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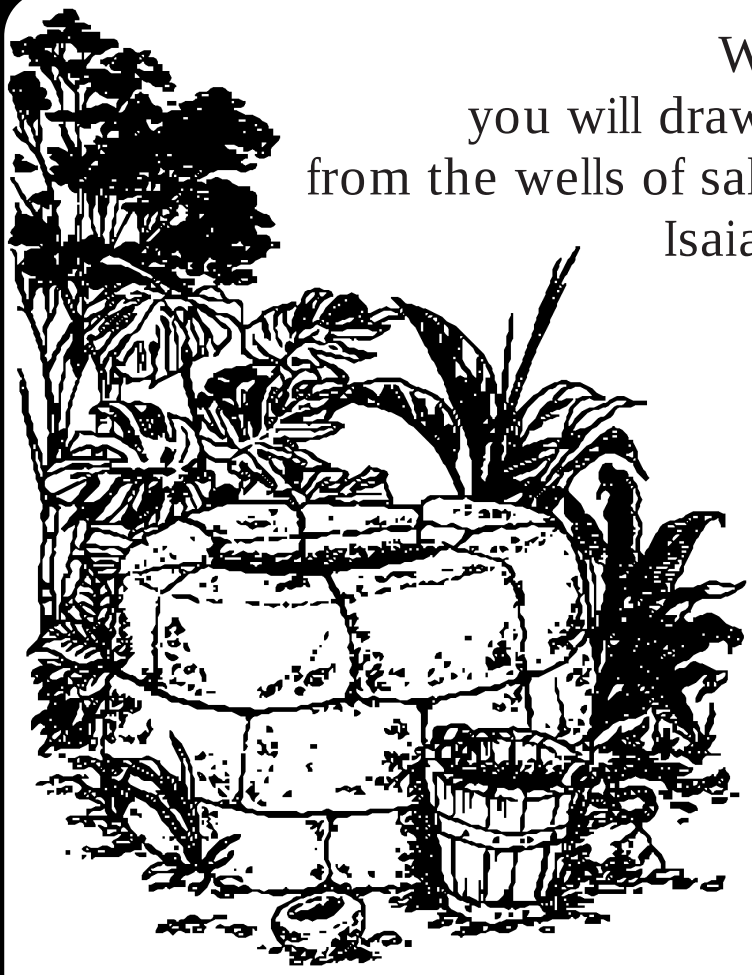
The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal



With joy
you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.
Isaiah 12:3

The Lutheran Educator

The education journal
of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
edited by the faculty of Martin Luther College

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God is in the Details

Many teachers have a similar experience. Out of the blue comes a letter. The writer is a former student, probably married with children, living in a far country. You haven't seen the person for years. You strain your memory. Who was that student? Ah, yes; second row, third seat, somewhere back in the 70s.

The letter is complimentary. The former student thanks you for what you did. Ah, a warm glow.

"What is she thanking me for?" you wonder. "Perhaps it's that great reading program I had that opened up the marvels of the printed word." "Maybe it's that incredible science curriculum we had at that time." Or computers or literature or music or art or phy ed. There are so many things that student could be writing to thank you for. A really warm glow. We are human, after all.

"What? She's saying I complimented her on how well she wrote her cursive r's?!" "He's thanking me for telling him he could do better in math?!" "I said she tried particularly hard in some basketball practice back in '72?!"

You really strain your memory now. But the event is gone, without a trace.

You have now discovered a lesson about memory, teaching, and what students remember. Students will remember you for the big things—breakthroughs in learning, a Moby Dick understood, a fantastic program for writing, lifting the fog of calculus. But more often than not they will remember you for the details: a casual, quickly forgotten (by you) word of comfort or encouragement, a smile or frown at just the right time, a teachable moment in which you actually taught. Our ministry is recalled by the details.

We are often at our best when we are not self-consciously teaching. At those moments God uses us because he likes to be in the details of our lives. He knows that learning takes place in little things as well as in big things. Recall, he taught with a touch and with a look.

When our Lord tells us to put off our old selves and put on new selves, created to be like him in true righteousness and holiness, he is talking about all of our life—the big things and the details.

That seems a bit scary. Does that mean we have to watch our casual comments, our smiles, our looks—the details? Yes, we do. But it also shows us the way for us to do that. Through a faithful use of the means of grace the Holy Spirit will fill our lives. When God dwells in us, he will help us with the details. Then all of our life—the big and the little—will be a testimony of him.

Don't forget the big picture—an eternity with our Savior God, but also watch the details. Your students are watching you—and remembering.

JRI

Classroom Conflicts
=
Teachable Moments

Rose Y. Bilitz

JESUS EQUIPPED his disciples with necessary skills, preparing them for when he would no longer be with them. He patiently took time to train his disciples and set the perfect example for them. Just as Jesus prepared his disciples for times of conflict (Mt 10:17-42), so also teachers need to prepare their children for similar times.

When children say things such as, "He took that from me," "I need that," "She wrecked my tower," "I was there first," "He kicked me," "She called me a dummy," teachers can become frustrated. Some teachers' first reactions may be, "Give it back," "Why'd you do that?" "Say you're sorry." But wait. These are prime teachable moments. Teachers can turn conflicts in learning experiences and thereby help children develop lifelong Christian skills for constructively dealing with adverse situations. (Sometimes, it may be necessary to redirect an activity or to offer more limited choices.)

Here is an example when the teacher used a conflict as a teachable moment.

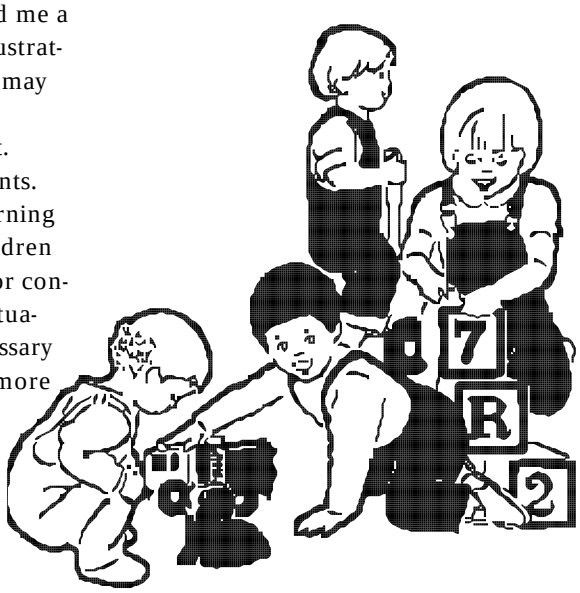
The scene: a preschool classroom

John took his rabbit in a stroller to a picnic. John was enjoying the picnic with his friends. Eric came from the house area, grabbed the stroller, dumped the rabbit, and went back to the house, stroller in hand.

John: "I was using that! I had it first!"

Eric: "But I need it so Amy can take the baby for a walk!"

The following six steps were used by this teacher.



Step one: Approach the situation calmly.

Stop any aggressive behavior and neutralize the object of conflict by holding it.

The teacher calmly approaches John and Eric who are now physically fighting over the stroller. She neutralizes the stroller by pulling it behind her. (Sometimes a teacher may have to pry little fingers off the object.)

Step two: Gather information

Find out the feelings and needs of each child. Use open-ended questions, giving each child equal time to tell his or her side. By finding out the feelings and needs of the children you are acknowledging, not condoning, these characteristics which are typical of this age.

Kneeling down, she asks, "I wonder what's happening here."

John: "He took the stroller."

Eric: "But I need it. Amy wants to take the baby for a walk."

John: "But I had it first!"

Step three: Restate the problem

Rephrase the problem in mutual terms, using each child's own words.

"John, you are angry with Eric because he took the stroller and you had it first. Eric, you need the stroller so Amy can take the baby for a walk. We have two children and one stroller. I wonder how we could solve this problem? Or how Jesus would?"

Step four: Ask for ideas for solutions

The teacher may offer suggestions or questions but the children will probably also give some solutions.

"You both want the stroller. How can we work this out?"

Julie, who is building a city nearby says, "They could share."

"Julie says you could share. What do you think, John?"

John: "OK."

"What do you think, Eric?"

Eric: "OK."

"When you are willing to share like this, you are showing love to each other just like God has shown love to you. You both said you would share. How will you do this?"

John: "I was using it first. He can have it when I'm done."

Eric: "But he wasn't using it."

"John, Eric said you weren't using it. He wanted to use it while you were at the picnic."

Eric: "And when I'm done, you can have it to go back home."

Step five: Restate the suggested solution and ask for a decision.

"John and Eric, you both want to use the stroller. Eric you will use it while John is at the picnic and John, you will use it to take your rabbit home. Will this work?"

John has his picnic and Eric gives the stroller to Amy.

Step six: Follow through

The teacher announces closure to the class and observes to see that the solution is carried through.

"I'm happy to see that John and Eric were able to solve their problem."

Initially, this approach to discipline does take extra time and patience but there are long-term benefits for the child and the teacher. For the children these include

- gaining confidence in solving their problems in a God-pleasing manner
- maintaining interest in the process because it revolves around their own problems,
- learning analytical thinking skills,
- learning what to do, not just what not to do,
- gaining independence and experience cooperating with others.

The benefits for the teacher include

- practicing an effective means of discipline,
- experiencing fewer incidents of tattling,
- watching children constructively solving problems by themselves,
- finding greater cooperation from the entire class,
- serving as a positive role model.

It takes practice but each time it is done, the children cooperate and respond faster and eventually take on some problem solving on their own. Jesus took time out of his schedule to teach the disciples and prepare them for when he would no longer be with them (Mk 9:30-31). We, too, can take time out of our busy schedules to invest in Jesus' little "disciples."

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Rose Bilitz teaches preschool at St. Paul's Lutheran School, Lake Mills, Wisconsin.

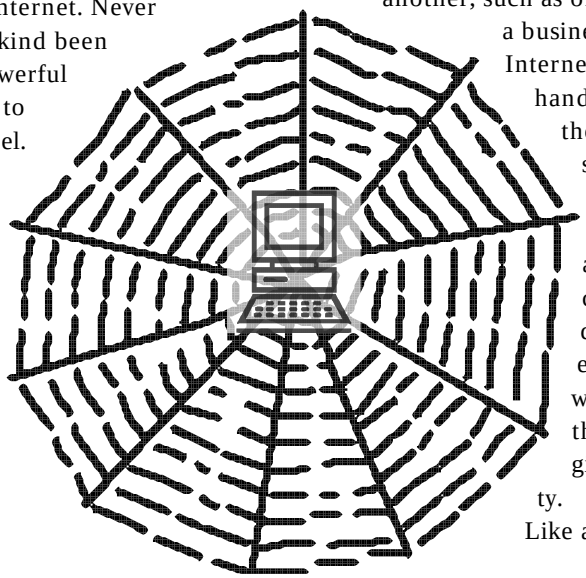
Using Technology in the Teaching of Mathematics is a training program for upper grade elementary and secondary school teachers of mathematics to be held at Martin Luther College, June 16-21, 1996. Participants will learn to use the geometry Sketchpad and Derive software; explore the Internet for resources in teaching mathematics; and become acquainted with the newest generation of calculators (TI-92). Information is being mailed to all schools. You can also call Special Services at Martin Luther College (800 686 4142) for further information.

David Pelzl, project director

The Internet: World Wide Web in WELS Schools

Eric J. Paulsen

IT IS HARD TO REMEMBER the last time that something has received as much press and hoopla as the Internet—specifically the World Wide Web (Web)—has in the past year. I am as guilty as the next writer, for here I am writing yet another article about the Web. But as far as social, economical, governmental, and educational impact goes, the Internet is huge and deserves the publicity. Never before has an individual been given the potential to reach this many other individuals. Never before have educators been given the breadth of resources so readily available as on the Internet. Never before has mankind been given such a powerful tool with which to spread the gospel. Within this article we will focus on these three threads: the Internet and its users, opportunities for educators, and opportunities for us as Christ's ambassadors.



Internet and people

A basic understanding of the Internet and what it consists of is necessary to learn how it impacts the lives of the people who use it. The Internet consists of a collection of electronically accessible sites around the globe. These sites are not unlike a file server on a local area network (LAN). For this reason, I will use the term Internet and Network interchangeably throughout this article. The difference is that a LAN is usually confined to one building or group of buildings geographically close to one another, such as on a campus or in a business park. The Internet, on the other hand, consists of thousands of file servers located thousands of miles from one another. This conglomerate of different computers and users is what constitutes the Internet and gives it its diversity.

Like all networks, the

Internet offers specific services to its users. The first of these and probably the most common is electronic mail or e-mail. E-mail is simply letters that are sent electronically from one computer to another. In the case of the Internet, there are specific protocols that are followed so that messages can be sent literally from anywhere to anywhere, as long as both sides adhere to the protocol. The protocol of choice is the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol or SMTP. This set of rules defines to the computer where the address is located, where the return address is located, and where the subject line is located, etc. There are many types of programs that are capable of sending and receiving SMTP messages, but the most common is Eudora. Eudora is offered in a free form on the Internet and it also is offered in a commercial form that has a few more bells and whistles.

> *"Never before has mankind been given such a powerful tool with which to spread the gospel."*

The second most common use of the Internet today is also the new kid on the block, the World Wide Web. The Web is simply put, the most intriguing facet of the Internet for novices and experts alike. The Web consists of a series of pages that are connected with hot links called Universal Resource Locators or URLs. For example, one may visit in cyberspace the Smithsonian Museum. This site will contain many pages of information. But unlike other aspects of the Internet, these pages may also contain graphics, sounds, and videos. In short, the Web is very interactive, both visually and audibly. At the end of some of the pages, there may be URLs to other topically related sites on the Internet. By clicking on one of them, the user leaves the Smithsonian and enters the new site he has chosen. This development is what is driving the huge interest in the Internet as a whole. It is also the easiest and most effective way to get students onto the Internet. The software of choice for viewing or browsing the web is Netscape. At this time it, like Eudora, is offered in both a freeware and commercial form.

The third part of the Internet is FTP which stands for File Transfer Protocol. This is the most efficient way to transfer files across the Internet. All uses of the Internet involve the sending and receiving of information, however, when it comes to efficiency, FTP sites will provide the quickest transfer rates. The program of choice for the Macintosh is Fetch and for Windows is WS FTP.

The fourth part of the Internet is newsgroups. Newsgroups are public discussion areas covering just about any-

thing you can think of. At present, there are over 16,000 newsgroups! Some of these newsgroups are dedicated to helping others with specific software or hardware problems while others are used to discuss methods of bow hunting or embroidery. Not all newsgroups are as worthwhile as these. Since the newsgroups can accept only text files, users started encoding binary files such as applications and graphics into a text format. This allows users to use newsgroups to share unsavory pictures, pirated software, and malicious viruses. The newsgroup realm is the most nefarious region of the Internet. The programs of choice here are NewsWatcher for the Macintosh and WIN VN for Windows.

The last major part of the Internet is telnet. Telnet refers to the ability to physically logon to another machine on the Internet. This is similar to logging into a BBS such as CompuServe, America Online, or WELSNET. There are many telnet sites on the Internet. They have the distinct advantage over their BBS counterparts in that once the user has connected to the Internet, he doesn't have to worry about another phone call to get to that service. For example, if a user connects locally to the Internet in Los Angeles, he can telnet into his company's site in New York for the price of his local call in Los Angeles. This holds true even if he is online for several hours. Some BBS's, such as WELSNET, are offering both the normal dial-up connections as well as telnet connections. This means that subscribers of their services have a choice of how they connect. The software of choice for the Macintosh is NCSA Telnet and Ewan for Windows.

One of the Internet's unique qualities is that it is available to anyone. There are literally no restrictions on access to the Internet. It is used extensively by researchers, government employees, educators, business people, and private individuals. The only requirement is that they have a computer and a means of connecting to the network.

There are several different options for making the connection to the network. These options can basically be broken into two distinct groups: modem or part-time connections, and direct line or full-time connections. The modem or part-time connection utilizes a SLIP or PPP connection. This means that the user will dial an Internet provider who has a full-time connection and uses that service's access. It is the normal means for individuals to gain access to the network. The direct line or full-time connection has four different levels, depending on how much bandwidth the user needs. The basic starting line is known as a 56K line and is equivalent in speed to twice that of a 28.8 bps modem. The next step up is an ISDN line (128K) which is equivalent to roughly four times that of a 28.8 bps modem. This is a unique development in that it does away with the analog converter or modem. This line is totally digital from computer to computer. Instead of taking digital signals and converting them to analog with a modem and then converting them back again on the receiving end, this is digital from start to finish. This alleviates

some of the bottlenecks caused by analog systems. From here the next step involves a large line called a T1. This can come in what is called a fractional T1, or part of normal T1 or it may be a full T1 connection. Some sites on the Internet with a lot of traffic have multiple T1 lines to handle the load. A T1 line transmits data at 1.5 megabits per second or roughly 50 times faster than a 28.8 bps modem.

The cost of the different types of connections is relative to the amount of traffic they can handle. A SLIP or PPP connection will cost roughly $20/month whereas a T1 line will be about $600/month. These prices are dependent upon the competition between phone companies in a given area. Hence, the prices vary widely across the United States. However, with a little shopping, a provider can usually be found that has some sort of educational pricing structure set up to help local schools gain access to the Internet. These providers are usually also more than willing to give the technical support a school just getting started on the Internet requires. Never forget that support is as important if not more so than finding the lowest monthly bill.

Opportunities for Educators

The biggest draw for educators is the wealth of information that the Internet provides them with just a phone call. There simply is no other resource that can even compare with the breadth of topics presented on the Internet. The fact that a teacher can access the grand daddy of all networks and make use of its varied services is in itself amazing. What used to be the realm of the technogeeks is quickly becoming the playground for anyone looking for information. As teachers, one of our greatest tasks is to equip our students with the skills necessary to use the tools for gathering and evaluating information. This process of equipping our students would be incomplete if we did not introduce them to the resources on the Internet. One of the easiest ways to access these resources is through the Web. Even though the Web was started in 1990, it didn't really see great growth until 1993. At the end of 1993 there were 623 Web sites. At the end of 1994 there were 11,576. Estimates predict that there will be more than 30,000 sites by the end of this year. As a point of comparison, use of the text based gopher services increased 197% while use of the Web grew 1,713%! This phenomenal growth is due in large part to the simplicity of the Web.

There are a tremendous number of valuable Web sites for Lutheran educators. Just as there are a variety of special interests for teachers, so there are a variety of special places on the Web to address each of those special interests, as well as a few extra ones. A Web site is really nothing more than a location on a hard drive somewhere. A single hard drive usually contains many sites. A site is referenced by its URL. Each URL follows the same syntax. This is an example of a URL:

http://www.rpi.edu/~okeefe/-business.html.

The first part, *http://*, tells us that this

is a Web site as opposed to some other Internet resource. The second part, *www.rpi.edu*, is the actual name of the server. This is a unique name on the Internet. In this case, the last three letters tell us that it is an educational site as opposed to a government (.gov) or a commercial business (.com). The third part, *~okeefe/business.html*, is the path or directory for the actual page I am referencing. In this case, I am accessing the directory *~okeefe* and looking for the file *business.html.* The *html* suffix tells me the page is in html or *H*yper*T*ext *M*arkup *L*anguage. Though it is not necessary to understand the syntax of a URL to use the Web, it is helpful to know when you are interested in the actual location of the sites you access. Below are a few of the many valuable sites available to educators. The first two are the sites where the Macintosh and Windows software that was discussed earlier can be found.

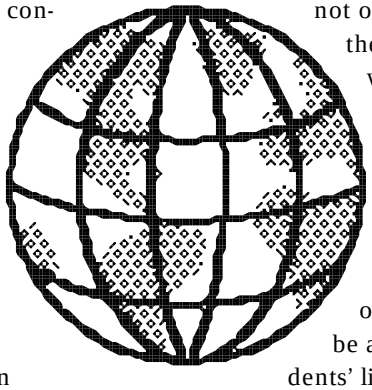
> *"The biggest draw for educators is the wealth of information that the Internet provides them with just a phone call."*

Windows software
http://www.myriad.net/tucows/software.html
Macintosh Software
http://community.net/~csamir/macapp.html
FedWorld
http://www.fedworld.gov/
Legislative Library of Congress Archive
http://thomas.loc.gov
Interactive Citizen's Handbook
http://www.whitehouse.gov
Stock Market Quotes
http://www.secapl.com/cgi-bin/qs
Top 50 Business Sites
http://www.rpi.edu/~okeefe/business.html
Yahoo Search Engine
http://www.yahoo.com
Lycos Search Engine
http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu
Weather
http://www.mit.edu:8001/usa.html
Virtual Frog Dissection
http://george.lbl.gov/ITG.hm.pg.docs/dissect/info.html
Music Resources on the Web
http://www.music.indiana.edu/misc/music_resources.html
ESPN Web Page
http://espnet.sportszone.com
Online Bible
http://www.gospelcom.net/bible

Combine ease of use with credible content and the Web becomes a clear winner as far as usefulness goes. The content is generated by the different sites all over the Internet. Just as there are FTP servers in countries around the world, so are there Web servers as well.

The actual physical computers that make up the Web are found all over our globe.

It is for this reason that there is no centralized group or company responsible for the Internet. There is no one who is checking content or making sure that copyrights are not being broken. The Internet regulates itself. The individuals or companies that produce content for the Internet are the only ones who are overseeing that content. As a result, there are many unsavory sites or file servers on the Internet. One man's art is another man's pornography. This conflict has taken the debate to the level of the U.S. Congress with the Communications Decency Act, which is an attempt by the U.S. government to control content on the Internet. The dilemma for users is compounded by the sheer number of different perspectives on the issue. As we as WELS educators begin to look at the Internet and at the different ways of using it in our classrooms, we must decide for ourselves how we want to deal with the issue of unwanted content.



For some groups of people, this problem is solved by purchasing watchdog software packages that prohibit access to the unwanted content. For other groups, the unwanted content is seen as an inescapable evil inherent with the use of the Internet. And for still other groups, the unwanted content proves to them that the Internet is useless and should be avoided like the plague. However, hiding the students from the poor content is irresponsible. When the students use the Internet on their own, and almost all of them will eventually have access to it, they may come across unsavory material. The students must be equipped with the skills and training in the faith in order to make the appropriate decisions. The question for WELS educators becomes not one of whether we agree with the content or not, but rather which of the aforementioned groups should describe us and our use of the Internet.

The Internet is huge and it is only going to get bigger. As much as it is a part of our lives today, it will only be a bigger part of our students' lives tomorrow. For this reason, we would be remiss in our calling if we do not teach our students how to use the Internet. The users and uses of the Internet are as varied as the grains of sand on a seashore. Some may relate to financial or business information, others to the fine arts, and still others may be purely recreational. Regardless of one's interest, information about it and others who share that interest can be found on the Internet.

The key then becomes connecting the students who have specific interests to the appropriate sites on the Internet. Just as the corner music store can usually provide recordings for this week's Top 10 and not the classical or contemporary jazz recordings for other types of listeners, so also with many sites on

the Internet. Helping the students sift through the common sites to find the ones that have good content that is updated frequently is a key to success. When the students have access to sites that provide pertinent and up-to-date information, their perception of its value increases. The reverse is also true. Forcing the students to use services and sites that are not really useful will turn them off to any use in the future.

In an effort to help teachers learn more about how electronic communications can help them in their classrooms, WELSNET, an information server owned and operated for the WELS by Northwestern Publishing House, will hold a sectional at the 1996 National Teachers Convention. The theme will be "putting teachers and parents together online." WELSNET will explore the use of e-mail and electronic communication in the area of homework help and family devotions. In addition, simply putting teachers and students "in touch" with each other will be explored. For more information please contact Amanda Kohlmetz at NPH, 414-475-6600, x-157 or contact her online on WELSNET, 414-475-7514. NPH is also working on a Home Page for the World Wide Web which they hope will be up and running by early 1996.

Opportunities for Christ's ambassadors

Our synod is just beginning to realize the potential of the Internet in conjunction with our great commission, that of spreading the gospel to every nation. Just as God chose Israel for the site of his Son's incarnation because of its close proximity to the major trade routes, he may have also positioned us on the next generation of the trade route, the Internet. We have the ability as individuals to, in the words of the children's song, let our little gospel lights shine before all mankind. When we take part in discussions or create a Web page, we have the potential of reaching millions of people.

> *"[God] may have also positioned us on the next generation of the trade route, the Internet."*

God has given us the command not to be like the world (2 Co 6:14-18), but rather to come out from them and be separate. We can do this by creating Web pages that contain information about our churches and schools. An example of a Web page created by one of our WELS churches can be found at *http://www.airshow.net/airshow/grace.html*. These pages may contain information about the WELS in general. This would provide an opportunity to give simple

confessional statements in the vein of *This We Believe.* The pages may contain factual information about a congregation such as the pastor's name and phone number, worship times, or possibly an event calendar that is updated daily with any changes. The point here is that by putting the information out there, we are providing a means for the Holy Spirit to reach into the hearts of those who take the time to read about us.

Another great opportunity for us concerns our world missionaries. Our synod provides our missionaries with e-mail accounts to facilitate better communication with synod offices. What a positive boost our churches could provide by having the Sunday school or the Lutheran elementary school students send little moral boosters via the Internet. These simple messages of encouragement and of prayer can really aid our missionaries as they carry out the work of the church in foreign lands.

A final thought here follows one of the themes, *Dare to Deviate,* used at the WELS retreat site, Camp Philip. Let's be different in our creative uses of this powerful resource. We need to spend time looking at this resource and devising new and interesting ways of using it to help in the mission of the church. Let's look for ways to get our students more involved in the technology that will have a tremendous impact upon their adult lives. The world is ever-increasingly becoming a very complicated place. We have the ability to take advantage of these advances and to use them to our ends.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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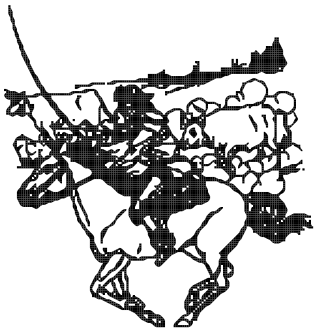
- Martin Luther College's home page address is http://www.ic.mankato.mn.us/ic/user/mlc/mlc.html



Letters From Home

Notebooks of Discovery

Ramona M. Czer

NONE OF MY DAUGHTERS keeps a journal quite like I did. Oh, I've bought them plenty of books, locked diaries with tiny brass keys or blank books with dimpled angels glowing on the covers, but they usually leave them buried in bookshelves or desk drawers (and make me greedy for those pages eternally blank). I'm a little pensive about this disinterest, but I've decided there may be a couple of good reasons for it. I don't think they need journals like I did, for one thing. After all, don't we listen daily to their tirades, their musings, even their silliness? Gone is the era when children should be seen and not heard (though that too makes me a little pensive), and so also gone is the search for the perfect omnipresent confidante, a journal. The other reason is your fault—you have them keeping journals in your classrooms.

Don't get me wrong—I'm thrilled you encourage journals—but I do have one concern. I've noticed more and more college freshman composition students coming in with an "attitude" about journals: "More journaling?" they'll sneer. "I've done that so much I'm sick of it!" How sad that they're tired of their own ideas, imaginations, and emotions, but maybe it's inevitable when a natural form of expression becomes an "assignment," when it becomes so structured and formulaic that they start writing on automatic pilot and discover nothing new about themselves or their world.

I've thought a lot about this problem because I want to continue using journals in my own classrooms and because (I confess) I haven't quite given up on those long-buried books in my daughters' bedrooms. How can we make journal writing seem useful, natural and yet also be a process of exciting discovery? The answer peeked out at me from the depths of my own purse: Perhaps we need to have them keep a different kind of notebook.

Novelist Doris Lessing says, "I've always disliked words like inspiration. Writing is probably more like a scientist thinking about some scientific problem, or an engineer about an engineering problem." Maybe she keeps a notebook like the one I do now: one not so much like a diary with long emotive ram-

> *"I've always disliked words like inspiration. Writing is probably more like a scientist thinking about some scientific problem, or an engineer about an engineering problem."*

blings in it but one full of quick observations, as well as copied quotes, jottings about weird or intriguing happenings, and reminders of thoughts that flit through my brain. Partly I started keeping such a notebook because of time constraints but also because...well, I was bored. The old way, the intensely self-conscious, seemingly useless, gut-wrenching way felt suddenly wasteful, as if I'd learned all I could from it. Now I needed to honor my experiences and remember them with succinct descriptions. Now I needed to bring writing into my everyday life more so I could use it to make speeches or share stories with my children or pepper an article with anecdotes that made a point. And most of all I needed to discover what my major preoccupations were so I could write about them, and I did that by simply gathering the quotes and stray thoughts that appealed to me whenever it happened—naturally.

I wonder if you'd like to try this kind of notebook with your students. It's not something that should become an "assignment" if you can help it. Have it be just a simple spiral or bound book they keep in their desks or take back and forth from home to school and then encourage them to pull it out and jot something down whenever they "get the urge." It may be daily or it may be only every few days. After a disappointing loss on the basketball court, when the first snowfall drifts past the window, or when something funny happens, you say, "Hey, I'm going to write about that," and pull out your own notebook and write for two or three minutes at most. Ask them periodically about what they've jotted down and read some of your short entries. Have sharing times weekly for groups to share something super neat from their notebooks (and they can either "talk" it or read the entry since the benefit is in the observation not the crafted expression of the observation). Do all this and I suspect soon you'll hear them laughing and intensely quiet at the rich material in each others' notebooks. It will also, some of it, beg to be developed into longer projects of obvious significance to them.

Lucy McCormick Calkin writes about the need to help children discover the

wonderful content in their world in her book *Living Between the Lines.* She insists that "We can't give children rich lives, but we can give them the lens [notebooks] to appreciate the richness that is already there in their lives." She also says that "When writers carry notebooks everywhere, the notebooks nudge us to pay attention to the little moments that normally only flicker into our consciousness." I'm not sure we can hope to make all students into committed writers, but I think such notebooks teach them that they have ideas and experiences worth recording and that as the notebooks fill up, certain themes and emotions will keep reappearing. Those are the trains of thoughts that can one day be expressed in any number of ways, in artwork, as songs on the piano, or even in experiments in the science lab.

My notebook sits in my purse right now, plump with promise. It's filling up nicely, and I'm eager to see where it's going next. Will I write tonight of the miraculous escape my friend had when a train hit his car? Will I copy down that great quote by Charles Kingsley about the inner eye? Will I scrawl down the funny thing Erin said today: "Mom, can I borrow two of your Bobbsey pins?" All that and maybe more. And tomorrow nothing may come, but it's still filling up. So much so that one of these days I might even raid that buried angel book—unless of course someone else rediscovers it first.

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WELS National Teachers Convention

Guy Doud (National Teacher of the Year, 1986)
John & Carol Butzow (teachers)
Bowen Loftin (NASA scientist)
John Pikulski (author)
Ruth Heller (illustrator/author)
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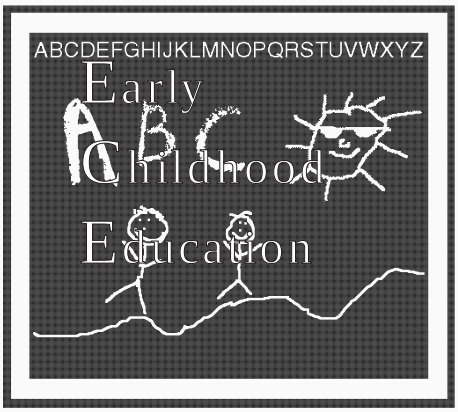
Joanne Ryder (illustrator/author)
Norm Hannewald (National Science Teacher)
Bob Friedel (Aerospace Science Teacher of the Year—Wisconsin)

Martin Luther College
June 25-28, 1996

Development of Gross Motor Skills in Preschool Children

Jodie E. Schommer



CHILDREN IN AMERICA may be in the worst shape ever. Many are overweight, suffer from high cholesterol, become breathless when running short distances, and can't even touch their toes. The majority of these problems can be solved by turning off the television and getting children to move. More children should move off the couch and get outside for some fresh air and exercise.

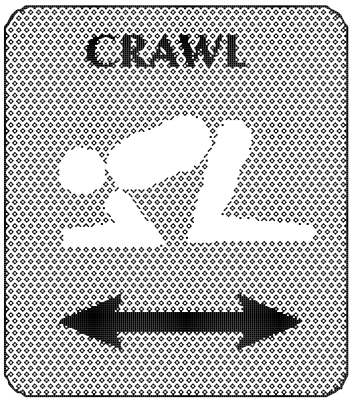
We can help children become more active by getting back to some motor skill basics. Every day children need to play those tried and true childhood games: "Ring Around the Rosy," "Duck, Duck, Goose," "Red Rover," and "The Farmer in the Dell." These games take just a few minutes and they need not interrupt already crammed schedules. In addition to the wholesome physical exercise, children learn social and cognitive skills from these games such as taking turns, right from left, and experiencing circles.

In the physical education class, the teacher should start with a basic warm-up. There should be long, slow stretches, reaches, twists, and turns. The teacher might assign carpet squares, already laid out on the floor, to each child. The general rule is that the child must remain on the square for the warm-up. This gives the teacher control and the square becomes a clearly defined space for the child.

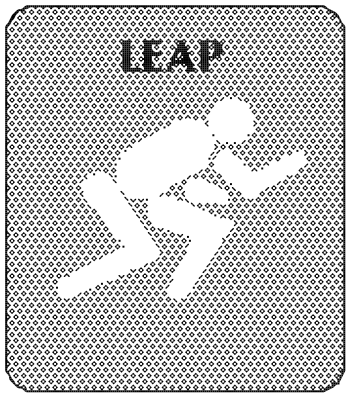
The next step is to teach the basic movements. Crawling is first. It is amazing the number of three- and four-year-olds who cannot do this basic movement. In crawling children must remain on their knees; they may not rise to their feet. The teacher can then set up an obstacle type course using a simple rope path. A little imagination in setting up the path helps. Have the children crawl under, over, and between

> *Children in America may be in the worst shape ever.*

things in the classroom. This can become the physical education program for an entire week, where each day finds a variation in the course. Such an activity can be done many more times during the school year. A fun variation is to have the children crawl on their tummies "next to" the rope. All movements should be done first forward, which is conventional, then sideways and backwards, always remembering to go sideways to the left and right, thereby helping children understand laterality.



After crawling, the next activities can move on to hopping (a short leap on one leg), jumping (two legs work together), and leaping (jumping from one leg to another). Again, the teacher can make pathways using ropes, carpet squares, hula hoops, or other markers for the children to follow. The class can be divided into groups of no more than five children to follow the pathways that have been set up. Each group should have the opportunity to follow every one of the different pathways.

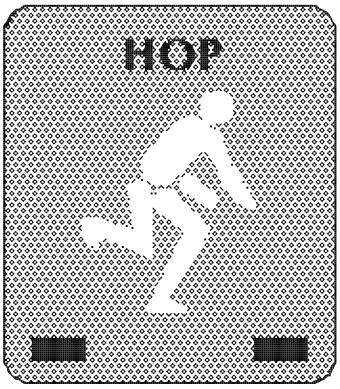


Bean bags develop coordination, teach left from right, over and under, and balance. Small groups of children can do individual activities. One group can be balancing bean bags on different body parts while another can be tossing the bean bags into a milk crate or box. It is very important that the children be encouraged to do each activity with both their right and left hands and right and left feet. This again reinforces the understanding of laterality.

Hula hoops can be used to make pathways to follow, but they also can be used alone as a teaching unit. Children can walk in confined circles to the left and right. The child's right foot should be in and the left foot out. Then reverse it. Children can also step in and step out, or they can hop, jump, and leap in and out, taking turns with the left and right sides.

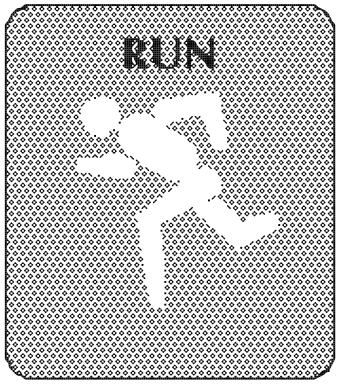
Balls are useful and fun for the children. Different types and sizes of balls,

like foam balls, little super balls, playground balls, and a large 36-inch ball are all useful in this program. This—pardon the pun—will give you well-rounded program. Balls can be handed around in a circle, back and forth between partners, or gently tossed into containers.



The teacher needs to avoid long waits in line with three- and four-year-olds. Preschool children have attention spans from 30 seconds to three minutes and waiting in line quickly uses up this attention span. A program that takes too long to set up and explain loses the children's attention almost immediately. Therefore, a preschool program should be simple, direct, and quick-moving. The use of stations for the activities described above decreases the amount of waiting immensely. Correctly set up stations are specific areas with specific activities for the children to accomplish in a specific amount of time. When they are finished, they move on.

The children under the direction of the teacher begin the task in the area to which they are assigned. After three minutes the children are told to "Stop, pick up your equipment (which means no more movement), put your equipment away," and "rotate" (which means that they are to move in an orderly manner to the next predetermined station). Each station contains one activity with which the children are already familiar. No more than three children should be at each station. This eliminates waiting. Children can help each other and quickly get to their turn. Each station can have the identical skill as the previous one until the children develop other skills. The teacher can be at one station where a new skill is introduced. This skill can then be added into the rotation the next time physical education is scheduled. New skills can also be introduced in circle games.



The use of rebus pictures can help the children to "read" their instructions at each station. Some of these pictures are included in this article.

Those who would like further information on this type of physical education program for preschool children should contact the author.

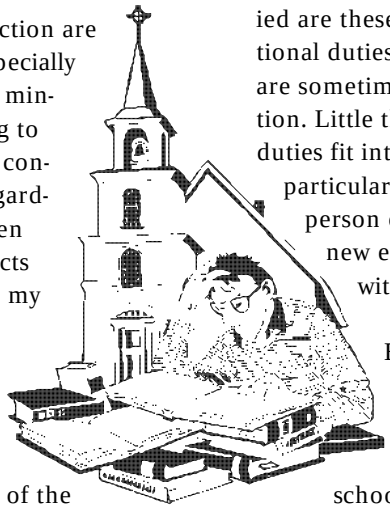
Jodie Schommer serves as teacher and director of Bethlehem/St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool in Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin.

A Retrospect on the Elementary School Principalship

William A. Pekrul

Looking back

Retrospect and reflection are beneficial activities, especially in regard to the public ministry. I am not referring to longing regrets, but to constructive evaluation regarding where you have been and how the past impacts the present. Currently, my ministry is in an area Lutheran high school, but for ten years I was a principal in a Lutheran elementary school. My perspective of the principalship definitely changed during the fifteen years since I graduated from Dr. Martin Luther College. When I left the elementary school principalship, I had a chance to think about these changed views and to ponder what previously had been only fleeting thoughts in a hurried existence.



The ministry of the principalship is one of constant balance and management. Balance is necessary to maintain a personal and professional wellness within the many demands of family, congregation, and school. Management skills attempt to divide productive time among the varied responsibilities in these areas.

The office of a Lutheran elementary school principal offers many opportunities for service. So numerous and varied are these opportunities that additional duties and expanded challenges are sometimes accepted without evaluation. Little thought is given to how new duties fit into the scope of a person's particular ministry, nor does that person often reflect on how these new endeavors will be managed with other existing activities.

Balance and management: administration

With so many areas of need in the elementary school principal's office, the principal must ask these questions: Is this need something that should be addressed now, or can it be handled later? Should I accept this as my responsibility, or should I delegate it to someone else? Is this something that falls within the focus of my ministry as principal, or by doing this am I creating an overlap within the functions of this congregation's overall ministry?

These questions, and often quick decisions, come many times a day. The principal may find himself in a very deep quandary when he has to make these decisions alone, without the guidance of those around him, the governing board of the school, or the congregation in general. He could encounter difficulty in reaching a decision because

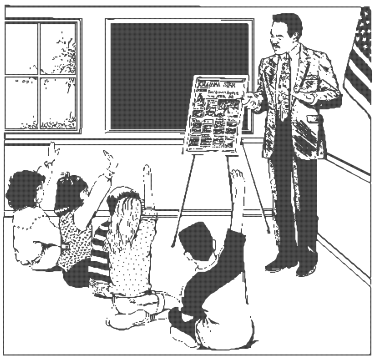
accepting the responsibility must be balanced with an already full agenda, but to reject the task may seem self-serving.

Obviously, all the decisions a principal must make cannot be handled by a board's policy statement. But without a clear delineation of ministry responsibilities, these added undertakings can add up to a daily existence that feels more like a burden than a joy.

Balance and management: teaching

Apart from the many responsibilities of the principal's office, the majority of elementary school administrators are also full-time teachers. This added dimension creates another area for service and, in turn, presents more decisions which must be made. The principal must balance these two aspects of his particular ministry and he needs to decide where energies and personal attention should be focused. Once that decision is made, he must manage carefully to give proper attention to the identified priority. But, how to decide? How to prioritize?

Before school, when a student's personal problem could use the principal's attention and a parent asks to talk about a particular classroom, who gets the principal's time? During a lesson, when a visitor comes to the classroom door with an immediate concern, who gets the attention? At the end of the day, when the classroom needs to be cleaned up, papers are waiting to be corrected, and a teacher wants to talk about the frustrations of the day, what choice will be made? The day is waning, and if the principal is partial to his administrative responsibilities, he chooses to serve the parent, the visitor, and the fellow teacher. Now, as the sun sets, some of those tasks that were put aside have not gone away, and the balancing act is now shifted to school and home.



Balance and management: family

All teachers bring school work home, but when correction and preparation time is filled with administrative interruptions, that school work impacts family and personal time to an even greater extent. The principal/teacher /father is faced with more decisions: Play with the children or correct papers. Take care of home maintenance or do lesson plans. Do daily exercise for personal fitness or read a classroom novel. Throw into all that the phone calls at home about school administrative concerns and the day is complete. The principal feels that much needs to be done but he hasn't the necessary time. Even those responsibilities that he has time for sometime end up half done. If the administrative agenda is miraculously completed, the completion comes at a cost. The personal and family aspects of the principal's life pay the price.

Communication

In retrospect, I would not presume to offer hard and fast solutions to this multi-faceted situation. However, one basic activity can be the first step on the road to change: communication.

First and foremost, the principal needs to communicate regularly with our gracious Lord and Savior through Scripture and prayer. He needs to listen to what God says to him in his Word, and he must be open about his concerns and needs to our caring Good Shepherd. Regular, personal Bible study and prayer open the door to answers and a God-directed perspective that ease the burdens of daily frustrations.

If the principal has a family, he cannot neglect to listen to their needs and also to be attentive to his personal responsibilities as a husband, father, and friend. The family sends loud, clear messages in a variety of ways if the father is actively trying to hear them. But time needs to be reserved for that family communication. Deep, heart-felt answers don't come from a quick info-byte moment of "How are you doing?" Unhurried activities that allow for meaningful conversation are essential. In those conversations, the principal/father/husband also needs to fill in the family on his schedule and personal challenges so they can be supportive. They can't understand what they don't know.

Within-school communication is also important. The principal needs to realize that only so much can be done with available resources. Being realistic about what can be done with existing time, staff, and funds is not only healthy, but it is a prerequisite to personal overall wellness.

That realization may not be possible alone. This is where the board of education comes in. There must be regular and honest communication with that governing body so they know what the situation is in the principal's life and work. Instead of making the priority determinations himself, he needs to allow the board to see the choices he commonly has to make and ask them what they would have him do.

It may be that they are unaware of the myriad of tasks that make up the principal's day, and the balancing and management that he is trying to accomplish alone. He also needs to be honest with the board concerning his capabilities as they relate to his personal life, his teaching, and his administration. He is an administrator. He administers policies and procedures cooperatively determined by the congregation through this governing board. When the principal does what he can to make the board well-informed, the board may not decide as he would have decided, but the decisions will be knowledgeable ones. Furthermore, the stage has been set for ongoing evaluations and adjustments.

High school and the elementary school

I am now in a high school setting. When I was an elementary school teacher, I viewed secondary teaching as being less demanding. The sheer number of duties required in the grade

school seemed to eclipse the "limited" chores of my high school comrades.

I have since discovered that it is a different type of teaching ministry, not easier, not harder, but different. I teach six sections of classes and I am involved with drama, publications, and other extracurriculars. My teaching does not include the many preparations necessary in the elementary school, but I leave school just as tired as before. A large amount of energy is expended teaching in-depth material to maturing teens, even within one specific subject area. The intensity of teaching high school students is a fair trade for the quantity of activities in the elementary school.

> *"First and foremost, the principal needs to communicate regularly with our gracious Lord and Savior through Scripture and prayer."*

One aspect of the high school teaching environment I enjoy is the focused, manageable scope of my ministry. Opportunities still exist for further service in a variety of areas, but the parameters of my primary responsibility are defined clearly. A clearly defined, manageable teaching ministry is one that would be beneficial for anyone in our schools.

Conclusion

Somewhere, the idea was forged that to be a truly dedicated teacher or principal you need to live on the edge of your frustration level. Our ministry is one of service, and we all want to serve in so many areas that to decline possible opportunities seems close to heresy.

Productivity does increase within realistic areas of responsibility, but the overall attitude of one serving in the ministry can be damaged by a schedule that does not allow adequate time for professional and personal pursuits. To some people these multiple responsibilities may seem unattainable, but the first step is to communicate. Communicate to our heavenly Father who knows and cares for all our needs, and then, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, communicate with others. Our goal is not for personal gain, but to increase effective work within his vineyard to his glory. My prayers are with all you as you pursue continued communication toward a more productive ministry.

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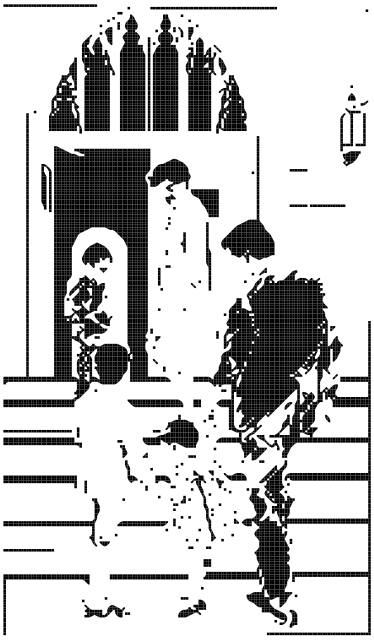
From Infancy

Arnold J. Koelpin

AND HOW FROM INFANCY you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Ti. 3:15)

This is a familiar passage to most of us. Our catechism teacher used it to explain the uniqueness and greatness of the Bible. Together with the words that follow, this Scripture passage turns back on itself to explain the very nature of the Scriptures as the holy and inspired Word of God.

And right there Satan lays a trap for us. He would like us to become biblicists to whom the Bible becomes a mere icon and idol. Like the Israelites of old who ran the precious ark of the covenant into battle, expecting the mere presence of the ark to be a magic box for victory—and they lost, we can turn the Bible into a paper pope, a code book for right living, and lose the real sense for which God inspired his Word.



For we do not live by being moral, by the knowledge and observance of God's law. Nor do we live by religion, by lofty experiences of the divine and an awareness of the mysteries of God. We live dear reader by the forgiveness of sins. And that faith rests squarely on the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said of the Scriptures. "They are they which testify of me."

When St. Paul, veteran preacher, writes to Timothy, a young colleague in the ministry, the full emphasis of his counsel lies on the Holy Scripture as a vehicle of the gospel. "From infancy, Timothy, you have learned the Bible, the Torah and the prophets, which are able to make you wise in this respect—for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." No paper pope those scrolls, but the living, breathing dynamic of God himself going into action on our behalf. That

Bible is all sufficient for our faith, and for our life of faith.

The veteran Paul understood what his countryman Simeon understood when the aged seer cradled the infant Jesus in his arms and said, "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel." Simeon knew his Bible. It was not a set of principles that some itinerant philosopher passes by us to flatter our intellect, to excite our emotions, or to strengthen our will. The Bible puts our whole person face to face with God, under the veil of inspired words, so that we might know that truth is not divorced from the person of God, from that little baby whom Simeon held in his arms.

When Jesus said. "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the truth and the life," he was saying a mouthful. God laid himself down in the cradle of history, in the swaddling clothes of words, so that we could take him. What this means is that God comes to us in the preaching of his Word and that Word is decisive in our life, as it is in the lives of every tribe, nation, and people who walk this earth.

God judged the world in Christ—fairly and righteously. For the cross is not glorious. It is an instrument of torture and death. It is condemnation. And as we look at Jesus with our natural eyes as one stricken and smitten by God, we cannot stand the sight and we hide, as it were, our eyes from him.

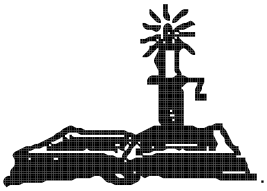
Why? Because in the cross, God took our pants down, and we stand before him naked and exposed. What happened there to this righteous and innocent Son of Man reflects with graphic vividness what is to happen to us. The cross is the ultimate preachment of God's anger over sin. In it God exposes the root sin out of which all the fruit sins, like disobedience, sexual impurity, pride, and selfishness grow. The root sin is our total separation from God from birth. Devoid of all true fear and faith in him, we are turned back upon ourselves and, try as we may, cannot keep the royal law of love.

But what our natural eye cannot see in Jesus' cross because of sin, the eye of faith does see. By the Spirit of the living God, we can see that Jesus' cross is our salvation—that his death is our life, that his obedience is our rescue. The wisdom of the cross is simply this: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

So you want to be a minister, Timothy, John, Renee, Mary? Then learn to know God. Learn to know him from the Scriptures which put you face to face with God. This is the victory that overcomes the world, its problems, its evils—even our faith. And don't forget to tell the world about it.

Dear God, keep us in this faith until our end.

Arnold Koelpin teaches in the religion and social studies divisions at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.



A Philosophy of Christian Special Education

Special Education Committee

"WHAT IS UNIQUE about special education in WELS schools?" The answer requires us to look at special education and ask what distinguishes special education from regular education in our WELS schools, and what distinguishes special education in our WELS schools from that in public schools. This document has been prepared to address these issues and to help us celebrate the ministry which is the heart of all education, special or regular, in WELS. The continuity of mission as we serve all our students is something for which we continually thank our God.

Philosophy of Christian "Special" Education

Christ in his life here on earth, showed great concern and love for children. He called the children to come to him. He even told his disciples to make sure they would come to him so he could bestow on them his blessing. Through the apostle Paul he also spoke of how vital all of his people are, regardless of the special gifts they may have, even calling those who need special treatment "indispensable" to his kingdom (1 Co 12). As Christians, we attempt to meet the uniqueness of each member of Christ's flock by providing appropriate services. To that end, the mission of Christian special education would be

> to teach students with special learning needs and styles in a Christian environment in which they can grow spiritually, intellectually, socially, physically, and emotionally to ultimately reach their fullest potential so they can join the Psalmist and say, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Ps 139:14).

Principles

- *God has made every person in his or her own fashion.*

We recognize and accept that each individual has differing gifts and abilities. Each individual brings a unique set of needs to the learning environment every day. Uniqueness is not something which gives rankings of importance, but expresses God's wisdom in making each individual in the best way to give the greatest glory to him. It is the wonderful array of differences which reveals the glory of the body of Christ.

The children God has given us are redeemed children of God, and should

be provided with a Christ-centered educational program which meets their individual needs. Not all children learn at the same rate, nor do they learn in the same way. A knowledgeable awareness and practical sensibility of these facts suggests the implementation of strategies and programs which will enable children with special needs to make the best use of these various gifts. God allows us the privilege of working with indispensable members of his kingdom. The uniqueness of each individual is expressed in the words of Job:

> Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? You gave me life and showed me kindness and in your providence watched over my spirit (Job 10:10-12).

- *There needs to be a plan for delivery of services to God's special people.*

The planned educational program should be committed to providing each child with appropriate educational opportunities. Normally this means providing each child with a modified educational program in the regular classroom with the regular teacher. In some cases, however, additional services beyond the regular classroom may be necessary.

- *Special resources must work cooperately with the classroom teacher*

The classroom may need additional support personnel to deliver the necessary services to meet the special needs of each individual. Members of the educational team develop educational programs encouraging children with special needs to learn through the areas they have in common with their peers, while providing extra support in the areas of deficiency or expanded opportunity in areas of giftedness.

The program may provide a setting outside the classroom where individual counseling, testing, tutoring, or enrichment would take place. Educational mainstreaming and an outside setting such as a resource room, are to be partners in the educational process. This partnership connects special education teachers, the child, and regular teachers in a joint effort to provide optimal educational experiences.

> *"Uniqueness is the wonderful array of differences which reveals the glory of the body of Christ."*

The degree to which the child is provided services outside the regular classroom is determined by all of the personnel involved.

- *Each child needs to develop to his or her fullest potential.*

A strong program will help each child recognize and respect his or her

own God-given talents. An attempt would be made to instill a deeper and more accurate understanding of who they are and assist them in achieving their place in God's Kingdom of Grace and their place in society. For this to happen all of God's children want to appreciate and use their gifts to the fullest. All of God's children also have obstacles to overcome that they might be faithful stewards of God's gifts (cf Matthew 25:14-30, the parable of the talents).

For the challenged student some of the obstacles which must be confronted are sin, poor study skills, unique learning styles, health problems, poor personal habits such as eating and sleeping patterns, poor self concept, and limited academic gifts. For the gifted and talented student some of the obstacles which must be confronted are sin, feelings of ostracism, feelings of being different, poor self concept, boredom, and the pressure to excel. In our ministry to both groups of students we need to assess what the obstacles are for each individual student and develop a plan to help that child succeed.

With a view toward preparing the student with special needs for successful integration into the church community and the community at large, an emphasis is put on developing the child in a multidimensional way: spiritually, intellectually, socially, physically, and emotionally. In conjunction with educating the unique individual, all of the involved communities need to be educated in the topic of diversity.

- *The center of responsibility for the nurturing of the child rests with the parents.*

Parents with a child who has special needs are met with unique challenges; still God has given the primary responsibility for the nurturing of the child to parents. Therefore, parents need to take an active roll in the education of their child. Expectations for parents are high as they

1) worship with the child to provide the child with a Christ-centered and prayer-filled spiritual life;
2) encourage their child when the trials of life are hard;
3) cooperate with the educational systems in place;
4) assume the financial obligations;
5) initiate and cooperate in the multidisciplinary evaluation and subsequent programs and reevaluations.

Christian educators can be very instrumental in helping parents with these tasks. They are privileged to assist the parent in a cooperative effort bringing up the child in the fear and instruction of the Lord.

> Psalm 145:3,4 Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.
>
> Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

The Special Education Committee is an ad hoc committee appointed by the WELS Commission on Parish Schools. Its members are Pastor Wayne Fischer, Prof. Alan Spurgin, Mr. Daryl Hanneman, Rebecca Lohrmann, Administrator Daniel Schmeling.

REVIEWS

Friedrich, Elizabeth; Shirley Morgenthaler, Eileen Ritter, Jane Wilke. *Good News for Kids; Series A.* St. Louis: CPH, 1995.

This devotion book is part of a series for use with children in grades kindergarten through fourth. The format of the book has five sections: a Bible text, a visual aid suggestion, the gospel truth of the devotion, the devotion itself, and a prayer.

The gospel truth provides a focus for the devotion. The visual aids would also help hold the children's attention and teach the truth of the devotion. The devotions are written so that the children will become very involved in the devotion, perhaps too much so for some teachers. The Bible text is carefully and thoroughly discussed in the devotion. The law and gospel are also presented in each devotion, although at times the good news comes in only briefly at the end of the devotion. Overall, this could be a very useful devotion book for our Lutheran schools. (AEL)

Grube, Edward C. *Object Lessons: Old Testament–Series A.* St. Louis: CPH, 1995.

(Note: This text is part of a series of three devotions books—Series A, Series B, and Series C, all on the Old Testament readings for the Three Year Lectionary. This review discusses Series A.)

Sometimes a decision about whether to purchase a particular book of classroom devotions can be made by examining the individual parts, rather than looking at the whole book. Unfortunately, this reviewer believes the whole is less than the sum of the parts in the case of this book of devotions. Some of the devotions are very well written, using law and gospel clearly presented. In addition, the text of the devotion makes good points which can be used for a discussion of the devotion. However, many selections are not of such high quality. In some cases the law and gospel is more often than not vague or obscure. Let's look at a particular devotion.

"Taking Out the Trash," a devotion written for the third to last Sunday in the church year, is a very good example of the best and worst. The devotion uses the text from Job 14:1-17 in which Job describes the miserable condition of mankind and how his sins are sealed in a bag. The devotion then makes an analogy with Jesus. Jesus takes out the trash (our sins) and thus earns the title, "the holy trash man." Giving Jesus such a title will probably shock some and perhaps offend a few. But if you can get beyond being upset with the comparison, there lies a very good point for discussion and reflection. Our sins are trash and garbage and Jesus does away with them. The devotion also comments on how depressing the text from Job is and maybe these pages of the Bible should be cut out and thrown away. Again, this may be offensive to some, but it is an effective attention getter and discussion generator.

The format of this devotion book is

divided into readings for each Sunday of the church year. For those who want to follow the church year this book would be a plus. Each devotion contains suggestions for a visual aid. (The devotion described above for Job suggests a plastic garbage bag.) These suggestions for visual aids remind the user of the importance of such aids in teaching. The book would serve as a good resource for teaching aids. The readings are moderate in length, easy to understand for children in primary or intermediate grades, and all conclude with a prayer.

Overall the quality of the individual selections is uneven. Some seem bland; some are engaging. Some have a clear presentation of law and gospel; some seem obscure. Teachers, before they use any devotion in their classrooms, should carefully read the devotion and adapt for their circumstances. With that advice, this devotion book would be useful in our schools. The importance of this devotion book lies not in what it says but in how it makes its audience think. And that can make a good devotion. (JHB)

Kremer, Reynold R. *A Time to Search: Fifty-Eight Topical Devotions.* Milwaukee, WI: Kremer Publications, 1994.

Concerned that his upper-grade students were not attentive during traditional devotional readings, the author decided to try a different approach to devotions. His concern resulted in the writing and publishing of this work. There are two volumes of topical devotions, the "Turquoise Book" and the "Burgundy Book." Each contains fifty-eight devotions; both are identical in format.

The format of these volumes is that of a Bible study. Each topic is organized into six sections as follows:

1. Topic and definition: the topic is listed and defined with a short phrase.
2. Search it out!: a series of Scripture passages that deal directly with the topic.
3. What this means to me!: the student's own application together with suggestions for teacher guidance.
4. See it happen!: a Bible story on the topic; the author suggests that this Bible story might well be used for the afternoon devotion.
5. Now you know!: unusual Bible facts related to the topic.
6. Work with it!: independent study in which the students answer a question that could be the basis for a subsequent discussion.

The topics in these two volumes cover many facets of Christian faith and life. A number of the topics focus on justification through Christ's work of redemption. A larger number of topics focus on aspects of Christian life of sanctification. Because the studies are quite brief, one might be concerned about having children develop an overly simple understanding of the topic and "pat" answers to rather difficult and complex questions. The gospel message will come through in many of the topics only if the teacher makes an effort to bring it into the discussion.

The topics are independent of each other rather than sequenced. Teachers should find this arrangement helpful because they can select only the topics they would like to use. Although the volumes are intended for use in grades six through eight, some of the topics seem better suited to more mature

groups such as high school students. However, because the author strongly suggests that each student should have a copy of the worktext, all students would have access to all the topics.

Overall, teachers should find that these volumes offer an interesting and varied approach for helping their students learn what God's Word says and how it may apply to their lives.

Even though the author identifies these Bible studies as devotions, he acknowledges that they depart form the traditional format of devotions. Devotions as they have been typically conducted in our Lutheran elementary schools provide opportunity for students to hear what God has to say to them, to praise and thank God, and to offer their prayers and petitions to him. From that perspective the topics in *A Time to Search* are not devotions but Bible studies. This does not detract from the value that students may derive from using them, but is only a matter of how they should be identified.

A mother with a daughter in a Lutheran school which used these books had some observations on their use. Each student in her daughter's fifth and sixth grade classroom had a copy of the book. The devotion/Bible study was used over a period of two days. The children would look up passages and answer the questions (parts one and two above) on the first day and do parts three through six on the second day. This mother, who is also a teacher, felt the study of the Bible passages was good and she herself would use the book at this grade level, alternating it with a more traditional type of devotion book. (HLW)

Reviewers: Anne Lauersdorf, Jeff Bischoff, Howard Wessel