



OCTOBER 2020

SCHOOL MINISTRY

Mailing



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SCHOOL MINISTRY MAILING

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Alight

FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS



What We Know!

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials” (1 PETER 1:6-7).

Fall is a time for seasonal changes such as cooler weather, harvests and being back in school. Students and teachers across the nation are hard at work in Lutheran schools with in-person classes, remote learning and hybrid models. All are adjusting to conditions brought about by COVID-19 as the first quarter is completed. Educators are reflecting on the joys and challenges of a new school year. “It’s so good to be together!” Teachers, students and parents are thrilled to be back and thankful for in-person school experiences.

For many schools, however, an in-person model is not possible. In these cases, schools have adapted to meet the needs of the students they serve by designing curriculum and individualizing teaching methods to accommodate in-person and virtual instruction, in many cases offering both simultaneously. This is not a simple task and it is creating an environment of chronic fatigue for administrators and teachers. Besieged with the complexity of providing multiple platforms, schedules and social distancing requirements, many principals, teachers, students and parents wonder, “How long will this last?” And the answer is, “We don’t know.” Clearly, staying healthy and caring for those who are caring for others is critically important. Consider these suggestions to encourage





colleagues, students and parents to be mindful of the importance of good health:

- › Develop and maintain habits of healthy eating, exercise, time to unwind and getting enough sleep.
- › Limit the amount of time reading or listening to news stories.
- › Reduce the amount of time on social media when feeling overwhelmed or distressed.
- › Talk to trusted individuals about concerns and check in regularly with others.
- › Explore mental health support services available through health plans, in school, and in the school community (concordiaplans.org/wellness.html).
- › Publicize the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline numbers: 800-273-TALK(8255), and in Spanish 888-628-9454.

- › Share facts and information regularly to reduce the spread of misinformation.

Even more importantly:

- › Worship regularly and connect with a church family in person, through “drive-in services” or virtually.
- › Stay connected through individual and small group Bible studies (blogs.lcms.org/2020/bible-study-series-for-covid-19/#stress-resilience).
- › Pray without ceasing.

This is what we do know. We cannot do this alone. God has given us the precious gift of His Son and, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, promises to sustain and to strengthen our faith especially through times of trial and weakness. Throughout the Gospel we see Jesus healing the sick, casting out demons and performing miracles. We follow, even though the mission is hard. While the marathon of the pandemic wears on, we can continue to thrive and take comfort that the Gospel message of hope and the promise of eternal life is the answer that will sustain us through the pandemic and whatever comes our way.

“These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 PETER 1:7).



Computer File



Building Relationships through Technology

How do you get to know someone? If you meet them in person, you can sit down over a cup of coffee or talk at an event to learn more about them. You may find that you have similarities and differences or even play the “Lutheran education” game to see how many shared acquaintances you have as connections! Whatever the case, getting to know someone is simply something that those who work in education do without even thinking.

This is all well and good if you are able to meet and talk face-to-face with someone, but what happens when the only method of communication is through the use of technology? Many people will immediately answer that this adds a level of complexity to building a relationship and that the relationship will not be as “personal” since it is solely developed without face-to-face interaction. Their argument is predicated on the fact that distanced relationship-building is more difficult and less effective than when getting to know someone within physical proximity.

To be honest, relationship-building that is facilitated through technology is nothing new. If you use the true definition of *technology* and apply it in a historical context, mailing a letter, making a long-distance phone call and sending a text were all revolutionary technologies when they were first introduced. Today’s technology of video communication through services such as Zoom, Google Meet and FaceTime is only the next iteration of a long line of technologies that have allowed individuals to interact and build relationships while they are physically apart.



And perhaps that is the most important point. Throughout history, humans have found ways to build relationships using the technology that was available to them. Pen pals who connected via long-form handwritten letters led to friendships that lasted lifetimes. Late night phone calls enabled long-distance relationships to stay connected and grow deeper. Today’s online messaging technologies and video interactions have enabled individuals to connect with others with whom they may have never been able to interact with physically.

It is no different in your classroom today. Teachers and administrators are able to build relationships with students regardless whether they are physically sitting in a classroom or connecting to their learning remotely using technology. The most important point to remember is that it is possible to create deep relationships no matter the medium, so long as you are willing to put in the effort to make it work.

With all of that said, there are some excellent best practices when it comes to developing relationships with students and their families when you are working with them in a remote education setting.

› **Take the Time:** In order to develop effective relationships with students, you need to set aside specific times to connect solely for the purpose of getting to know the student (or family) better. It does not have to be formulaic or scripted — *just talk*. Similar to the conversations you would have at recess or in carline with students, the time you spend intentionally connecting will enable you to learn a little more to build a better relationship.

› **Make it Personal:** Developing relationships in “group format” just does not work. You need to connect one-on-one with a student or family to develop effective relationships, so no all-class Zoom calls. This personal touch works in the same way as sitting down with a friend to chat; it is more intimate and develops the connection between individuals.

› **Write Things Down:** As educators, we have A LOT of information that we deal with on a daily basis, and we may forget some of the little things. Make sure you write things down about students so that you remember them. It does not have to be fancy, but a page in a notebook about your online learners with things like the name of their pet or their favorite fast food helps jog your memory about the student when talking with them. Similar to the “About Me” handouts that teachers do at the beginning of the year (and administrators or Parent Teacher Leagues give to teachers in pre-planning) these little notes will serve as backup for your brain when it comes time to connect.

› **Establish Routines:** In the same fashion as a weekly phone call with a personal friend or family member, establishing a routine to check in with and connect with students and families goes a long way in helping cement deeper relationships. These set check-ins create a sense of routine and normalcy, and, with today’s technology, are able to be scheduled with reminders so everyone is on the same page.

› **Leverage the Technology:** Whatever technology your school is using to facilitate remote or online

learning, learn as much as possible about it in order to find ways to leverage the technology to connect with students and families. If live video is an option, use it. If video messages to students are an option, use them. If notes can be sent via email or text or instant message or chat ... well, you get the idea! Understanding the different ways that a system can be used to connect in order to build a better relationship is essential as not all students will be able to develop a relationship using only one technological communications medium, and some will prefer one method over another. It is on you to figure out what works best for *your students*, even if that means it is not *your* preferred method of connecting.

It is possible to develop effective and long-lasting relationships with students and their families even if they are only connecting to your school using technology. These five best practices should give you some ideas and serve as a starting point as you continue to develop relationships throughout this and future school years.

Remember, at the start of this year’s *Computer File* articles, I issued a challenge. When each month’s article is published, I want you to read through it, find something pertinent to you and your specific situation and then post about it on social media to start a constructive discussion with your peers. As educators we well know that learning only takes place after the internalization of topics and having our thoughts and ideas challenged (or being forced to defend them). Thus, it is essential that we ourselves reflect on, internalize, express our thoughts and have constructive discourse on how the topic will impact our ministry both today and in the future.

Michael J. Rosenfeld, Reuben J. Thomas and Sonia Hausen, “Disintermediating your friends: How online dating in the United States displaces other ways of meeting,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116, no. 36 (September 2019): 17753–17758, accessed September 8, 2020, [pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1908630116](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1908630116).

Logan Beth Fisher, “Connecting With Reluctant Remote Learners,” *EduTopia*, George Lucas Educational Foundation, August 24, 2020, accessed September 8, 2020, edutopia.org/article/connecting-reluctant-remote-learners.

Susan Yergler, “How to Create Community in a Virtual Classroom,” *EduTopia*, George Lucas Educational Foundation, August 17, 2020, accessed September 8, 2020, edutopia.org/article/how-create-community-virtual-classroom.

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Matthew Bergholt Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



SENT TO SERVE **MATTHEW 20:28**

FOCUS: Freed to Serve. Galatians 5:13

Moses: Freed to Lead

(Exodus 13:1–15:21)

Before You Teach

God's call takes us to unexpected places. Like the children of Israel, we may not always know where God's Spirit leads, but we rejoice as God's plan is realized. Moses led the Israelites to trust God's promises in spite of their fears and to joyously praise Him for their rescue from the Egyptians. Trust and praise may well be a two-pronged emphasis in our own faith life and in our teaching.

Welcome/Greeting

Greet each child upon entry! The first five seconds of a child's arrival are critical for establishing the child's positive outlook for the day.

Gathering

Gather children in your worship area. Sing. Introduce the narrative.

Tell the Story

YOU WILL NEED: Precut cloud, flame and water wave.

DO: Show the cloud, flame (fire) and wave (sea), as the narrative is told. Signal children to repeat **bold** print words after you.

Moses led God's people who were freed from slavery by Pharaoh toward the **Red Sea**. **God** guided them by a **pillar of cloud** during the day and a **pillar of fire** at night. When the king of Egypt heard that **God's** peo-



ple left Egypt, he was upset, and Pharaoh changed his mind, saying, "What have we done? We freed the people who served us!" Then Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army chased the people of God. When God's people saw Pharaoh and his army, they cried out to the Lord, saying, "What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? It would have been better to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." Moses said, "Fear not! Watch how the Lord will rescue you today." The Lord said to Moses, "Lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the **sea**, dividing it so my people go through on dry ground.

The **pillar of cloud** moved behind God's people, hiding them from Pharaoh's soldiers. Moses stretched his hand out over **the sea**. The Lord divided the water. God's peo-

ple went into **the sea**, walking on dry land between walls of water. As Pharaoh's army followed, the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over **the sea**." Moses did as God said. The Egyptians had followed God's people into **the sea**, and the **waters** covered Pharaoh's army, the chariots and all the horsemen. Safe on dry land, God's people danced and sang, celebrating God's rescue. **"Sing to the Lord/for he has triumphed gloriously/ the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."**
Signal children to repeat each phrase after you.

God sent Moses to rescue God's people from slavery. God sent Jesus to rescue us from our sin. We praise and thank God for His love. **Sing to the Lord/for He has triumphed gloriously/from my sin I'm now forever free.** *Children repeat each phrase after you.*

Pray

Children repeat each sentence after you.

**Dear Jesus,
I trust Your loving care for me.
From all my sins You set me free.
Thank You, loving Savior! Amen.**

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

PRE-K & K: "In God I trust; I shall not be afraid" (PS. 56:4).

GRADES 1 & 2: "Behold, God is my Salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid" (IS. 12:2).

Activities

CREATE: Gift Art.

YOU WILL NEED: watercolor or tempera paint. Children paint colorful works of art for gifts. Option: Mat the artwork. See "Camp Serve" below.

DO: Guide children to think of words and phrases that remind people of God's care. Print, or have children print, these on gift cards. See "Camp Serve" below.

SING: Teach "Horse and Rider" song, which paraphrases God's rescue of the Israelites from Egypt in Exodus 15 (search the internet for "Horse and Rider Song"); "God Is So Good" (LOSP, P. 57).

CAMP SERVE: Gift children's paintings to individuals who need to be uplifted. Attach child-made gift cards. See "Do" above.

Sending

YOU WILL NEED: a cross.

Gather children in your "Sending Circle." Say: **God sent Moses to rescue God's people from slavery. God sent Jesus (show cross) to rescue you and me.** Pass the cross, inviting children to pray as it is received, or to quietly pass it along. As each child exits say, **God goes with you.**

Live the Story

Uncertainty in life is not a new phenomenon. The Bible informs us of crises faced by God's people long ago. Today, we can see ourselves in them. Throughout Scripture, a single theme emerges: the ongoing rescue of God's people. God sent Jesus to be our Rescuer. Forgiven and loved, we trust God's plan for us now and in the future. Read Jer. 29:11-14.



Early Childhood Devotions

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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

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IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES



Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



SENT TO SERVE Supporting Those Facing Fear



Nobody likes to live in fear.

In the normal course of life, there will be things to fear: everything from separation anxiety as infants to teenage social anxiety to the range of worries that fill adulthood and being a parent.

It's one thing to be afraid, to be fearful — but it's another thing to live in fear. Being afraid is often momentary, but living in fear is constant. We know that being on a fast-moving roller coaster is temporary and our fear will soon end. Being employed in a toxic workplace, or being in an abusive relationship filled with constant threats, is often more long term.

What happens when we are afraid? There are basically three responses:

- › **We freeze.** We come to a complete standstill. We might be physically or emotionally or socially immobile. Sometimes it might be a combination of all three. We cannot move forward in a healthy direction and are thus vulnerable as we are motionless.
- › **We flee.** In the face of fear, we run. We take off physically from a threatening situation, and we also

run away from emotional, social, financial and even spiritual fears. We seek a safer place to go to — a place to hide.

- › **We fight.** In the presence of danger or threat, we get combative. We strike out physically, we speak out vocally and we attempt to stand our ground against that which is threatening us.

As parents, who are God's "sent people," how do we support and serve our children and others who experience such fears in life? Here are a few ideas:

- › **Accept them.** We may think their fear is not based in reality — but it is real to them. We should not dismiss their fear as if such angst doesn't exist. It does for them. Accept them (and their fears) with words of care and support. Listen attentively and give them eye contact and a sense of hope for the future.
- › **Seek to understand.** This next step allows for non-threatening questions that seek to reveal the source of their fear. It could be something recent or something in the past that continues to absorb them. Attempt to create conversation through open-ended questions. Allow them to honestly reveal their fears and concerns.
- › **Share comforting words.** Find ways to communicate care, support and hope with them in a genuine way. Words, tone of voice, eye contact and attention can communicate support and offer a place of emotional safety which can position them to move forward to address their fear.
- › **Bring comfort from God's Word.** The words of Holy Scripture are filled with comfort. Scripture is applicable for issues of this time and place. There may be times in the course of a conversation when God's Word can apply to the discussion. It need not be in abundance, because one passage or even one verse is filled with hope.

Without a doubt, there is a lot to be afraid of in the world for children and adults, both on a day-to-day basis and over long-term situations. We need not live in fear or unrest, because our Lord Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He comes to set the captives free! We can cast our cares on Him, because He cares for us. We can find our refuge in Him!

There are times we might be afraid, but we need not live in fear.

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY //

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

PROJECT TITLE: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

PURPOSE

To engage family members in an activity that allows them to be challenged and find ways to overcome those challenges.

OPENER

Ask the following questions in your family setting to get the conversation going.

- › What are some things you are afraid of?
- › Why do you think you are afraid of these things?
- › Are there some fears you have overcome recently? How did this happen?
- › How do you usually face the things you are afraid of?

BIBLICAL INSPIRATION:

In your family, have an adult or older child read the following verse from the Book of Psalms, and discuss what it means, as each of you think about facing fears in the future. Try to memorize it as a family, by repeating it several times over and over.

“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you” (PSALM 56:3).

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY: OBSTACLE COURSE

Sit down as a family and decide two things:

1. Find a suitable space where you live — indoors or outdoors — that will allow you to have room where family members can run.
2. Collect items from around your home, such as pieces of wood, bricks/blocks, various size chairs, etc., from which you can build a family obstacle course.
3. Construct the obstacle course with the age and physical abilities of family members in mind, so that all family members can have a sense of success when they participate in this fun family challenge.
4. Create a score card or chart that will allow the family members to record their times and to see if they improve after a second or third run.
5. Have family members take turns running the course, recording each person's time. Have the rest of the family cheer them on and encourage them to do their best!
6. After a number of tries, when everyone has had several opportunities to run, gather together for a discussion of these final questions:
 - › How do you think you did running the obstacle course?
 - › How does Jesus help us overcome obstacles and fears in our lives?

CLOSING PRAYER

At the close of the family session, have an adult or older sibling say the following prayer, phrase by phrase, with the rest of the family repeating the words.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank and praise You, for sending Jesus to be the Prince of Peace. May Jesus calm our hearts, when we are afraid. May Jesus fill us with strength, when we feel weak. May Jesus help us overcome obstacles in our lives. May Jesus give us peace in all we do, and help us bring comfort to others. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.





Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Inclusion Strategies: Talking with Your School

As a teacher, administrator or one with another role within our Lutheran school communities, you may fully understand the importance of inclusion from both a biblical and educational perspective. You may be ready for your school to jump in and become a fully inclusive environment in which all students are equal participants and feel that they belong. If your school is already there, or close to being there, that is wonderful! However, for many it is a process that first and foremost requires communication and commitment.

Recently, a principal shared with me a frustration at his school. He is adamant about Matt. 19:14 when Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” He expressed that he clearly views this as Jesus meaning all children, not just certain students who meet certain academic standards. He sees the mission of his school as being able to include as many students as possible, but it has been an uphill battle to get others to feel the same way. He has come to the realization that this is a process that will take time and dedicated effort, but it will be worth the current frustration.

This example emphasizes the reality that not everyone in your school community will automatically see the importance of inclusion or even understand what inclusion looks like. It is useful to help parents, teachers and those in the local community understand and get excited about the steps toward inclusion that your school will be taking. Students may be coming home



from school talking about what “Susie” did in their class today or noting how “Sam” is different. If parents understand the school’s mission in creating an inclusive Christian community, they can have conversations with their child similar to those happening at school. These conversations can continually emphasize that each child is uniquely and purposefully made by our Creator.

Another tip for communication that will help everyone in the school community understand and hopefully get excited about inclusion is to clearly establish and explain how inclusion fits with the school’s mission. This is helpful for school boards, congregations, parents, teachers and other involved in the school. This communication needs to be consistent throughout the year, not just mentioned at back-to-school night or put in the school handbook. Those are great ways to begin to build these discussions, but providing ongoing information



about the inclusive efforts will help others realize the school is not just saying that this is part of their mission but they will see evidence of it as well.

Share stories about how God is working in your school community because of inclusion. These stories can be from teachers, parents and other students (respecting and protecting the privacy of individual students) and shared in newsletters, on the school website and on social media. Make the connection between these examples and how they model elements of the school's mission. Remember that it may be obvious to you in your role at the school, but this does not mean it is obvious to others.

These stories also provide the opportunity to share with those outside the immediate school walls. This could include those in the community who may want to support these efforts financially. Funding is often one of the stumbling blocks to serving more students with disabilities in Christian schools, but individual donors and community foundations may be interested in donating money or specific items needed for students when they see how it is helping the school become more inclusive.

Another way to communicate the importance of inclusion is by having a display in the school entryway or a main hallway. This can include information about inclusion in general, resources on specific disabilities and pictures from classrooms. There are months during the year dedicated to autism awareness and Down syndrome awareness, so the displays can be changed to coordinate with some of these as well. Over time, these displays and stories become part of the fabric of the

school. People in the school community see inclusion as an integral part of the Christian mission, not something that is only done once a year or occasionally during a special unit in class.

This quote from Renee LaPorte can be found on the National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion website: "When someone is truly included, no one will question their presence — only their absence." This goes along with the idea of welcoming all children into the kingdom of heaven. This is the goal of truly inclusive environments where students with disabilities are not only physically present. Communication is a critical piece of getting to that goal and aligning it with the school's mission.



Please reach out to us at lsem@luthsped.org or visit our website at luthsped.org and let us know how we can support your ministry in efforts at inclusion!

"Talking to Kids about Inclusion," National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion, accessed Sept. 28, 2020, fullinclusionforcatholicchools.org/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-inclusion-from-a-catholic-perspective.

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Writer: Dr. Kara Bratton Designer: Frank Kohn

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Parent Pages

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Do Children See Differences in Other People?

When children of different ethnicities play together, it is easy to assume that they do not see differences. Social media posts share memes that assert children have to be taught to hate. However, we know that the latter is not true because hate is a sin, and children do not have to be taught to sin.

The idea that children do not see differences is also inaccurate. As a reading teacher, I can assure you that children notice minute differences. God designed our brains to create categories for concepts that include a wide range of examples. Children continually look for differences to know if something fits into a category. This skill is how children can learn to read, even if text fonts have letters that do not look like handwriting (e.g., lowercase “a,” “t,” “g”). Children notice differences and adapt to them.

One of the first concept categories that a child makes is that of faces. An infant recognizes a human face because it connects to the arms that will provide food and care. As an infant’s brain develops, he can distinguish between familiar faces and the faces of strangers. Suddenly the child is no longer comfortable in the church nursery because the face of the teacher is not recognizable.

Children do notice differences in people and often ask about them. They want to know why a classmate has a hearing aid or a friend has very curly hair. Once they realize that the difference noted does not change the relationship, they become accepting of the dissimilarity. When children see people who are different from them in ability, in ethnicity or in culture, they develop a





“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose”

(ROM. 8:28).

broader concept category for faces, languages and ways to play together. However, this does not just happen on its own. We must work to help our children see, experience and accept people with many kinds of differences. It is part of actively teaching love and acceptance.

To be more accepting, it helps to be more familiar. The best place to start is to model comfort, curiosity and sharing regarding your relationship with people who are different from you.

Comfort: There is a time of discomfort when you first begin a relationship with a new person. Learn how to lean into that feeling so you can easily find connections. Modeling this behavior will teach your child not to be afraid of differences.

Curiosity: While children can get away with asking just about any question, help them see the difference between learning something new and being rude. Teach your child to be curious about starting a relationship and save the questions for when a friendship is in place.

Sharing: Be willing to share your time, life and space with people who are different from you. Teach your children about your family's heritage and learn about people from different cultures.

Think about the people your children see every day. Do they see different skin tones, different eyes, different hair or different clothes? If not, there are things you can do to help your child be more familiar with people who are different.

Books and other media: Seek out books that feature people from new cultures. Likewise, look for movies, television shows, music events and even video games that feature a variety of people. If children see only people who look and act like them, they may begin to believe that is the only acceptable norm. Our world has a wide variety of people and cultures. Learning more about these people will help your children to see new ways that God loves His creation.

News media: Look for and point out good stories about people from different groups. This action is especially important if the news about a particular group in your community is often disparaging. Help your children understand that people sin, but that does not mean that everyone in a group sins in the same way. Children who understand and practice repentance and forgiveness will be less likely to blame an entire group of people for the actions of a few. God's mercy helps us to realize that we are all in need of a Savior.

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” **(ROM. 8:28).**

God's children are created in His image and called according to His purpose. If God did not see a purpose in differences, He would not have created them. It is God's joy for His children to develop fellowship with each other. In fellowship, we work together to share the Gospel to a world that is in desperate need of its message.



Professionally Speaking



Sent to Serve – With Words

SCRIPTURE: Is. 55:10–12 “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

Seems like there is more chatter than ever before! Plenty of noise, lots of confusion. Isn't it amazing that with all the resources available for communicating that communication is one of the most perplexing elements of life? One could argue that everyone is talking, but very few people are making sense. Compare comments on social media about masks and one wonders what words to believe and what words are without merit at all.

Besides chatter, very few people are speaking words that are blessing. Rather, it appears that words do more to divide and enrage. Most words are used in an attempt to grab power for one's own interests rather than to affirm and support our neighbor. Think for a moment of all the words being used which are intolerant of God's Law. Words that divide races. Words that divide families. Words that question the truth of marriage. Words that place other things and people above God.

Of course, without hearing God's Word, one can't even comprehend the need for God's Good News of life and salvation in Christ alone. Words matter, and it is only the Word from God that can save and give life.

What are the words that “send” Lutheran schools? Try these words as starting points and consider incorporating them into the written and hidden curriculum of a Lutheran school:



WORDS OF DIRECTION:

› We need to help parents be parents.

- **Practice, practice, practice.** It's not a one-and-done effort. It takes determination. “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (PROV. 22:6).
- **Share family stories.** “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts

of your house and on your gates” (DEUT. 6:6-9). Faith stories are especially important to share — include baptisms, confirmations and weddings — even as this command from God expects His story to be told.

› **Discipline and correct.**

- “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (HEB. 12:11).

WORDS OF ETHICS AND MORALITY:

› **Teach about life issues** (PSALM 139). As God is the giver of life, we should be sure that life is seen as precious from conception to grave.

› **Teach about the gift of marriage.** God’s Word is certain on the importance of the institution of marriage. It’s the very picture of marriage that Paul uses to show Christ’s relationship with His Church. We need to get this right!

› **Teach about the care of one’s body.** It is the temple of the Holy Spirit but is often neglected as God’s gift.

WORDS OF INSTRUCTION:

› Science is plagued with an ungodly perception. Yet, when science is taught from a biblical perspective, the majesty and providential elements of God come shining through with awe.

› The beginning of the world, as shared in Genesis 1 and John 1, are core to knowing Jesus.

WORDS THAT EMPOWER THE LONELY AND DESPAIRED:

› God’s people are chosen for His purpose. “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (JER. 29:11).

› Newness in life is celebrated every day as we remember our baptism. Baptism life means a new day and clean slate — every day.

As every day seems to be forcing change, share words that are unchanging. Share words that remind us to look to Jesus for all we need in this world.

› **Jesus does not change.** “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (HEB. 13:8).

› **Before time and into eternity — Jesus.** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (JOHN 1:1).



A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

Professionally Speaking // OCTOBER 2020

Writer: Mark Muehl Designer: Erica Schwan

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Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



Freed and Chosen to Serve

“...THROUGH LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER” (GAL. 5:13).



October Theme: God chose people long ago to serve.

Bible Story: Moses leads God’s people out of slavery

Scripture References: Exodus 13:17–15:21

What it teaches us: God saved His people from slavery in Egypt. They responded with praise and thanksgiving. Through the saving work of Jesus, God’s Son, we are saved from sin, death and the power of the Evil One. We, God’s people today, praise and thank God for sending Jesus to save us.

Prepare to teach

- › **Read** the story and, if possible, a study Bible.
- › **Think:** The biblical story of God saving the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt is recorded in Exodus. It is mentioned many times in the Psalms — the songs of God’s people — and often used as a reminder of how God would send His Son, Jesus, to save us. .
- › **Pray:** Dear God, long ago You saved Your people from the mean king and His soldiers. They were happy — so happy they danced and sang. You sent Jesus to save us. We thank and praise You too. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

You will need

- › **Bible**; picture of Jesus (do an internet search)
- › **Pictures**: find pictures online: Moses, God's people, soldiers, walking through path in the sea and people praising. Reduce sizes to 2 inches; glue in circle shapes; color; cut out; laminate; cut out; use to make tree cookies or glove puppets. Use pieces of adhesive Velcro on the back.

Gather for Worship

Sing (use melody "Mulberry Bush"): **Boys and girls, come sit with me... Boys and girls, come sit with me, right here on the floor.**

Invocation: Sing (using melody from above): **We gather here in God's name...Father, Son and Spirit, too.**

Opening Song

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

Bible Story

Show figures on the tree cookies/glove puppet; sing the story to tune "The Farmer in the Dell."

- › Show Moses. Sing **A walking we will go; a walking we will go. Let pack our things, walk through-the desert; to our new home we'll go.**

- › Show people. Sing **A walking we will go; a walking we will go.** Add soldiers. Sing **What's that I see? What's that I hear? Mean soldiers coming near.**
- › Show God's people. Sing **Let's pray and ask for help (repeat) Dear God, we need Your help right now; we're shaking — full of fear.**
- › Show the path. **God sent a big, strong wind. (repeat) He made a road right through the sea. They ran through and were free.**
- › Show people praising. **Let's sing and praise our God. (repeat) Our God saved us; now we're free — to our new home we'll go.**

Song to Sing: See the suggested song in Music and PE section below.

What the Story Teaches: Share the message from "What it teaches us" (above) in your own words.

Time to Pray

Dear God, We know You are always with us, help us and save us in times of trouble. Please help us to show our thanks by loving You and helping others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing/Benediction

(Use "Mulberry Bush" tune.) **Now it's time to say goodbye ... Now it's time to say goodbye. Remember God loves — and cares — for you.**



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

S Science and Nutrition

- > The people walked through the desert; use sensory table with sand and large seashells, and use tools to scoop sand and find shells.
- > Serve blue (color of water) gelatin or (shell) mac and cheese.

T Technology

- > Use tools to scoop sand.

R Reading and Language Arts

- > God's people went on a trip. Read *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Helen Oxenbury and Michael Rosen (Little Simon, 1997). God's people saw fish in the water as they walked. Read *Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister (North-South Books, 1999).

E Engineering

- > God's people set up tents at night. Use blankets/sheets to make tents. Sit in them and retell the story, have a snack, etc.

A Arts (art, music and physical education)

- > **Art:** Use brushes or fingers to paint colors of choice. Dry. Cut into fish shapes. Tape to windows. Pretend the story, walking on the dry path.
- > **Music and PE:** Use melody from "Jimmy Crack Corn" and sing **I clap my hands to thank our God.** (repeat twice) **He loves and cares for me.** Sing again **Stomp my feet, run around, jump up high.** Use items in the room that can be used for rhythm instruments and sing again.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

God's people learned God was always with them and taking care of them. Hang a picture of Jesus in your child's room. Refer to it and remind them God is with them too.



M Mathematics

- > You will need 5 large seashells (not a swallowing hazard) and a small bucket. Use the following poem: **5 little seashells lying on the shore. I picked up one — then there were 4.** Continue the same pattern until there are all in the pail. **Look! I have 5 seashells.** Either take them out while counting (repeat the poem) or set the pail out for the children to play with.

S Social Studies

- > Remind the children God is always with them (e.g., at school, at home, on a visit to the doctor, shopping, on a road trip). (See song in "Bible Story" above).



School Shepherd

TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS WITH SCHOOLS



THEME | SENT TO SERVE

Sent to Serve Grace Fully



“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”

(ROM. 3:23–24).

How do you picture or describe *graceful*? Perhaps you think of a ballet or other dance performance. Graceful Lutheran schools have students and staff with athletic or artistic skills.

Lutheran schools are *grace,full* in a more important sense: Lutheran school shepherds are messengers of God’s grace to us in Christ.

GRACE THROUGH THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The word *grace* dominates the epistles of Paul (found approximately 70 times). Paul would describe and include

himself in Rom. 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Paul professed that he was “the least of the apostles” (1 COR. 15:9). He celebrated in the very next verse, “But by the grace of God I am what I am” (v.10).

During this school year Lutheran schools focus on Jesus, who was “Sent to Serve.” Jesus’ redeeming act of service was “to give his life as a ransom for many” (MATT. 20:28).

The Lutheran school ministry is not separated from the local congregation and the gathering of God’s people in the Divine Service. School staff, families and children are encouraged around the Means of Grace each week.

GRACE TO THE SCHOOL SHEPHERD

The God who so graciously sacrificed His Son for our redemption shares His grace with us. The school shepherd is not only the administrator of the Means of Grace — he is also the recipient of that grace.

To joyfully share the Means of Grace is first of all to be a recipient of the Means of Grace. The power and promises of Baptism are for the school shepherd. The assurance of the forgiveness of sins shared through the words of absolution are also spoken for the one “called and ordained” to be God’s spokesman. The body and blood of Jesus is given and shed for the forgiveness of sins of the shepherd.

SENT TO SERVE GRACE FULLY IN THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Having received God’s grace in Christ Jesus, the school shepherd is sent to serve grace fully.

To serve grace fully is not to deny or minimize the Law. In earlier verses of Romans, Paul emphasizes “through



“By grace I’m saved, grace free and boundless; My soul, believe and doubt it not. Why stagger at this word of promise? Has Scripture ever falsehood taught? No! Then this word must true remain: By grace you too will life obtain.”
(LSB 566:1)

the law comes knowledge of sin” (3:20). Applying the full counsel of God’s Word, the shepherd shares God’s condemnation to the disrespectful student, the judgmental parent, the gossiping staff member and the sinners displaying a vast variety of sins in the Lutheran school. God’s answer to those sins is Jesus, and God’s response is one of grace to all who believe.

First-grade teacher Sharon often feels inadequate. In addition to serving in her classroom, she serves as a wife and mother in the home. Sharon is a veteran, competent Lutheran educator; however, she often compares herself to other staff members. “I wish I was as creative as the 3rd-grade teacher.” “The 5th-grade teacher does much more around the church and school than I do.” Pastor Smith senses her feelings of inadequacy and assures Sharon, “You are a precious, forgiven child of God. God has gifted you in very unique ways as His servant in our school. Thank you for serving so faithfully.” Pastor Smith ministered grace fully to Sharon.

Joe finds himself in the pastor’s office. Joe’s journey to the office began in the 7th-grade classroom. Once again, Joe has spoken disrespectfully to the teacher. The teacher had sent Joe to the principal, who in frustration (and in hopes of a divine intervention) sent Joe to Pastor Jones. Pastor Jones listened to Joe’s story which not only included his version of the classroom dynamics, but also included Joe’s concern about his parents who had recently divorced. Joe was sad and confused. Pastor Jones shared the “law” of school behavior expectations and

discipline, and he shared the Good News that Jesus’ love never changed. Pastor Jones ministered grace fully to Joe.

The Smith family came to Pastor Collins sharing their financial struggles. Husband and father, Bill, had been laid off from work for several months. Wife and mother, Marie, had not been able to work as she was still recovering from surgery. They shared that they would not be able to keep up with the school tuition payments. Pastor Collins also invited the principal into the conversation. Together they explored tuition assistance for the Smith family and a plan to assist the family in other ways. Pastor Collins and the principal ministered grace fully to the Smith family.

Grace through the cross of Jesus is taught every day in Lutheran schools. Grace is lived in a variety of dynamics in the classroom, in administrative offices and through the office of the school shepherd.



Sharing Our Thoughts

- ◆ What does a grace-full Lutheran school look like?
- ◆ What examples of grace-full living do you see in your school?
- ◆ How are children and families invited and encouraged to gather around the Means of Grace in worship?



Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



Your Feet Are Wet ... Now What?

Congratulations! You did it!

You may be wondering what the purpose is of the above words of encouragement. Read them again. Yes, they are for you. They are for you to acknowledge and celebrate!

You have entered into a new school year that has likely begun in a way that has never been done before. Social distancing with early childhood students — how can that really be done?! Effective cleaning of toys children use — is that really possible?! Wearing masks — can teachers really do that all day?!

Perhaps you have started the year with in-classroom learning and have learned much about new processes and regulations related to COVID-19. Or, perhaps you are working with home-based learning and are providing activities and resources to students with the assistance of technology. No matter which direction your teaching has started or is now progressing toward, your feet are wet, and you can decide whether to continue or back up. Hopefully, you notice the water isn't too cold, and you feel safe to wade in a bit further! The school year is just beginning!

This is certainly a time of learning and growth for many educators. Regular practices are being stretched, especially in the field of early childhood education where hands-on, in-person engagements (with teachers and peers) are the foundation for children's learning. Even if you are having in-class learning, there are likely practices and protocols that make you scratch your head. And, if you are engaged in home-based learning, there are certainly practices that make you contemplate if you are doing the right thing. Do not second-guess yourself and let doubt overshadow the ministry work you are doing. Yes, the work may be different



than what you are used to, but you are moving forward in sharing Christ-filled education with your students; it just may look different.

It is easy to let the media, dissatisfied and stressed-out parents or even grumbling colleagues complain and to begin to agree with their narratives. Be on your guard! You are a servant of Christ, sent to work in the mission field of early childhood education. Nowhere does it say in Scripture, or in your educational training, that your work would be easy and without struggle. Nowhere does it say that your plans will always go just as you thought. However, Scripture does say, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (JER. 29:11). Scripture also shares that "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her

when morning dawns” (PS. 46:5). Each day, know that God provides encouragement, endurance, strength and perseverance to serve in the ministry in which He has called you. Do not let Satan creep into your mind and heart and begin to crumble that which He has built for you! You are called, and sent, to serve in His ministry!

Now, for a while, think about the students in your care. How have they grown during this unique period of time? How have they overcome trouble and unfortunate situations in which they have no control? What areas do your students have that need attention from you? What can you do to help contribute to their overall well-being?

It is still being fully determined how the COVID-19 will most impact young children. For now, many early childhood scholars are talking about the need for enhanced social and emotional learning opportunities. For many children who have been kept at home, or isolated from their regular social interactions, engagement with others, especially peers of the same age, will be important. These typical peer social engagements help develop self-regulation and executive function skills, which are needed for lifelong success. The absence of opportunities to engage in activities that build these areas will need attention for many students in your care.

As a servant in Lutheran schools, spiritual care is also of priority. Many families have not had the same regular opportunities to engage in worship with fellow Christians in a congregational setting. In well-known research done by Becker, Bertels and Morgenthaler (1999), it was determined that young children gain much spiritual acuity by participating in worship with their families. Spiritual activities done in the early years provide opportunity for children to grow deeply in their faith. Regardless of what your students have done for their family worship in recent months, how have you (and the rest of your colleagues) worked to foster the love of Jesus in your students’ hearts and minds? How have you brought the light of Christ into the homes of your students through technology and personal relationships? In addition, how are your colleagues growing in their faith? How is their



worship engagement? Be sure to provide support and encouragement for colleagues as they continue forward in their active faith-life too.

As you reflect on what you have found successful in the first weeks and months of this new school year, remember to build from the areas you found beneficial, whether big or small. Never before have educators been required to twist the delivery and focus of their classroom learning with such swift and unplanned timing. Yes, it is a challenge, but it is also a feat where progress and growth can be made.

In conclusion, spend time thinking about Martin Luther and the changes he encountered during the Reformation. He wanted changes; the church at that time was not being truthful, and Luther wanted to make sure people knew the truth about Scripture. This October, be sure to spend time reading about Martin Luther. His life was not always easy, but he knew God’s promise of love, grace, mercy, forgiveness and salvation. He got his feet wet, and he didn’t look back — Luther kept on walking. Thanks to the determination and perseverance of Martin Luther, you have a very special ministry setting in which to serve today.

Peter M. Becker, Gary L. Bertels, and Shirley K. Morgenthaler, *Children in worship: Lessons from Research* (River Forest, IL: Pillars Press, 1999).

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A RESOURCE OF LCMS SCHOOL MINISTRY

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