **Then Easter came and we are glad** (draw smile).

CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

Invite families to attend Easter services to joyfully celebrate the redeeming work and resurrection of Jesus. If possible, give each an Easter book (e.g., an Arch Book from CPH).



Rattles & Prattles

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Judy Williams Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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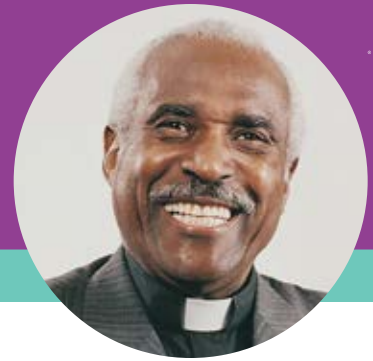
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School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

Joy:fully

There are many joys in Lutheran school ministry: an excited kindergarten student coming to school the first day, the graduation of another class, an athletic team victory, a school musical production, the completion of school accreditation, a celebration of a ministry milestone. The list goes on and on and on. None of those joys compare with Easter joy. Easter joy is more than an event, a day or a season. Lutheran school ministry takes place every day and every year in the joy of the risen and victorious Jesus.

The Joy FULL Good Shepherd

Can you picture Jesus laughing? The truly human Jesus might laugh at the joys of His creation: a lamb frolicking in the pasture, the beauty of blooming spring flowers or colorful fall leaves. Jesus might laugh at human behaviors: the ignorant challenge of a Pharisee or the play of little children. Just as we can imagine seeing Jesus weep, we can hear His laughter. Certainly, the journey to the cross was no laughing matter. There was pain in every aspect of the Passion. While others laughed as Jesus hung on the cross, He died in absolute agony. However, Ps. 40:8 describes Jesus' joy in the cross: "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (SEE ALSO HEB. 10:5-10). Jesus' joy was completing the plan of His Father: being the perfect and only sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus' joy was forever crushing the head of Satan (GEN. 3:15). Jesus' joy was our salvation. Through His resurrection, Jesus reigns joyfully "seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (HEB. 12:2).

The Joy FULL School Shepherd

Grieving women received Jesus' joy at the empty tomb (MATTHEW 28); frightened and doubting disciples



received Jesus' peace and joy in a locked room (JOHN 20); disciples journeying to Emmaus received His joy in the breaking of bread (LUKE 24); Paul received His joy delivered by Ananias at Damascus (ACTS 9). Empowered and directed by the Spirit, Christians become fruitful: "the fruit of the Spirit is ... joy" (GAL. 5:22).

Along with every baptized Christian, the school shepherd receives the joy of Jesus. Baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, we, too, receive Easter joy. How blessed we are by faith to see the empty tomb! There is full joy in knowing that Jesus' victory is ours

— our sins are forgiven. We, too, will enjoy an eternity with our Heavenly Father.

Having received the joy of Jesus' resurrection, the school shepherd lives daily in that joy. With the joy of Jesus in his heart, the school shepherd brings that joy into the Lutheran school. The joy is proclaimed weekly in the worship assembly of the church and in the chapel assembly of students and staff. That joy is shared individually with children and adults in casual conversations in classrooms and hallways.

School ministry takes place in the reality of a joy-draining, sinful world. Not every task is joy filled. Not every moment is exhilarating. In the context of personal and ministry realities, the school shepherd becomes the messenger and ambassador of joy in Jesus.

Shepherding Joy FULL Lutheran Schools

Seeking joy only as a feeling or atmosphere can be disappointing or draining. The school shepherd is more than a ministry cheerleader. Joy is a reality in a relationship with Christ — “Rejoice in the Lord always” (PHIL. 4:4). The joy that is Jesus is lived and shared. While Lutheran school ministry takes place in the reality of a sinful and joy-robbing world, Lutheran schools are joy-FULL places. Worship and devotional settings share the joy of Jesus. Classrooms are joy-FULL settings. School events bring together families and friends in the joy of Jesus. Resources from the 2019 LCMS Convention “Joy:FULLY Lutheran” (President’s report; Convention Bible study) are helpful.

- › Sing Easter hymns of Joy.
- › Identify “joy” Scripture passages.
- › Share Jesus’ joy with a special mission offering or community mission activity.
- › Bring the joy to shut-ins.
- › Decorate classrooms with a “joy” theme and invite the congregation, parents or community.

“Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,

Wellspring of the joy of living, Ocean depth of happy rest!

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Fountain head of love divine:

Joyful, we Thy heav’n inherit! Joyful, we by grace are Thine!”

(LSB 803:3)

- › Host a “joy” festival on the church/school parking lot.
- › Share “joy” thank-you notes with church and school volunteers.

Dialoguing Joy FULLY

- › What are the joys of ministry in a Lutheran church and school?
- › What is robbing personal or collective joy in your ministry setting? How can the joy fruit of the Spirit be brought to those situations?
- › Is the school and church ministry perceived as joy-filled by the staff, parents, and community?



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



The Importance of Open-Ended Art Experiences

Glitter. Glue. Construction paper. Scissors. Paint. Messy. Delightful. Creative.

Take a moment and read the above words again. What comes to mind as you read them? What do you envision when you think of glitter, glue and paper? What do you picture when you think of paint and creativity? There could be a list of ideas that comes to your mind as you read the above words. Yes, each of these words is connected to the subject of art, but what really is “art”? And, what does art look like in your early childhood classroom? And, more specifically, how do your students engage in artistic opportunities in your classroom?

Wow! It may appear that this brief article is already getting fairly deep, but asking questions like these prompts the opportunity to engage in reflective thinking. Reflective thinking can bring up images, past experiences or even hopeful excitement for future opportunities in one’s mind. As you reflect and imagine the opportunities you provide for your students in regard to art, how would you explain how your students are able to engage in creativity and imagination?

God made the human brain to be an amazing work of art! Only God could make something that is able to think, move body parts, feel emotion and experience creativity. If you look online for the meaning of creativity, you will find many possible definitions. A popular definition of creativity is the ability to create a new product or idea. Creative thinking and experiences can randomly appear, lead to unexpected connections

and provide solutions to problems. The use of a child’s imagination as it connects to creativity is important and needs to be nurtured.

It is the natural disposition of young children to have a desire to create. Children create play scenarios with toy cars and blocks, make believe in their dramatic play and explore different roles when they create games on the playground. When children have freedom to create and use their imaginations, they are engaging in age-appropriate work that develops their brains.

In relation to open-ended art, where there is no specific desired outcome or specific pattern to follow, children engage in individual expression. They use their executive function skills to make decisions on their own and work through challenges that can present themselves with materials. Open-ended art experiences





Even young children can praise God with their creative minds and glee-filled imaginations!

can include a variety of materials, or few; children have the opportunity to choose the media they want to explore. Through open-ended art experiences, children learn initiative, problem-solving, risk-taking and creative expression by making something through representation.

Children are able to grow in their physical development through the use of glue, pencils, crayons, paint and clay. Through the use of materials that require manipulation by fingers and hand movements, children develop fine motor skills that are important for expanded opportunities of writing as they grow.

Open-ended art experiences also promote a variety of language development skills. As adults talk to children about their art, they utilize unique vocabulary that expands when new materials and items are shared. Words of texture, such as sticky, slimy or smooth, or words that name newly introduced items, such as scissors, collage or paintbrush, build a child's vocabulary.

There is also great joy and self-expression when a child engages in open-ended art and is able to participate in a new type of self-expression. Social and emotional skills are developed through these creative opportunities as children talk about their work, socialize with peers in the creation of art, make choices of materials to use and find success with their results. As children engage in open-ended art, they can easily become focused in their attention, which is an important skill for future school success.

As you work on providing more open-ended art experiences where children can engage in imaginative

thinking and creativity, consider the following helpful strategies:

- › Provide a rich assortment of materials and experiences for students. Art experiences do not always need to happen indoors at a table or easel. Go outside and look for opportunities for creative art. What are some items available in nature that can be used for color, texture and collages?
- › As children engage in open-ended art, they will take a unique role in their learning — follow the child's lead. Children often learn more when they are deeply invested in experiences that highly interest them.
- › Enrich oral language and vocabulary by expanding on children's ideas. Share words that describe their work. How can you provide ideas or suggestions to push their individual ideas further? Ask open-ended questions as well, providing opportunities to think and use newly learned vocabulary.
- › Rather than praising all work the children do, use factual observations about the child's work. Saying "You used some red circles in your picture" or "I can tell you worked hard to glue those leaves on the tube" acknowledges a child's work in a way that doesn't overpraise.
- › Encourage collaborative work with students. How can students work in pairs or small groups to create open-ended art?

Children are JOY-filled individuals who love to use their God-given gifts of creativity and imagination. Do not be bothered by the messes children create or the time children take to finish their masterpieces. Rejoice that children are using their talents and experiencing creativity in ways that use their brains for learning. Even young children can praise God with their creative minds and glee-filled imaginations!