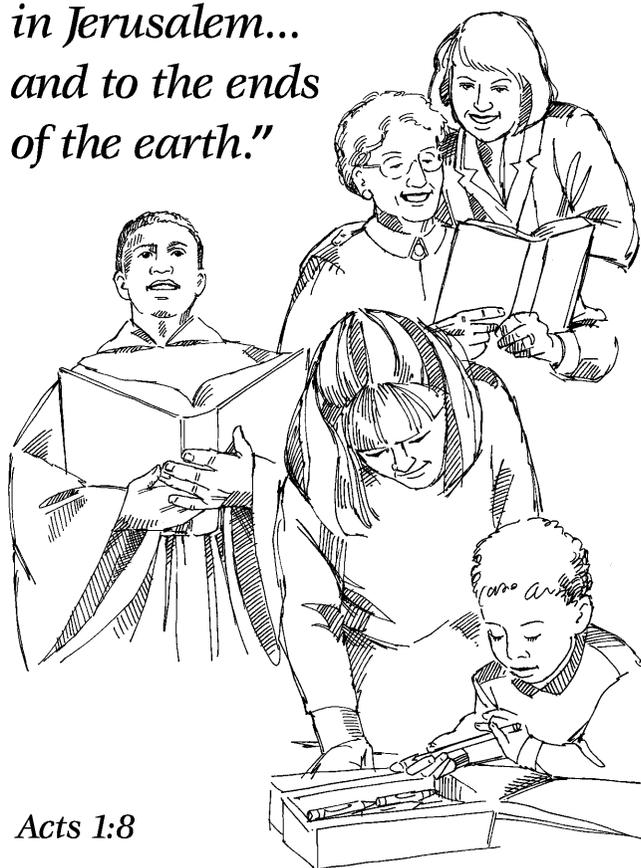


VOLUME 42
NUMBER 4
MAY 2002

The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal

*"You will be my witnesses
in Jerusalem...
and to the ends
of the earth."*



Acts 1:8

The Lutheran Educator

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

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VOLUME 42

NUMBER 4

MAY 2002

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Editorial correspondence and articles should be sent to *The Lutheran Educator*, Editor, Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Court, New Ulm, MN 56073. Phone 507/354-8221. Fax 507/354-8225. e-mail: lutheraneducator@mlc-wels.edu

The Lutheran Educator (ISSN 0458-4988) is published four times a year in October, December, February, and May by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-3284. Periodical Postage Paid at Milwaukee, WI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Educator*, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-3284.

Rates: One year—USA/\$8.00—single copy/\$2.00. Canada/\$8.56—single copy/\$2.14. All other countries—air mail \$16.00; surface mail \$13.00. Postage included, payable in advance to Northwestern Publishing House. Write for multi-year rates. For single issue only, Wisconsin residents add 5% sales tax, Milwaukee County residents add 5.6% tax.

Subscription Services Information

1-800-662-6093 (Milwaukee area 414/475-6600), or direct dial 414/614-5120 or 414/614-5160 or write Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284.

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A Matter of Choice

Time can influence the choices people make. Each of us receives the same 24 hours a day, seven days per week. How will you be filling this time as the rigors of a school year draw to a close? Perhaps, you can't wait for the break in routine. You may find yourself at the end of a particularly challenging school year, eagerly counting the days till vacation begins, just thankful that you made it through. Or you may be experiencing an educational high, wishing for more time to spend with this particular group of children, celebrating their accomplishments. Whichever the case, summer vacation provides a chance to reflect on the year—its challenges and successes and the choices that you made.

Sometimes people need to take a step back before they can move forward. I think that's the case as teachers wind down one school year and begin considering the next. Take some time to reflect on what you enjoy about teaching. Educators often talk about the joys of teaching. What are your personal joys from this past year? What motivates you as a teacher? If the year was particularly stressful, you may need to recall what led you to this noble profession in the first place. Christian educators have the comfort of knowing that our teaching is more than a result of our intentions. We are called to serve in the place God sees best. Sometimes our sinful nature leads us to believe this eliminates choice. While God guides and leads, he doesn't force choices. The attitude with which we carry out our work involves a choice. Choices can become habits. We can choose to bemoan our present position, the location in which we live, the people we serve, or the colleagues with which we work. Or we can choose to approach our tasks as privileges, opportunities to serve.

Intentionality has been recognized as a principle that motivates great teachers. Even the secular world of education realizes that teachers who choose to teach are going to convey that attitude in their classrooms. The authors of *FISH! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results* state, "There is always a choice about the way in which you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself."

As you reflect on the past school year, think about the choices you made. We can't plan for every event but we can choose our reactions. May all our choices reflect God's love as people called to serve.

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Lundin, S.C., Paull, H., & Christensen, J. *FISH! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*. New York: Hyperion. 2000.

Go to Judah

Earle Treptow



If you're looking for something to put on the "Stay in Moab" list, keep in mind that, to this point, Ruth has lived all her years in Moab. She knows the way things work there; she's comfortable there; her roots are there; her support network

It was time to make a decision. This was no chocolate-or-vanilla-ice-cream-today decision. This was a big decision. A life-altering decision. In a short period of time, Ruth had to make up her mind. Should she stay or should she go? Should she stay in Moab or should she go with her mother-in-law to Judah? We don't know how she made her decision. I doubt that she flipped a coin or plucked petals from a daisy. Did she make some comparisons between staying and going, listing, in one column, reasons to stay in Moab, and, in another, reasons to go to Judah?

is there; her people are there. The land of Moab was generally more fertile than the land of Judah, and therefore far less prone to famine. If she stayed in Moab, she wouldn't have to do what Naomi and her husband had done: come running to Moab desperately seeking food. Put one mark in the "Stay in Moab" column.

Remember the origins of the people of Moab? Moab was the son born of the incestuous union between Lot and his eldest daughter. With that background, you can imagine that the people of Israel might not have held the Moabites

in very high regard. Add to that the fact that the Moabites had refused to let the people of Israel travel through their land on the King's Highway. Let's just say that the people in Judah probably wouldn't have been jumping up and down for joy that a Moabite woman would be living in their midst. Put another mark in the "Stay in Moab" column.

Ruth is, at this point, without a husband. Chances were, if she accompanied her mother-in-law to Judah, she wouldn't find a new husband. The men in Judah would not have come knocking on the door of a foreigner. With no husband, she would have no children and no family to call her own. If she wanted a husband and family, the decision was obvious. Stay put. Another mark in the "Stay in Moab" column.

Without a husband, Ruth would have to go into Judah with no obvious means of support. Her mother-in-law would be with her, that's true, but Naomi was in no position to protect and provide for Ruth. Going to Judah would mean going on welfare; it would mean relying on people other than her own to feed her. I don't know what "the Moabite dream" was, but one might venture the guess that being poverty-stricken and desperate for food wasn't it. The "Stay in Moab" column gets another mark.

Ruth certainly felt a sense of duty towards Naomi. But there was no need to feel such a sense of duty, because Naomi herself told Ruth and Orpah, in no uncertain terms, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home." Naomi wasn't simply saying what she was sup-

posed to say, what good etiquette bid her say; she really thought it would be better for Ruth to stay in Moab. When Ruth and Orpah promised to accompany her to Judah, Naomi argued strongly against it. "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? Return home, my daughters, I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them?" Even Naomi thought the answer was obvious. In good conscience, without any pangs of guilt, with her mother-in-law's full approval and encouragement, Ruth could stay in Moab. The "Stay in Moab" column grows longer.

One more thing. If Ruth decided to go to Judah, she would have to go with a mother-in-law who, at this point, was none too happy with life. Naomi's closing remark to her daughters-in-law indicated that she wouldn't be the most pleasant person to be around. Naomi said, "No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has gone out against me." Going to Judah would be no "Sunday picnic." Yet one more mark in the "Stay in Moab" column.

I'll grant that it's often easier for an outsider to decide what a person should do in a given situation, but this wasn't a difficult decision to make. We might call it a "no-brainer." What's interesting is that Ruth thought so, too. Only her

decision wasn't the one we would expect. She told Naomi, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." It didn't matter to Ruth how many things were stacked up in the "Stay in Moab" column. She was going to Judah. But why?

The fact that Ruth took an oath in the name of the Lord provides some insight into her decision. She had evidently come to know the Lord as God. We don't know how well-grounded she was in the faith at this point or how well-versed she was in Scripture, we just know that she had no interest in returning to the gods of Moab. She trusted the Lord and wanted to be in a place where the Lord was worshipped. Though she would still face temptation to worship false gods, she would at least free herself from societal pressure to worship an idol made by human hands. That's a pretty big mark in the "Go to Judah" column.

There was another thing that influenced Ruth's decision. You see, she didn't approach the question primarily from the standpoint of personal interest or benefit. Her main concern was not, "What makes the most sense for me or what will help me the most?" Her heart of faith asked an entirely different question, "How can I serve in this situation? How can I be of the most benefit to Naomi?" To Ruth, the answer was obvi-

ous. She could be of the most service to Naomi by going with her to Judah.

Here's a lesson for all of us. The guiding question for those who have been loved and served by Christ ought not be, "What's best for me?" but rather,

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Her heart of faith asked an entirely different question, "How can I serve in this situation?"

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"How can I serve in this situation?" Not, "What's going to bring me the most acclaim?" but rather, "How can I bring glory to God and be of benefit to my neighbor?" The sinful nature that clings to us holds a different opinion on the matter. "God wants you to be happy, right?" he says. "How can you be happy if you have to spend your time serving others? People are going to take advantage of you." That advice often carries the day, and we live then as if the world revolved around us, as if we were kings and queens who ought to be served.

How differently our Savior viewed things! He didn't come to be served, but to serve. And whom did he serve? His enemies. The ones who hated him. The ones who caused his death. Us.

Aren't you glad that he didn't ask, "What's best for me?" but rather, "How may I serve others?" Because he served us in life and death, we are righteous in God's sight and heirs of heaven. That changes everything. Because heaven awaits us, because God has served us better than anyone in this world could serve us, we don't have to be served, but can use our days to serve others.

If you're looking for an opportunity for service, to make a real difference on campus, let me give you this one piece of advice: Just open your eyes. Opportunities are everywhere. If you look at people and situations with the question, "How can I be of service in this situation?" you will find lots of ways to serve. Don't think that it's only service if people notice or if it's something

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Don't think that it's only service if people notice or if it's something out of the ordinary.

”

out of the ordinary. You offer an equally great service to God and neighbor by listening to a friend in time of trouble as you would by going to some far-off place, on some exotic mission, to

preach the gospel. The student who studies diligently and gets C's on his report card offers a service to God equal to that of the person who gives a million dollars to the church.

Some might think that the best service anyone could render is to preach the gospel. I don't want to dismiss the importance of announcing God's good news in Christ. However, when it is seen as the ultimate good work and of greater service to God and neighbor than anything else, we've gone too far. God regards every work done out of love for his name in accord with his word to be good. Open your eyes to see the great opportunities the Lord places before you to serve and thus offer works that you know are pleasing to God. So you can serve your Savior by doing the little things in life: helping a child swing a bat or do a math problem, faithfully preparing for the church service, assisting an elderly person cross the street. Just keep your eyes open and ask yourself the question, "How can I serve in this situation?" Brothers and sisters, who have been served by Christ, don't stay in Moab; go to Judah. ✠

Pastor Earle Treptow is the Director of Admission, pastoral track, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

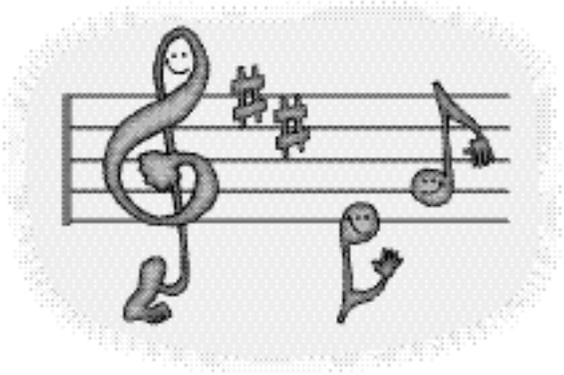
Solfege is Superb!

David Bauer

Our Synod's music curriculum, *Sing and Make Music*, is now complete in five levels. Level One is for pre-K and K, Level Two is for grades 1 and 2, Level Three is for grades 3 and 4, Level Four is for grades 5 and 6, and Level Five is for grades 7 and 8. This music series, authored by Dr. Edward Meyer, makes use of solfege (the *do, re, mi's*) in teaching children to sing and read music. Why was the decision made to make solfege the means by which singing and note reading would be taught?

I have used solfege extensively and am convinced that solfege is fantastic! My students learn music faster and better when they use solfege. They grow in their music-making skill through the usage of solfege. With greater musical skill, they also have an increasingly growing satisfaction in learning new songs. What is it that makes solfege such a great system for music education?

The success of solfege is very simple. Each note of the scale has one and only one syllable attached to it. For example, in the key of C, the note C is always *Do*; the note D is always *Re*, and so on.



There is always a one-to-one correspondence between each note and the syllable that is used to sing the note. As simple as it may seem, that one-to-one correspondence is the chief reason solfege works so amazingly well!

When the same note is always sung with the same syllable, the note begins to have a unique identity that becomes ingrained into the minds, voices, and ears of the students. By contrast, when a song is learned with text, the same pitch will often have a different word or syllable attached to it; there is no continual repetition and identical association between the note and the text that is used to sing the note. If a song is learned with the neutral syllable *la*, every note has the same text; the one-to-one relationship provided with solfege is not there.

But solfege does not succeed solely

Figure 1

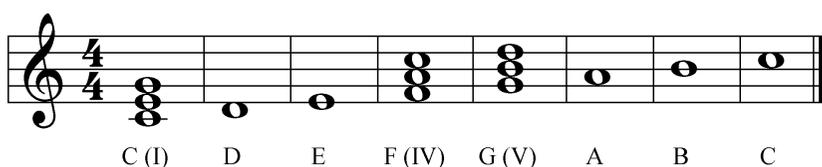


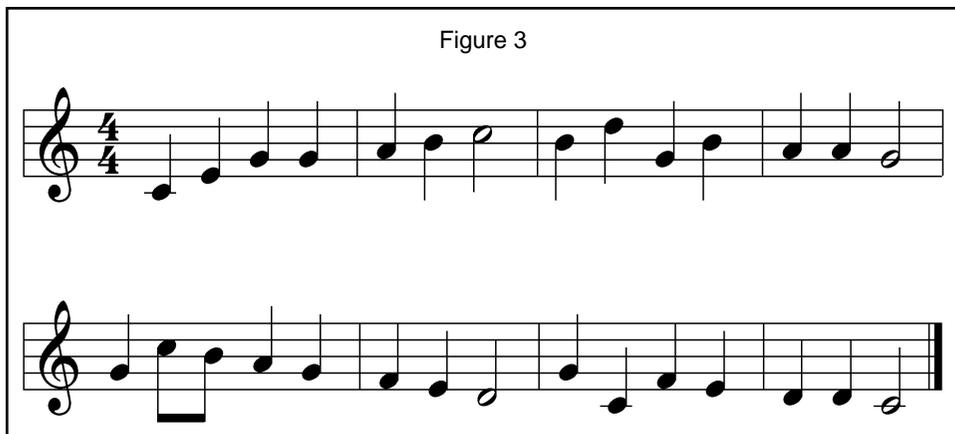
because of the one-to-one correlation between a given note and the syllable that is used to sing it. Melodies are not made up of random individual notes, but the notes are formed into patterns that are used over and over. Students who learn and sing with solfege not only learn to associate the correct syllable with the correct note, they also learn how to go from one note to the next because there are common patterns in tonal music that repeat themselves over and over within a song and from one song to another. With the usage of solfege, the patterns of the notes are ingrained into the singers because the “text” that is used to sing the notes, the do-re-mi’s, is also itself repeated by virtue of the one-to-one relationship

between notes and text. For example, in the key of C, the scale pattern “C-D-E-F-G” is very common. Every time this scale pattern is sung, the syllables will always be *Do-Re-Mi-Fa-So*. The eye, voice, and “text” all work together to secure this pattern into the minds and voices of the singers.

One of the most common patterns is the scale pattern, where succeeding notes are either one note up or one note down. Look at the melody of *Glory Be to Jesus*, CW 103 (Figure 1). Notice how often the notes go up or down one scale degree at a time. And if they don’t go up or down in the scale, they repeat the same note again. The only time the notes in this melody do not repeat or go up or down one at a time is from the

Figure 2





last note of the first line to the first note of the second line.

The second most common pattern of notes is a movement from note to note that uses the tones of the basic chords. For instance, in the key of C, the tonic chord is the C chord, which is made up of the notes C-E-G. The second most important chord is built on the fifth tone (the dominant tone) of the C scale, G. The notes of the G chord are G-B-D. The third most important chord is the one built on the fourth tone (the subdominant tone) of the C scale, which is the note F. This chord is made up of the notes F-A-C. These primary chords are shown on the C scale (Figure 2), built on the 1st, 4th and 5th tones of the C scale.

Consider the melody of CW 226 (Figure 3). The first three notes of the melody make up the C chord, C-E-G. The other notes of the first two measures are either repeated tones or scale movement. The first four notes of the third measure are the tones of the second most important chord in the key of

C, the G chord, made up of the tones G-B-D. An analysis of the rest of the melody notes shows that all tones proceed as repeated tones, scale passages, or jumps that make use of the notes of the C, G or F chords.

When children first begin learning songs in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, they do not have the musical knowledge or skills to learn songs using solfege. They learn many songs using the rote method. The teacher sings or plays a phrase of the song, and the children repeat it back. This continues phrase by phrase with the necessary repetitions, until the song is learned. This is a useful method, and it does have a valuable place in classroom music, especially in the lower grades. If done properly, it can also be an interesting way to learn music.

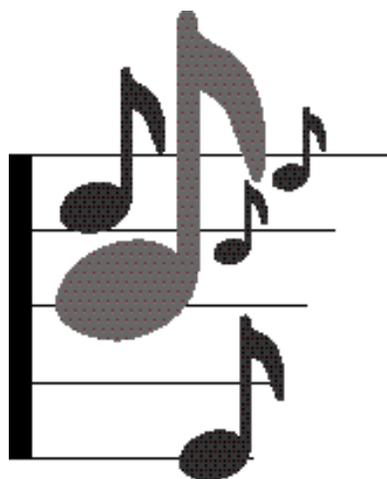
Far too often, though, this method continues as the only method used to learn songs through the middle and into the upper grades. Have you ever noticed a group of bored looking and acting middle or upper graders, when

being taught a song using the rote method? I certainly have, and it wasn't a rewarding sight! And neither words of scolding nor encouragement seemed to have any positive effect. The children continued to look and sing bored.

Part of this boredom stems from the continued usage of the rote method. As students progress in a subject area, they should be growing in their knowledge and skills from grade to grade. Unfortunately, this does not often happen in the area of music. The "baby" method of learning songs (rote) continues to be the only one used. Instead of engaging students in the learning process by using methodology that produces a growth in knowledge and skills, the teacher combs through stacks of sample songs, searching for those that will "wow" the kids. All too often, those songs that are instantly attractive are lacking in musical substance, not to mention often lacking in textual substance as well.

Now I can't promise you that using solfege will replace those looks of boredom with faces glowing with electric excitement when learning a new song. Experienced teachers know better than to believe that any gadget or gimmick or even solid methodology in education will produce guaranteed positive results every time. But I can promise you that consistently using solfege will make your students more skillful in their music making, and skillful music makers are more actively involved in the music making process. Students who are actively involved in any learning endeavor will be less bored with the process.

This past year I had my Junior Choir at St. Paul's in New Ulm learn an SAB setting of *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* by Peter Lutkin. This blessing was a staple of the choir repertoire at DMLC for many decades, alongside a version by Emil Backer. They also learned a catchy song for the same service. After the service, there were a number of students waiting for rides and I asked them which song they liked best. There were no exceptions; the Lutkin Blessing was the unanimous choice. The Lutkin was harder to learn; the Lutkin wasn't instantly catchy, but the Lutkin was much better music. Good music continues to satisfy; the catchy tune only has



surface appeal, it doesn't endure. These students were able to learn the Lutkin and learn it well because they had the knowledge and skills to do so; every note was learned with solfege, and the learning was not crammed into a desperately short amount of time.

A world-renowned director of children's choirs, John Bertalot, insists that

Figure 4



all of his young singers learn how to read music. Once a young intern questioned the time that Bertalot spent on this often painstaking activity of learning to read music. “Wouldn’t it be faster to just play the right notes for them (the rote method), and have them imitate them back?” he questioned. Bertalot asserted in reply, “It might be faster, but it wouldn’t be better.” When students first start using solfège, learning songs will almost certainly take longer than learning them by rote, but with patient and persistent use of solfège, their skill will grow and so will the pace with which they learn music.

If you haven’t been making use of solfège, how can you begin?

Solfège can be taught by including special “solfège exercises” in your music classes. *Sing and Make Music* includes carefully prepared exercises for this purpose. These can be especially valuable, because they are designed to present the syllables in a systematic way that ensures the easier combinations are practiced and mastered first, and the harder ones are gradually added in a logical and sequential fashion.

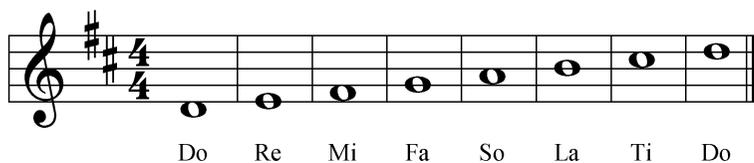
The first two syllables that are best to

start with are *So* dropping down to *Mi*. Wise music educators listened to young children sing on the playground, and discovered that the little melody above is a universal “classic” used by all children on playgrounds around the globe (Figure 4).

Do you notice that this little melody, with one exception, uses only the syllables *So* and *Mi*? Not surprisingly, *La* is the third syllable commonly introduced; *Do* comes later.

But not every song your class needs to learn for church or any other occasion conveniently restricts itself to those carefully sequenced groupings of syllable that your students are drilling and practicing in music class. My advice? Learn your church songs or other fun songs with syllables too! It may not result in a presentation of the syllables that is as neat and logical and sequential as the syllable exercises, but that’s OK! The musical leaders in your classroom will thrive on the challenge, and the rest will follow and catch on without any trouble. And every song you learn with solfège will little by little ingrain those scale and chord patterns into the minds, ears and voices of your students.

Figure 5



When you hand out a new song to be learned, have the students first write the syllables underneath each note. If the song is in the key of D, put the D scale on the board or overhead with the syllables underneath each note (Figure 5).

Then have the students add the syllables underneath each melody note. I use the computer to print out just the melody so they don't have any piano or harmony notes to ignore. Before the computer, I wrote out the notes on staff paper with a felt tipped pen.

Learn the melody first by singing only the syllables. Plan the songs the children need to learn for church or other occasions far enough in advance. Then the learning of the songs can proceed at a more leisurely pace that doesn't demand excessive nonstop drill. At the same time, work on memorizing the text, so that the text will be thoroughly memorized when the melody of the song is well learned with syllables. After both of these are in place, switch over to singing the song with the text. This is the time to hand out the published copies of the music. They will need a few times through to see how the text is associated with the notes, but it won't be long and the two will flow together. Since the text was memorized alongside

the learning of the melody and/or parts, the music soon will no longer be needed.

Follow the same procedure for learning an alto and/or a tenor part. Have everyone learn everyone else's part. Tenors would sing the Soprano and Alto parts an octave lower; Sopranos and Altos would sing the Tenor part an octave higher. Will singing other parts produce confusion? Emphatically no! The more they sing, the better singers they will become! Keeping everyone singing is a sneaky "choir management" technique, too!

By having the students write in the syllables, they will be doing something very wonderful and educational; they will be looking at the notes in an intelligent way! Eureka, they will be growing in their musical skills!

Solfege is superb! ♪

David Bauer teaches at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.



What it Means for a School Family when Special Needs Students are Included in WELS Schools

From a Principal's Perspective

Thomas Hering

Who makes up your school family? What is your school family's mission? Perhaps a brief look at these questions will help us focus more clearly on what it means to include special needs students in our WELS schools.

We are privileged to consider the members of our school families as more than co-workers, educators, learners, and encouragers. In fact, we view our school family members as more than good friends. We recognize one another as redeemed children of God and co-heirs of heaven. Regardless of our gifts and abilities, regardless of our experience level, regardless of our responsibilities and duties, regardless of our personalities and physical traits, and regardless of our geographical location, we all are citizens of God's kingdom, headed on the same path that leads to life eternal. All members of the school family, young and old, called and volunteer, full-time and part-time, make up Christ's body and live to grow in Christ's love, to praise our heavenly Father, and to serve one another using the gifts the

Spirit gives.

Who makes up your school family? Room parents, students, secretaries, pastors, board members, janitors, principals, classroom helpers, recess monitors, teachers, librarians, cafeteria workers, and others form your family. But remember, we are not merely co-workers, but co-heirs, equally in need of God's grace and forgiveness and equal recipients of the same.

What is your school family's mission? Your school likely shares the same mission statement that your congregation has adopted. It may include ideas similar to the church to which I belong, that is, *To Know*, *To Grow*, and *To Go*. How special it is that each member of the school family is privileged *To Know* the love of God the Father, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Your school provides a natural setting for its "family members" *To Grow* spiritually. What a blessing when co-heirs in classrooms strive *To Go* with God's message of salvation to others so that more may know and grow!

When the members of WELS school

families have a clear understanding of who they are and why they exist, they will more likely be able to experience and enjoy the blessings of including special needs children in the “school family.”

Special needs children are special gifts from God. Those who are privileged to serve them view them, first and foremost, as members of God’s family in need of spiritual care offered in the Law and gospel. The degree to which a school can serve their other needs (aca-

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Those who are privileged to serve special needs children view them, first and foremost, as members of God’s family in need of spiritual care offered in the Law and gospel.

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demic, emotional, social, and physical) becomes secondary.

To be sure, the secondary needs of our special school family members are important. Meeting these needs

requires prayer, persistence, patience, preparation, and possibly professional help. There may be times when the needs of a child may be beyond our school’s ability to adequately or properly serve them. How meaningful it is when we can!

We briefly state an obvious and important reason for including special needs children in our schools. These young lambs receive a daily diet of God’s Word. The Spirit uses that Word to strengthen their faith and to reassure them of the Savior’s great love for them.

When we consider what it means to include special needs children in our schools, we may naturally think that the children with special needs whom we serve are the ones who benefit the most. And certainly they may be the primary recipients of God’s blessings as they attend our schools. But so many others realize wonderful blessings as well.

For the sake of this article, special needs children are those children who require attention beyond a teacher’s normal preparation, presentation, and attention.

Perhaps this definition leads us to consider another blessing of including special needs children in our classrooms. Teachers will grow!

A conscientious teacher will learn more about his other special students’ needs. This may mean taking classes, attending workshops and seminars, and doing extra research and reading. A teacher may become more familiar with the types of assistance our synod offers. Numerous WELS organizations, commissions, committees, and resources

exist to serve teachers with special needs children. Teachers have many opportunities to grow in their knowledge of special education.

But teachers can also grow in other ways when they minister to special needs children.

The Lord has graciously granted the workers in our churches and schools many skills and abilities. When polls and interviews are conducted that request our membership to list our church body's greatest earthly strengths, respondents often list our gifted called workers among the top blessings. This is not a reason to boast. Rather, it is evidence of God's grace that he would allow called pastors, teachers, and staff ministers to serve him and his people.

There is no question that WELS teachers pray that God will help them faithfully use their gifts when serving the children in their classrooms. Teachers recognize that the Lord blesses them with different gifts and varying degrees of those gifts. Teachers also recognize that with God's help, they can grow in using their known gifts, and possibly discover new ones. To serve as effectively as possible, teachers will constantly pray that God would strengthen them in their areas of weakness and encourage them in their areas of strength.

For some teachers, compassion and mercy may be gifts that are naturally or easily employed. For others, they may need to stretch and grow in these areas.

If classmates treat a special needs child cruelly, the Lord may use this to help the teacher learn to be more com-

passionate. And the same could be said for other spiritual gifts such as love, patience, gentleness, and self-control. Without God's help, a teacher (and parent, for that matter) may find it impossible to practice such attributes when teaching and guiding special needs children. But with God's help, teachers can lavish them with large doses of love, practice patience and self-control, and nurture the precious lambs of Jesus.

A teacher privileged to serve special needs children will learn how to be more creative and flexible in his teaching and evaluation. She will better recognize how important it is to strive to meet the needs of each individual student. And as teachers serve more and more special needs students, they will become more effective at identifying other students who could benefit from special evaluations and instruction.

But teachers are not the only ones blessed by serving special needs children. Classmates learn more about Christ-like love and experience life changing lessons as they apply Christian truths with their special class members.

A little boy is prone to mini-seizures. The middle grade girl's vision is severely limited. An eighth grade boy is unable to walk without some type of help, such as a wheelchair, crutches, or a walker. The young autistic lad speaks out at unexpected times and communicates in a way that other students recognize as "different."

Let's first look at the boy with seizures. His classmates can be taught to recognize a seizure when it occurs and how to care for him and keep him safe

when it happens. Even first and second graders are able to provide this assistance. Through good communication from the school, the parents of the classmates can support and encourage their children to supply this help.

The young girl with limited vision needs some accommodations. A student partner can be a voice to explain what she cannot see on the chalkboard or overhead. Another classmate might be her special note taker or recorder of history notes and math problems. Classmates are typically eager to be useful helpers for someone with such a need.

A schedule can be developed where students take turns carrying the books, supplies, and lunch of the boy with a walking disability. His other needs can also be met by classmate involvement. Even recess activities might be modified or rotated to include him. With a little creativity and planning on the teacher's part and with gospel-motivated instruction and encouragement, students in all grades will respond to the boy's needs.

The "unusual" noises and unexpected utterances from the autistic lad might surprise a visitor to the classroom. But after further observation, the visitor is amazed to see how naturally the autistic boy's classmates accept his behavior. In fact, after watching for an extended length of time, the visitor is pleased to see how the classmates have actually "adopted" the young boy as their special friend. They don't just tolerate his behavior; they regard it as something that makes him special and treat him with tenderness and patience.

Many more examples could be cited of how students are blessed to be classmates of special needs children. They are blessed because they learn that "red and yellow, black and white, all (including special needs children) are precious in His sight." They learn that they can provide useful service to their precious classmates. They learn that fairness

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There is joy in the classroom where students can take turns being the helper for a challenged classmate.

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doesn't necessarily mean that all are treated the same. They learn that the application of God's Word is not just hearing or taking a look at what the Bible says, but doing, acting, responding, helping, befriending, defending, protecting.

A teacher's Bible lesson applications no longer need to be hypothetical. The rich love of Jesus shines through the words and actions of classmates to their "special" friends. How wonderful it is when students can regularly practice what God's Word teaches. "Do not merely listen to the Word... Do what it says." "Whatever you did for one of the

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least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Children are sometimes known to be cruel to other children whom they consider to be “different.” We all observed it. The arrows of name calling, jeering, and jokes are shot at anyone who isn’t considered “normal.”

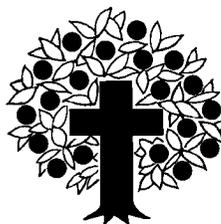
In our schools, students learn to rally around their special classmates. Experiencing Jesus’ caring love, our students surround their special friends with love, care, smiles, encouragement, and kindness. I have been privileged to witness students at all grade levels “adopt” special classmates with true love and understanding. It means a great deal to a school family to operate with a spirit of acceptance toward God’s special lambs. The children of that school may carry with them a life-long Christian attitude that doesn’t understand how others could actually make fun of children with differences!

“But defend him, speak well of him....” It is heart-warming to observe a junior high student befriend a special needs child. There is joy in the classroom where students can take turns being the helper for a challenged classmate. A tear trickles down the teacher’s face when she observes her charges, without being told, include a special student during recess. And not only do they include their friend in the game, they make sure that he or she is successful or wins. With guidance and gospel motivation from God’s Word, the entire student body includes the special students in their circle of friends and accepts them as “regulars.”

We could search further and explore deeper what it means for a school when special needs children are included. But let’s conclude by clearly stating the obvious, but important blessings. First, the members of a school family are led to evaluate who they are and why they exist. Second, the teachers grow in a variety of ways. Third, classmates benefit through the application of God’s truths, with their special friends. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, special needs children have the opportunity to bear God’s Word on a daily basis.

May the Lord richly bless your ministry to all those He places in your care and in your classrooms, especially to his special lambs with special needs. ✠

Tom Hering serves as principal and seventh and eighth grade teacher at Our Savior Lutheran School, Grafton, Wisconsin.



What it Means for a Family When Special Needs Children are Included in WELS Schools:

From a Parent's Perspective

Alison Wolf

Hearing the news, “We have a problem here. I think all tests point to the conclusion that your child has autism,” can be a devastating blow at first. Accepting the diagnosis, struggling with God, asking why, and lots of Scripture searching follows. Parents prayerfully will seek solace from our Lord and Savior first, but a natural by-product of seeking that solace in Christ is to seek help from the family’s church. From the church a family will speak to their pastor and seek support and understanding. Prayerfully this support will be found in an accepting pastor and in a church for all of Jesus’ lambs. As the child grows, there will be support services offered through the local county and public school system. These services (speech and occupational therapy as well as others) are valuable, but something is missing—Christ.

What it means for a family with a special needs child to have their child in a WELS school is to have that child hear about Christ throughout their school day. These special lambs, no matter what their diagnosis is, need more than anything else to gain a knowledge and



understanding of Jesus as their Savior (2 Pe 3:18).

The home is certainly the most important aspect of this training, but do our WELS schools sometimes too easily decide not to enroll these lambs? What our WELS teachers have to offer is the precious message of the gospel.

Parents of special needs children look to our WELS staffs for direction and help. Our WELS teachers do an excellent job of training and teaching students to have confidence in Christ and to stand firm in their faith. That confidence is exactly what makes a WELS school an excellent place for special needs students. The Christian training WELS teachers receive equip them to pray with parents, share Scripture with them, and work together to help the

special needs child. Many special needs students will need outside services that are usually offered in the public school, but there still can be a key role the WELS school can play. Public schools often have teachers who have special education backgrounds, but usually these are not the classroom teachers. Our WELS school can tap the resources public schools have to offer, while still educating the special needs child in the WELS classroom. It is at least a model

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Teaching students to have confidence in Christ is exactly what makes a WELS school an excellent place for special needs students.

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that should be considered.

Parents of special needs children often look ahead to see what their special child will be like in the future, what intervention they might have to try next, but the most important issue for them is their child's salvation. May our WELS teachers be empowered to share with enthusiasm and confidence their training in God's Word and know they are not limited in sharing that only with

regular functioning children.

Other important aspects our WELS schools offer special needs students are Christian discipline, peer modeling, and social interaction. These are all important aspects for any child, but critical to children who struggle with a disability. With many disabilities, there are behavioral problems as well as a lack of basic understanding of social cues and situations. What better place to model and teach these behaviors than in schools where Christ is the model for discipline, where the Golden Rule is not simply a catch phrase, where teasing is not tolerated, and true acceptance (acceptance in Christ) is encouraged. Special needs children tend to soak up negative behaviors much more quickly than “normal functioning” peers. This being the case, it is an answer to many prayers when Christian parents can rest assured that their children are being exposed to many positive experiences and behaviors; and, when they are not, those negative behaviors are being admonished in God's light.

What Christian parents of special needs students should offer to the WELS schools that accept their children is honesty, willingness to work at the school, respect for the teachers and their decisions, and, most of all, communication. Christian parents need to be proactive and help to educate the WELS teachers about their child and their diagnosis. Parents can share books and articles, have regular meetings, and, most of all, pray for the teachers. WELS teachers should recognize that parents of special needs children often problem

solve on their children's behalf, and therefore can be used as an excellent resource in the classroom. Parents and teachers working together in a cooperative effort will help the special needs child to succeed in the WELS school setting.

At times there will be struggles and problems, but again, what we as Christians have in Christ is the ability to at all times be "building each other up" (1 Th 5:11), as Christ wants us to do.

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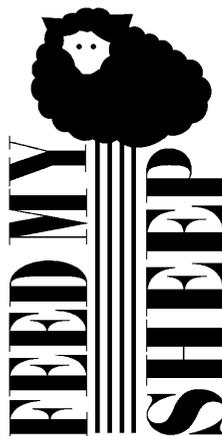
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These special needs students can have a tremendous positive impact on our WELS schools and congregations. Parents gain an entire family of believers who cheer for their special needs child's successes and pray with them over struggles and disappointments.

The body of Christ in WELS schools benefits greatly when special needs children are part of that school. When chil-

dren in our WELS schools are exposed to children with disabilities, they have an opportunity to practice their Christian love and acceptance. They have a chance to learn first hand about different gifts the Lord gives to his children, how we are all designed differently by God for a purpose. The learning and understanding that grows from the presence of these children can be phenomenal to observe and a real blessing to our schools. (1 Co 2:12-26). ✠

Alison Wolf and her husband, Steve, are parents of three boys; two with special needs. They are members of Our Savior Lutheran in Grafton, Wisconsin. All three of the Wolf children attend Our Savior School. One of the boys has classic autism, one has high functioning autism (Asperger's Syndrome), and one is normal functioning. Alison serves on the Commission for Parish School Special Education Committee and speaks to groups on autism. She also oversees a support group for parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.



Confessions of a Time Thief

Rachel L. Ohlendorf

Time. “Time is of the essence.” “What a waste of time!” “I don’t have time.” “Be on time!” As a student, I find myself very conscious of time. My days and nights are full of classes, homework, extra-curricular activities—and once in a while I actually eat or sleep!

With all this going on in my life, with every minute planned out precisely so I’ll be sure to get everything done on time, it seems impossible to even imagine being a writer while I’m a student. So where do I find the time to write? The answer lies in another tattered cliché: “take the time.” I take it. I steal time. I’ll confess right here and now: I am a time thief!

Being a time thief is an interesting life. It’s different from being a cat burglar or a bank-robber. I probably won’t be arrested or imprisoned for time theft. Why? Because I’m stealing time for myself from myself. It’s a little like the thief in *Superman III* (Warner Bros. 1983)—he steals a half a cent here and there, and pretty soon he’s got hundreds of thousands of dollars! I steal minutes—two here, ten there—and pretty soon I have hours of writing accomplished!

But stealing time isn’t easy; just like any other robbery, it takes planning and dedication. It means carrying pen and paper with me virtually everywhere (some day I plan to invent water-proof

paper so I can write in the shower). And it means maybe not getting a five-minute nap between classes, but writing instead.

Still, how much writing can I get done in five minutes, right? Well, I once wrote a 12-page short story just in the extra ten minutes I had before one class three days a week. It took me all semester, but I finished the story! Would I have written that story if I wasn’t stealing time? Nope.

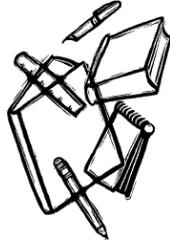
Every day I have opportunities to steal time. I finish lunch twelve minutes before my next class—aha! Time! My fiancé calls and says he’ll be a little late picking me up—more time! My homework doesn’t take as long as I thought it would—still more time! Sometimes it’s as simple as not watching a rerun of that 80s sitcom. Sometimes it’s as hard as saying, “No thanks, I don’t think I’ll run to the mall with you.”

I’m actually writing this article during stolen time—my last class let out early, so I’m stealing a few minutes quick before I run off to my next appointment. With just a few stolen minutes here and there, I’ve been able to give you a glimpse into the world of a time thief who is masquerading as a college student. And who knows? Maybe I’ve convinced you to be a time thief too. ❖

Rachel Ohlendorf is a student at Bethany Lutheran College. Her home is Taylorsville, North Carolina.

Teaching with Patterns of Poetry

Paul Willems



Humans experience various moods or emotions. Often it is difficult to communicate these emotions to others—the joy of a beautiful dawn or the sadness of personal failure. Only a few gifted prose writers produce tears or laughter as we read their works. Yet, teachers are placed in classrooms to communicate the human experience—the agony of war and the joy of discovery—as well as academic concepts. Teachers also need to express God’s Word, both law and gospel, clearly to students. Various techniques have been tried. Oral reading, role playing, video presentations, laboratory exercises, and story telling are effective ways to teach. But how about using poetry?

The concern of poetry has always been the expression of the human and divine experience in an emotional way. A poem paints a mental image of mood and concepts with words. To accomplish this, poetry uses patterns. These patterns include rhyme and rhythm, diction or word choices, narration and dramatic situation. Poems may even use

stanza patterns that appeal to our visual sense as well as to our hearing.

Poetry assumes a form distinctly different from prose. Many poems contain lines in which final words sound alike. This chime-like feature pleases our ears. Additional auditory enjoyment may be found when consonant, beginning sounds are repeated. This is called alliteration. Words that imitate their sound in onomatopoeia, such as *hum* and *clatter*, are also appealing

*Slowly sets the sun far across the hill.
Silently the shadows softly fill
Sage and swamp. And soon it’s very still.
It’s the silent season.*

from Winter

We expect poetic lines to contain rhythm or meter as specific syllables are accented or stressed in some recognizable pattern. The most common meter is the iambic foot. It contains an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. The very word, iambic, is in this pattern. A history lesson on Desert Storm may be illustrated by this meter

*With sudden will and filled with fury
bright
The Tomahawks light up the pitch dark
night
With flames and blasting. What an awe-
some sight.
Avenging angels borne on wings of death,
And slaughtering, they kill with every
breath.*

from Bright Night

The trochaic foot is the opposite meter of the iambic. It contains a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one. While not as common as the iambic foot, the trochaic meter finds wide use in poetry. You may employ this pattern in a science lesson.

*Planes are flying,
Atoms splitting with a blast.
Men are crying,
Women sighing, for at last
We have harnessed energy.*

from It(s) Work(s)

The rising meter of the anapest rhythm has two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed ending. This produces a poem with a light, swift touch. When accompanied by an unexpected ending, it is a joy to read and hear. A language arts lesson may begin with such a poem.

*See how pictures of relatives stand on the
shelf.
Note that each one is different. All are
unique.*

*They appear to reflect some small way on
myself.
If I contemplate history. My dreams may
come true.
They're my heritage vista. Descendants —
so few.
But I dust them and they are forgotten.
I'm through!*

from Dusting Pictures.

The least frequently used rhythm in western poetry is the dactylic foot. Its falling meter conveys the emotion of melancholy and foreboding. We like happy endings, but this darker emotion is also a part of human experience. A writing assignment may use Dark April as an example of dactylic rhythm.

*Dark April. Snow failing, wind blowing,
cold, dreary day.
Long lasting cold winter. No spring in
sight. What to say?
Dark gloomy, bad weather. Sad, lonely —
I sit alone.
No happy times. Winter cold weather.
Chilled to the bone.*

Dark April

Couplets are pairs of two successive lines that rhyme or contain a similar thought or meter. Tercets are three line groupings and quatrains consist of four lines. Most poetic lines are further grouped to form larger structural units called stanzas or verse paragraphs. Unrhymed iambic pentameter (five foot long lines) produces a poem called blank verse. Free verse is both unrhymed and without a regular rhythm. However, it usually includes

verse paragraphs. Free verse is the most common poetic style written today. It involves writing personal feelings and knowledge while using structure to form patterns of thought.

*In the quiet of the night I lie reading.
The sun has set hours ago and I am
alone.
The soft sigh of the wind in the trees,
The gentle chirp of crickets,
And the murmur of the creek
Are the only sounds that disturb the dark-
ness.
But I do not hear them.
I lie reading*

Solitude

Why not try to reach students with

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*The concern of poetry
has always been the
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human and divine
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emotional way.*
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poetry as you plan your lessons? It is known that students who are emotionally involved with the lesson will take away more of the meaning of the lesson and will remember its concepts longer.

Luther was a skilled instructor who had his students sing hymns, which are a type of poetry. Many of the writings of Scripture, including the Psalms and much of Revelation, are set in poetic style. This helps communicate their ideas.

You may search for poems to augment your lessons. You may write some of your own verse as an instructional aid. You may even ask your students to write in a poetic manner to fulfill an assignment rather than asking them to complete a worksheet or write a paragraph. Try adding this kind of excitement to your lessons. *Inventas vitam juvat excoluisse per artes.* (Virgil: How delightful to find life embellished by the arts.)

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Paul Willems teaches at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minnesota. The poems included in this article were written by the author.



Understanding Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Alan Spurgin



A child with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) presents a challenge to the teacher. The behavior of the child with ODD disrupts the class, interferes with teaching, and is particularly hard on the teacher who must manage the child. The problem is chronic and therefore it continues to wear on the class and the teacher over time. Parents are also often troubled with the behavior exhibited by their child both at school and at home. What can be done to help the child with behaviors that are unacceptable? Who is involved in the decision-making process to arrive at a suitable solution to help this child? Most important, how can this problem be mitigated with the use of God's Word?

Characteristics

Oppositional Defiant Disorder is a serious disruptive behavior disorder that has its own set of descriptors. The symptoms of ODD may include the following:

- often loses temper
- often argues with adults
- often actively defies or refuses adult requests or rules (e.g., refuses to do tasks at home or school)
- often deliberately does things that annoy other people (e.g., grabs other children's hats)
- often blames others for his or her own mistakes
- is often touchy or easily annoyed by others
- is often angry and resentful
- is often spiteful or vindictive
- often swears or uses obscene language (Bloomquist 1992).

The reason for this close scrutiny of symptoms of a child with ODD is this: Descriptors of ODD are very similar to other disruptive behavior disorders like Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Conduct Disorder (CD), and

Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). In fact, ODD is often misdiagnosed as one of the above-mentioned behavior disorders or occurs with another disorder. If the problem is misdiagnosed, often medication and other interventions do not work to help mediate the difficulty.

Intervention

The follow intervention model is suggested to help the caregiver work with and be successful in caring for a child with ODD.

Conduct a meeting with all caregivers involved, but excluding the child. Include all teachers, pastor, parents, extended family, childcare provider, coach, or any other significant person in the child's life.

First, those at the meeting should arrive at a strategy based on a good understanding of the characteristics of the disorder and information gleaned from all people involved.

- Use suggestions of the caregivers to arrive at a strategy.
- All people who work with the child should agree to the strategy.
- Implement the strategy and give the strategy a chance to work.
- All parties involved should communicate daily to make sure the child is not playing one person against the other.
- Agree to meet any time a team member needs input from the others.

Second, those concerned with the child should seek professional help, including consulting those agencies that

provide Christian counseling, to assist the family cope with and deal this disability.

Third, all should pray continually for the child, for the power that prayer accesses is awesome.

Fourth, the parties should not get discouraged. God will be there to help and guide.

Once a correct diagnosis is made of ODD, management of the problem may include the following strategies and

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All should pray continually for the child, for the power that prayer accesses is awesome.

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interventions. First, the use of God's Word is central to the correction of misbehavior. It is God's Holy Word that moves the heart. The application of the Law and the gospel at all times will change the behavior permanently. Second, try to build on the positives. Reinforce positively when the desired behavior is shown (catch the child doing good). Third, take breaks if you feel that you are escalating the conflict. Encourage the child also to take a break

if he is going out of control (self time-out). Fourth, pick your battles and win them. Children with ODD want to get the caregiver into a power struggle. Do not let the child get you into this power game. Fifth, set up reasonable and age appropriate consequences that can be maintained with consistency. Sixth, make sure you do not spend all your time and energy on the child with ODD. Try to work with and obtain support from other caregivers who are working with the child. Seventh, manage your own stress. Try to relax and exercise. Use respite care if needed (AACAP 1999). Finally, all the care providers (teacher, parent, childcare person, pastor, educational aid, grandparents, etc.) must come from the same viewpoint to understand the child and work with the child's behavior difficulties. Coming together so all caregivers are united is a key to success. The child with ODD is a master at playing caregivers against each other if all the people who come in contact with the child are trying to do their own thing.

There is no certain way to deal with a child with ODD. Each case is unique and has different players. There is no top ten list of things to do to work with a child with ODD and be successful. All caregivers need to have a variety of strategies, contingencies, and interventions to help them work with the child, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute. Find those that work and stick with them. Above all, use the Word. This will make a permanent change in the heart of the child with ODD. ♡

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Geoffrey Kieta

Do you ever throw stones? Most people would probably say “no.” But we all do. We throw stones when we let someone have it verbally. And there are lots of stones that we should never throw. Belittling people because of their race, saying women are scatter brained or men are insensitive are examples of throwing stones best left on the ground. But, harsh as it may seem, there are some stones that we ought to throw. When we say that our culture’s fascination with sex and violence is destroying our youth, we heave a pretty big—and pretty necessary—stone at pop culture. One of the biggest and most frequently used stones in the Lutheran sling is “legalism.” If a Lutheran calls you a legalist, you and he had both better be ready to defend yourselves. But what do we mean by that word?

Legalism means “law-ism.” But it doesn’t mean knowing the law. Nor does it mean basing your comments on the law. Legalism is the abuse of God’s law., not the use, the abuse. It is not legalistic to say that God forbids abor-

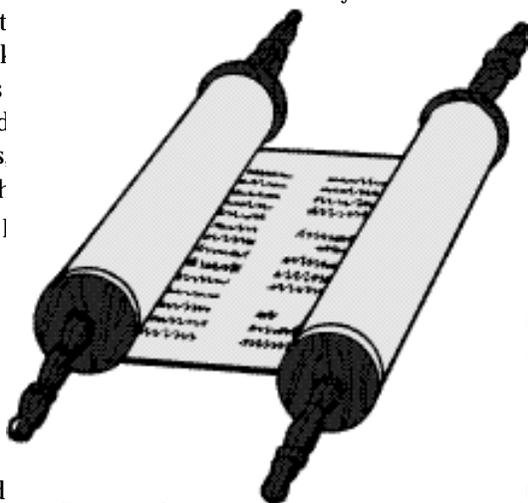
tion or homosexuality, because God does forbid those things, just as he forbids stealing or murder or rape. Condemning what God condemns is not legalism. Legalism is distorting what God says in his law.

The most obvious type of legalism is inventing laws that God has not commanded and presenting them as if he had. “You have to give ten percent of your income to church.” “You have to go to confession at least once a year.” “You have to be in church every Sunday.” God has not commanded any of those things. In the Old Testament, he did require a tithe. But in the New Testament, he requires only that we give generously and from the heart, as he has blessed us. God did call us to listen to each other’s sins and forgive each other. But we are not obligated to go to a priest or a pastor and confess each one of our sins orally to him. God didn’t even tell us we have to be in church every Sunday. Instead he tells us not to stop meeting together and to love to hear and read his Word. When we ask how many Sundays add up to lov-

ing and hearing, we are already on the road to legalism. Legalism often begins with a real commandment, such as loving God's Word, and takes it beyond what God has said.

Not every kind of legalism is so easy to point out. There is also a legalism of the heart which says, "I'm a good person because I do good things." This is legalism because it relies on the law in a way that God never intended us to. I once asked a man why he believed he would go to heaven. He told me, "When people are in need, I help them. If they're hungry and they come to my door, I buy them dinner. I've lived my whole life that way." I believe he did live that way. But feeding hungry people and helping those in need does not get us into heaven. God does want us to do those things, but when we depend on them to save us, we are legalists.

A very subtle kind of legalism can be found almost anywhere. Without saying anything that is wrong, it places all the emphasis on what we do. It tells us, "Live like a Christ Christian. Love lil And when it talks is either as a good what love really is makes no more th required (even a ing) reference to death and resurrection and then plunges into the heart of the matter: how we're supposed to live and be. This kind



bly our greatest temptation as teachers and pastors. After all, we know that making up laws is wrong. We know that depending on works to get us into heaven is false doctrine. But we look around at our people, and we throw our hands up in despair. Our congregation should be giving much more than it is. A classroom of ten or twenty children in three different grades is a challenge, and if those kids "act up," it makes it impossible to teach. So we feel the need to hammer home the law, so they know what they're supposed to do and how they're supposed to behave. But making the law the heart of the matter is an abuse of the law, because it puts the law in front of the gospel in a way that keeps the gospel from being preached clearly and effectively.

The gospel says God did it all for us. The gospel says we are declared innocent because Jesus was perfect for us and because Jesus died to pay for our sins and rose to give us life. The gospel says that God reaches out to us every day through the message of Jesus and gives us faith in him and keeps it alive in us. Legalism ends so little time on truth that all you about is the law. why legalism is so ive: it leads us away gospel. also leads us away . That might surprise To be a legalist, you t you can obey God's

law. A legalist trims off those parts of the law that disturb him or that are impossible for a sinful human being to keep, and he replaces them with other laws so that he can feel satisfied about himself. So when Jesus says that the two greatest commandments are love the Lord your God with all your being and love your neighbor just as much as you love yourself, the legalist redefines love into something he can do. Love is helping others. Love is working in soup kitchens. Love is setting up homeless shelters. Love is writing a really big check for church. But Jesus says that love is committing your entire heart and mind and soul and strength to God every day of your life. That means that you obey everything that he has commanded. Love is placing your neighbor's needs on the same level as your own, every day of your life. Love is an attitude of the heart that never turns away from what God wants. That none of us can do.

The Pharisees in the Bible were great legalists. They worried about how many steps they could take on the Sabbath day (because they were to do “no regular work”) and how long the prayer tassels on their robes were (because they were to pray without ceasing). But they didn't worry about justice and mercy and compassion, because God's definition of those things is so extreme that no human being can obey them. So they trimmed those things off. Today, liberal “Lutheran” churches trim off God's condemnations of homosexuality or abortion and replace them with “caring relationships” and “respect.”

“Fundamentalist” churches trim off what God says about the attitude of our hearts and add prohibitions on drinking or requirements like tithing. It's all legalism.

Legalism is dangerous because legalism denies both God's law and his gospel. It destroys our salvation. That's why the Lutheran Church has always been quick to point it out. We need to share that readiness. But we also need to recognize that there are legitimate uses of God's law. When we hold God's law up to ourselves and to the people God has called us to teach and see that we are sinners, that's not legalism. When we use God's law to guide us in Christian living, that's not legalism. Even when we use God's law to put a temporary check on the outbreak of sin—such as making rules about classroom behavior—so that we can study the gospel, that's not legalism. It is using God's law as he intended us to use it.

It seems pretty simple when you lay it out, so why is legalism so common today? Because it is the natural attitude of the human heart. That's why we parents so often find that our dealings with our children reduce themselves to “do what I say, and do it now!” That's why we easily reduce our spiritual leadership to checking church attendance on Monday morning (with the subtle pressure to improve that goes along with it). It's not that how we want the children to live is wrong. It's that they rely on the law to get the gospel's job done, and the law simply can't.

Legalism is so ground into the human

heart that it is impossible to avoid. Our natural legalism endangers us, our children, and our brothers and sisters in the faith. We need to recognize just how sinful those attitudes within us are. But for every moment of legalism, for every overemphasis on the law, for every self-invented rule, for every feeling of satisfaction at obeying what we can do while we ignore what God wants, Jesus died. He paid for it all. We are forgiven. Jesus also gave us his perfect life of obedience to God's law. Unlike us, Jesus was not a legalist—and his heart had no interest in becoming one. He alone was the perfect teacher who always used God's law and his gospel the way that God wanted them to be used. And in God's eyes we are perfect now, because in his eyes, we are Jesus now. That's the truth that we never want to obscure. That's the

promise that defeats and destroys the natural legalism of our hearts. That's the power of God to live in Christian love and freedom—and to teach law and gospel correctly. Trust that power of God. ✠

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