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I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Acts 2:17

The Lutheran Educator

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Called to Teach....A Unique Calling

There are many teachers serving the children of our communities. Most are well educated and competent. Children in their classrooms successfully acquire knowledge and develop skills. At first glance one may assume all teachers and teaching to be similar. Certainly there is general concern about children and sincere dedication to imparting knowledge and skills to our nation's young people.

But we are quick to respond, "No, teachers and teaching are not all similar. The role of a Lutheran school teacher is unique, for we have been called by our Lord to serve him. We are not doing a job to fulfill the terms of a contract. We are servants of our Lord, doing the tasks which he has called us to do. Our labor is a privilege. Our successes are in the Lord's hands. "I can do all things through him who gives me strength" (Php 4:13).

We do have a unique calling. Each day we are privileged to share God's holy Word with the "little ones" entrusted to us. We can lead Christ's lambs in devotional worship, train them to sing praises to their Lord, and teach them to pray. The erring child can be admonished with God's law and comforted with the gospel message of sins forgiven. Children who are frightened, sad, lonely, or ill can be assured of God's love and of the faithfulness of God's presence and help. Perhaps most treasured of all is our freedom to teach all subjects in the light of God's Word. Presenting all that we teach from a Christian viewpoint indeed makes our teaching unique.

The teachers of our Lutheran schools are also unique in the additional services which they give. There are those who beautify the worship in our churches with their talents as organists and choir directors. Others provide Christian guidance and leadership in sports programs, young people's organizations, and administration. Some teachers also have the opportunity to extend their Christian influence beyond the classroom when they are given the option of also serving as a Sunday school teacher or teaching VBS.

The aspect of our calling which is particularly meaningful to each one of us in the Lord's service is the influence this service has had on our daily lives. We live where the Lord called us to teach. We do the tasks which the Lord has called us to do. Our acquaintances, friends, and perhaps even our spouses have become part of our lives because of where God called us to serve him and when this special event of our lives has occurred.

Yes, being a called servant of our Lord has made our work of Lutheran school teaching truly unique. As we go about our separate ways of service to our Lord, our times most surely are in his hands. Our professional lives and also our personal lives have been guided and determined by our all-knowing God. We have the assurance of God's presence and strength. And most importantly, we have the privilege and blessing of sharing God's Word and providing Christian training for those whom God has called us to serve.

How blessed we are to have this unique calling...called to teach! IRM

Gospel Freedom and Contemporary Music (3)

Paul O. Wendland

This issue concludes Pastor Wendland's timely article on contemporary music. This issue contains the third part, "Music is a part of any people's culture." The two previous sections, "Music is an adiaphoron, an 'indifferent thing'" and "Music is God's Good Gift and Creation" appeared in the December and February issues.

Part Three

Music is a part of any people's culture

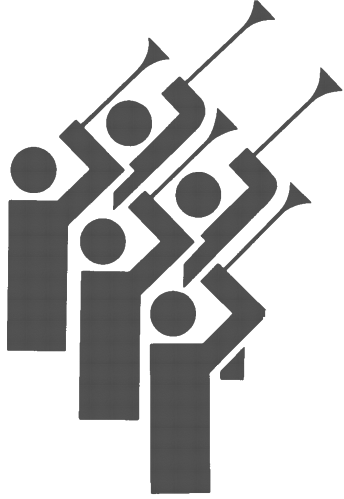
Of all people, the Christian is the most free with respect to culture. The gospel has made him so. He believes that a man who was every inch a first-century Palestinian Jew was God incarnate. He was not only a prophet and rabbi for the people of his day, he is the man for all seasons. His life, death and resurrection has validity not only for Jews, but for all people of all races and in all times. Whatever our original tribe may be, by faith in him we become members of a new tribe, "a people that are his very own" (Ti 1:14). Whatever nation may issue our passports, we understand that "our citizenship is in heaven" (Php 3:20).

One day, this Jewish rabbi we're talking about struck up a personal conversation with a Samaritan woman who was drawing water from a well at midday—a cultural faux-pas if ever there was one! In the course of the conversation, they began to discuss the relative merits of worshipping God on Mt. Gerizim, as the Samaritans did, or in Jerusalem, as the Jews were commanded by God to

do. Jesus said, "Salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:22-23).

This exchange is highly significant in understanding the relationship between Christ and culture. While clearly affirming that the one and only God had chosen to deal with humanity through the culture of the Jews, Jesus also asserted that his coming had changed things. His people would be liberated from worshipping God according to the Old Testament forms. If God's people are now set free with respect to the Old Testament cultus—commanded as it was by God—how much less can they consider themselves bound to any culture generated among men. The Christian is free, free to accept what is good and reject what is bad in any culture.

Perhaps this is the time to speak about what we mean with the word "culture." It is derived from the Latin cultus, which in its most basic sense refers to the tilling of land. Areas which had been converted from a wild, untended state into land fit for growing food were called cultus, cultivated. From this, the metaphoric



meanings developed. People who had been refined by training, education and discipline were also called “cultured.” The orderly way of approaching, venerating, and worshipping a deity was called a cultus. Finally, it became more or less a synonym for civilization in all its aspects .

In the English language, “culture” in common speech used to refer to the refinement of civilization. There were nations which were cultured and there were those areas of the world that were still primitive, needing to be brought under culture’s benign influence. Most recently there has been a shift in the use of the word. Especially in anthropology and sociolinguistics, scholars no longer think in terms of a superior “culture” which divides the world into areas refined and unrefined. The new view of culture is always “people- or group- specific.” It contains two primary focal points: “a) [a group’s] way of thinking or world view, and b) their way of behaving or lifestyle. These two aspects are, of course, very closely connected” (Wendland 1990, 8).

Since every group of people has their own underlying set of beliefs, along with customs, attitudes, and tastes arising from those beliefs, every group or tribe can now be described as having a culture.

“As a man believes, so is he,” might be a summary definition of it. We have been using the word in this sense in this paper, with one major modification. As a scientist, an anthropologist does not concern himself with the relative worth of various cultures, or of customs within those cultures. His purpose is simply to describe “what is,” without reference to cross-cultural values of transcendent significance. As an observer of culture, he is not interested in changing beliefs.

As those who have been set into a new relationship with the world in Christ, we view the matter a little differently. We do not wish to see beliefs as merely “people- or group- specific,” and to say no more. We also wish to evaluate beliefs in every culture on the basis of “living and enduring Word of God” (1 Pe 1:23). Therefore, if we accept the model of culture as having two primary focal points—worldview and lifestyle—,then we would like to modify that model under “worldview” to include beliefs which have significance beyond one particular culture.

We may distinguish among three kinds of beliefs: transformational, transcendent, and tribal. There are probably better terms one could use, but these will have to do.

Transformational beliefs are those which have entered into culture by means of Christian proclamation. They are rooted in the specifics of the Christian message, in God’s revela-

tion of himself as Savior in his inspired Word. We view them as transformational since they continually call people of every culture to repent of dead works and to believe in the living God. A glance at Paul's sermon to the Areopagus will help us understand this point. He went as far as he could to affirm what was good in the various underlying beliefs of the Greeks. But in the end, his message was still, "Repent!" (Acts 17:30) Greek philosophy was a dead-end street. They needed to be changed and the change they needed was the change only Christ could provide.

Once the gospel makes an impact on people and changes them from within, it is only natural that the spiritual, inner change will lead to outer changes in life and action. The gospel truly transforms; it turns the world up-side down! The importance of a Christian's function as salt and light within his particular society must not be overlooked as we analyze culture.

Next, there are transcendent beliefs, so called because they transcend a particular culture and are common to all or most cultures. They are expressions of our common humanity, the fact that God made "from one man...every nation of men" (Ac 17:26). They are rooted not in revelation, but in the natural knowledge of God. They would include our basic moral sense, a belief in a Supreme Being to whom we owe worship, and a sense of appreciation for God's created world.

Finally, there are tribal beliefs, so called because they are specific to a nation, group, clan, or tribe. Naturally, there is a great deal of overlap between these categories.

Many commonly held human beliefs have a particular expression within a specific culture. Even transformational beliefs soon become incarnate within specific cultural forms. But there are also beliefs which are held by one particular culture alone. It is of these we speak here.

For example, the Greeks felt themselves to be intellectually and culturally superior to non-Greeks, whom they called Barbarians. Central African tribes believe that much of the misfortune which enters into a person's life is attributable to witches and witchcraft. Many who belong to the evangelical tribe in America have the deeply-rooted belief that America is God's country in a very special sense that goes beyond mere providence.

All these beliefs become part of a common stream that feeds into the pool of everyday values and customs. They shape a culture's aesthetic sense and are expressed in a culture's art and music. Now while art and music may reflect a culture's beliefs from transcendental (where Christianity has made an impact) to tribal, we need to recognize that art and music always reflect those beliefs within the context of that particular culture.

This thought has a number of implications for an observer outside any culture. For one thing, it means that though there may be features of one country's art which have universal appeal, much of its message will be lost in the translation, since much of it is encoded in symbols specific to that culture. For another, we may miss a large part of the meaning, not only because we do not understand the artistic symbols themselves, but

also because the symbols may be expressions of beliefs, fears, hopes, customs, and values we do not share. In order to catch the whole meaning, a person has to be familiar with the culture. In addition to this, since the beliefs and values of the observed culture may clash with our own, artistic expressions which those within it prize the most highly may seem to us the most repulsive.

One simple example of these ideas is the art of Athens. Millions of Christians have seen the Parthenon and toured the temples of the Acropolis, enthralled by their beauty. The Acropolis appeals to transcendent values we have of the beauty and order of God's creation.

We see those values reflected in those monuments. The Apostle Paul saw those same monuments and "was greatly distressed" (Ac 17:16). For him, they reflected the Athenian's belief in idols.

One simple application of this thought is this: What looks great to an American won't always look good to an African, an Asian, or a European. Participating in an elaborate tea-ceremony may be highly satisfying to a Japanese, but utterly boring to an American. Listening to African traditional music may be an exercise in patience for a Westerner, and at the same time a thrilling experience for one who has the "ear" to detect the intricate and interlocking rhythms.

This was brought home to me personally on one occasion when I was struck by the beauty of an African sky. It was covered with rank upon rank of puffy, cumulus clouds—white against a deep blue. I had never seen anything like it in America. No doubt

what made it especially beautiful to me was its sheer novelty. I was with an African friend at the time and I pointed out the sight to him for his enjoyment. He looked at it and said, "Makumbi buyo!—Just clouds!" About that same time I was astonished to read in an anthropology text that the Ila people among whom we lived had over twenty different words for the ways a cow's horns might curl. Apparently, what were "just horns" to me were something rather more to them!

These cultural differences are not only acknowledged in Scripture; in a very real sense a person can say that God is the cause of them. God was surely at work both in Eden and at Babel. As Paul Tillich remarked, "Language is the basic cultural creation" (1959, 42). We know that, since the coming of the Holy Spirit, God is transforming all cultures by calling out of every nation a people for himself in Christ. Yet this fact gives us no Scriptural mandate to flatten out cultural differences in the interests of the gospel.

The gospel does not need to exert pressure from the outside by providing a new category of cultural laws. It exerts its transforming power from within. That is why Paul can say, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to every-



one to win as many as possible....I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Co 9:19, 22). Having personally been set free by the gospel, he recognized its transforming power, and was willing to adapt himself to other cultures so as to win people for Christ.

Naturally this does not mean ignoring cultural differences which arise from false beliefs and keep people enslaved to sin. Nor does it mean we can safely set aside the call to repent, because we are now so enlightened that we understand the deep theological truth, "Different strokes for different folks." But it does mean we will make haste slowly in arriving at those judgments, particularly if we are outsiders to a culture. The faculty of discernment is often better exercised by Christians within a culture than those without.

America is not one culture but many. *E pluribus unum* is more than just a motto. It has always been America's peculiar reality, ever since our nation's founders struggled to forge a unity out of many different groups of people—each its own little sub-culture. Rock music may not be part of our particular heritage. Our ears may not be tuned to it, and we may not understand how anyone can like it. But simply to reject rock music would be a mistake for that very reason. It could easily be seen as a rejection by the ignorant of a culture they do not understand. It could also be seen as a form of cultural bias, a bias particularly against the African-American contributions to our national culture. It is well-known that rock finds its source in that stream of our heritage.¹

To sift, to examine, to point out false beliefs and enslaving opinions—this is all to the good, and Christians will be doing this. But simply to reject the entire genre is not the way to go. As Luther said, "When Paul came to Athens...he found many ancient altars, but he did not kick down a single one of them with his foot" (1959, 77).

As we "think culturally" about art, it is also good to arrive at judgments in terms of the culture from which a work of art springs. What are that culture's standards of beauty? What are the underlying beliefs and values which give rise to those standards? In this respect, music and poetry can provide a great insight into the deepest recesses of a group's worldview. Every work of art is a window to the soul of its maker, if it is honest. It tells us what sort of person he is: what he believes, what he desires, what he prizes. Similarly, a particular artform speaks volumes about the people from which it originates.

This is true certainly of Christian art. How can anyone fully appreciate J.S. Bach without an understanding of the vibrant Christian faith which lay behind his music? It is equally true of any art. It seems to me that a gospel servant with a heart for people would want to have at least a passing familiarity with contemporary music.

If music is a window to the soul, and if millions within our culture listen to rock music, isn't it worth the effort to tune into what they are saying? Whether we like the sound or not, whether we agree with what's being said or not, we have to admit that the music expresses the hopes, the dreams, the fears, the beliefs, the concerns of millions. Isn't it worth

knowing the people to whom we want to preach the gospel?

When we view the art and music used in our public worship, it is helpful to "think culturally" too. The Christian experience as it developed through the ages was largely (though not exclusively) a European experience. Therefore the music and the artistic expressions which have the longest tradition and the greatest development are from the West. And, too, those forms—sanctified as the heritage of many Christian centuries—carry great weight and are to be respected. It would be foolish to despise God's provision of beauty to us through the European church. Therefore, since we want to bring our best gifts to the Lord in worship, we will continue to bring the best of the West in thanksgiving to the God who has given this heritage to us as his good gift.

At the same time, we will not want to turn up our noses at the Christian art which arises from other cultures as Christianity enters and transforms them. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" As members of a truly universal church, we would expect to see expressions of Christian art from every culture. We gratefully receive them. What else would the church "from every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7:9) do as it prepares to sing before the throne in heaven?

It is time now to return to the question with which we began this essay. What is the world to me, a Christian? Is it poison to the soul, or is it simply the good earth of God's making? Shall we view it as a Robert Louis Stevenson or as a William Golding? By this time we should be able to

answer, "Neither!" Someone like Robert Louis Stevenson is clearly blind to the corrupting influence of this dying age. Someone like William Golding is clearly blind to the transforming power of the gospel. We cannot subscribe to any optimism which is not rooted in the death and resurrection of Christ, nor to any pessimism unrelieved by it. Perhaps the words of a third Englishman are more apropos. I believe it was C.S. Lewis who said, "Offer the world neither your worship, nor contempt." The gospel of Jesus sets us free to do just that!

Note

1. For an interesting study, I refer you to *Deep Blues*, by Robert Palmer. (New York: Penguin Books, 1981).

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Don't Put All Your Eggs in the Standardized Testing Basket

David O. Wendler

Standardized tests have been used in American schools for more than a hundred years. Before the turn of the century most of the tests were criterion-referenced tests of skills in subjects like spelling, writing, and arithmetic. But as school populations grew rapidly and large school districts were being organized in increasingly bureaucratic fashion, there was a desire to compare students and compare school systems. The much publicized World War I Army Alpha and Beta intelligence tests also encouraged the use of norm-referenced tests. Further support for this type of testing has come from nearly every large education reform effort which either mandates a new form of testing or expands uses of existing testing. As a result, the volume of testing in schools is estimated to be increasing by between 10% and 20% annually over the last 40 years (Haney & Madaus 1989). As the quantity of testing in American schools has risen, the complaints about standardized tests have also increased in volume and intensity. What are the complaints?

Criticism 1 Standardized tests tend to focus attention on what students do not understand, do not know, or cannot do. Though the tests may exist to determine students' strengths, in fact, the multiple choice testing format does not give children the opportunity to demonstrate the full range of what they understand, know, and

can do. The result is an emphasis on what the student gets wrong. This focus on weaknesses rather than strengths is a result of a transmission model of learning which claims that every child should learn the same things at the same time, in the same way—or be deemed less than fully successful (Weaver 1990).

Criticism 2 Standardized tests do not reflect current models of child development, of cognitive development, and of learning. One notion they reflect is that complex processes and abilities can be learned if they are broken down into small pieces that are then taught and tested. The assumption is that these pieces can be tested by a multiple choice question, that the results can be sorted to fit on a linear scale, and be reported in the form of a single score.

These testing assumptions reflect the behaviorist model of learning first popularized in the 1920s which sees learning as linear and sequential. The belief is that complex understanding can only occur by breaking a concept down into its parts and teaching the parts as basic prerequisite skills to higher order thinking and reasoning. But Gould (1981) questions if something as complex as students' knowledge, abilities, and skills can be separated into parts. Recent research supports Gould's misgivings. Today learning is seen as an active process with thinking and reasoning fostered at all age levels by hands-on

activities and experimentation. We realize that students do not have to master low-level skills before they can do problem solving, make inferences and judgments, and form theories about how the world works (U.S. Office of Technology Assessment 1992).

Contemporary child development research also emphasizes considerable diversity in both the nature and pace of child development. We now know that though there are developmental trends, children do not develop in the same way at the same time, nor do they all develop the same intellectual and learning strengths. Standardized tests, however, reflect the implicit assumption that all children—or at least the ones we are willing to consider “successful”—will be roughly the same in development and strengths. It simply is not possible to rank complex variation of students on a gradual ascending scale (Gould 1981). Standardized tests that use such a linear scale can label a student's performance as incorrect or substandard when it is really only a normal variation (Edelsky & Harman 1988; Neill & Medina 1989; Wiggins 1989).

Criticism 3 Standardized tests are biased against those students whose intellectual strengths are not in the verbal and logical-mathematical areas and whose strongest learning style is not analytic, sequential, part-to-whole. These tests penalize students if their learning style is more global than analytic, or more practical than abstract. Thus, students can be judged as deficient when we might better view them as having different intellectual strengths and learning styles from those recognized and

rewarded on a standardized test (Butler 1988; Carbo 1984, 1988; Dunn and Dunn 1978; Gardner 1985, 1987; Gregorc 1986; Sternberg 1989).

Criticism 4 Standardized tests are culturally biased—not because test makers want them to be, but because it is literally impossible for them to be equally fair to children from diverse backgrounds. Tests tend to reflect the testmakers' background as to social class, culture, ethnicity, region, gender, age, and life experience. Thus, test questions may be confusing to some students because of language differences due to pronunciation or vocabulary usage. Another source of test bias is the student's culture which gives him or her a specific background of knowledge that could potentially contradict the correct test answers. We should not be surprised then that test scores correlate strongly with socioeconomic status (Owen 1985).

Criticism 5 Standardized tests give a false impression of objectivity. Neill and Medina put it this way, “Objective merely means that the tests can be scored by machines, not



by subjective human scorers" (1989, 692). The questions, the testing situation, the format and requirements of the test all can still reflect bias. To do well on the tests, part of what students must do is consciously think like the test-makers.

Criticism 6 Standardized test results can influence teacher expectations. Once a child scores "below average," teachers tend to expect less from that child. This may occur consciously or unconsciously (Good & Marshall 1984; Goodlad 1983; Oakes 1985). If students are ability grouped on the basis of some standardized test, few children are ever moved to higher groups, despite evidence that they are performing better. Various studies document the fact that children tend to remain in assigned ability groups throughout a school year and across grade levels (Shannon 1985). Unfortunately, this lowered expectation or assignment to a low-ability group may already begin in kindergarten (Durkin 1987).

Criticism 7 Standardized tests tend to discourage effective teaching and learning. Darling-Hammond (1989) refers to standardized testing as "testing for the TV generation—superficial and passive. We don't ask if students can synthesize information, solve problems, or think independently. We measure what they can recognize." Even though standardized tests may focus on low-level recognition tasks, yet the mania for testing and good test scores drives teachers to "teach to the test." This crowds out other, more meaningful and more beneficial kinds of activities.

In one report the New Jersey State Department of Education admitted

that not only do New Jersey teachers teach to the state test, but the department provides local school districts with copies of tests from previous years, and some teachers use these to drill students for weeks and even months (Madaus 1985). Thus, standardized testing does change education, but not necessarily for the better. The U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment concludes that state-mandated testing and minimum competency testing had damaging effects on the classroom behavior of teachers and students (1992, 64).

Teachers report that with increased testing and standardization of curriculum, they attend more to the so-called basics, the most elementary knowledge and skills, and less to the deep understanding of even a few topics (Stake 1991). This forces teachers to focus on narrow, quantifiable and often isolated skills at the expense of more complex academic abilities. As Farr puts it, "The focus on getting better test scores will drive real instructional reform right out of the schools" (1987, 22).

Criticism 8 Standardized tests frequently are not valid; specifically, they may lack content or construct validity. Content validity depends upon the match between test items and what has been emphasized in the curriculum or classroom—whether the test assesses what was taught or what the students were expected to learn. If the achievement test does not match what is going on in the classroom, there is a lack of content validity.

Construct validity examines how well a test actually correlates with what it claims to measure. Several

studies find a problem with the construct validity of standardized tests. Kamii & Joseph (1989) note that standardized tests cannot distinguish between students who understand underlying mathematic concepts and students who are only able to perform procedures by rote (and who therefore cannot apply these procedures to new situations). In another study of 1000 children, no particular relationship was found between their actual reading and their scores on the California Test of Basic Skills. Some children scored high but read poorly; others scored high and read well; some low scorers read well and others didn't (Altwerger & Resta 1986). Because this reading test concentrates on isolated subskills of the reading process, the actual ability to construct meaning from normal kinds of texts is not being measured. Likewise, critics charge that intelligence tests measure only analytic, part-to-whole reasoning while ignoring the many other facets of intelligence (Gardner 1985, 1988; Sternberg 1985).

In general, standardized tests measure only a tiny fraction of the bits and pieces of learning and education. But education is a cumulative effort linking millions of items of experience and knowledge, and it is the linking or integration that is important. The correlation between the abilities that standardized tests claim to measure and a student's actual development of those abilities or use of them in real life situations may in fact be quite weak. To say it another way, what you see in test scores may not be what you are getting.

Criticism 9 Standardized tests inappropriately use the bell shaped curve. The purpose of a standardized

test, by its very nature, is to rank-order students, and by inference to rank-order teachers and schools, and thereby label some as less successful than others, or even as failures. Norm-referenced tests are set up so that half the children will, by definition, be below average. "Below average" is a statistical concept: below the arithmetic mean. But within education, it has taken on judgmental connotations, meaning something like "not good enough."

It is true that some natural traits are distributed according to a normal distribution or bell shaped curve. Height is a classic example. A few people are very tall, a few people are very short, but the majority of people are in between or what we call average height. Other features normally distributed are the number of hairs on people's heads or the size of fish in a lake. But some natural features don't follow a normal distribution. For example, hair color among Japanese citizens does not have normal distribution. The ability to walk is not "normally distributed," since



the great majority of people can walk without difficulty. There is no proof that God distributed intellectual gifts along a bell curve with half of his creation "below average."

Japanese view ability distribution quite differently. The Japanese consider intellectual ability as being distributed like health is. Most people are "healthy enough." So with intelligence, most people are thought to "have enough" (Fallows 1989). In contrast, standardized norm referenced tests assume that knowledge, skill, or ability tends to be distributed according to the bell-shaped curve. This normal distribution is used for statistical convenience as a way of sorting and comparing students, not because knowledge or ability is actually distributed in this manner (Neill & Medina 1989).

If substantially more than half the students taking a standardized test begin scoring significantly above the mean or average, the test will eventually be revised so that once again it predicts that literally half the students who take the revised test will be "below average." Recently an educational uproar was created when John Cannell (1987) reported the "Lake Wobegon effect" of standardized testing. This effect is named after humorist Garrison Keillor's description of the imaginary town of Lake Wobegon "where all the children are above average." Cannell discovered that 49 of the 50 state education departments reported above-average performance. The New York Times called Cannell's findings "voodoo statistics." The uproar was quieted by test publishers renorming and revising their tests more often so that the appropriate number of stu-

dents would score above and below the average.

Designing tests so that the distribution of scores resembles a bell-shaped "normal" curve not only condemns half the students to being "below average," but also implies that education has no effect, or only a random effect, upon learning. Bloom, Madaus, and Hastings say, "There is nothing sacred about the normal curve. It is the distribution most appropriate to chance and random activity. But education is a purposeful activity, and we seek to have the students learn what we have to teach.... We may even insist that our efforts are unsuccessful to the extent that the distribution of achievement approximates the normal distribution" (1981, 52-53). These tests promote the idea that effort does not matter, since the bell curve design of norm referencing always places some students at the top, some at the bottom, and most in the middle.

Criticism 10 Standardized test scores are not very useful to teachers. Research studies confirm that these tests seldom identify student talents that teachers had not recognized previously (Tittle, Kelly-Benjamin, & Sacks 1991). They seldom provide teachers with diagnostic information that helps redirect their teaching. Instead, test scores are wrongly used to determine if children are ready for school, track them into ability groups, diagnose for learning disabilities, and decide whether to promote, retain, or graduate some students. In one study teachers in Broward County, Florida, were asked how much racial discrimination, discrimination according to sex, bilingual problems, and overemphasis on testing interfered with stu-

dents getting a good education. About half of the teachers indicated that testing interfered more than the other three factors (Stake 1991).

After reviewing these criticisms of standardized testing, what is our reaction? Since our schools are influenced by society's emphasis on accountability, we might deal with the criticisms of standardized tests by considering the following options. Continue giving the standardized tests and at the same time educate parents about the limitations of these tests. Use the test results as only one small piece of information about children. Finally, expand your knowledge of and use of authentic assessment which includes a wide variety of techniques, such as written products, solutions to problems, experiments, exhibitions, performances, process and product portfolios of work, teacher observations, clinical interviews, checklists, inventories, and cooperative group projects. Such authentic assessment could be of regular classroom activity or it could take the form of special projects. A growing number of states have begun moving away from using multiple-choice tests to measure student performance and have begun to implement, as replacements or complements, authentic assessments. This is an approach worth considering, for then we are not putting all our eggs in the standardized testing basket.



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Motivating Students For Learning

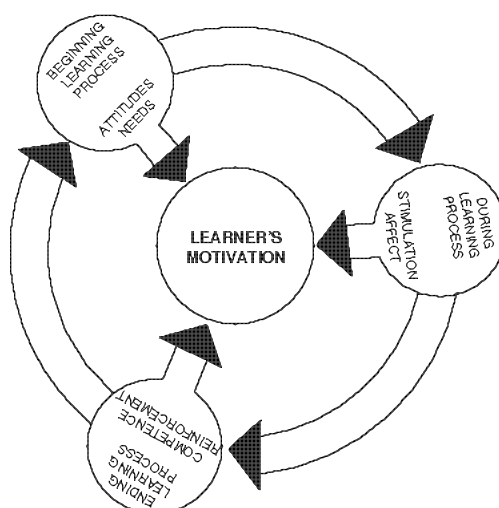
Debra Heinz-Peterson

...for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Proverbs 1:2-7

In the previous issue, I discussed the cornerstones for effective instruction. This article explores the identification of those motivational factors which influence student learning. The Time Continuum Model for Motivation, (below) will be referenced throughout the article.

The learner's attitude strongly influences behavior. The student may have attitudes or beliefs regarding the likelihood of personal success in learning, the subject matter, or the teacher. Attitudes are built upon previous learning experiences and beliefs. For example, if a student has

THE TIME CONTINUUM MODEL OF MOTIVATION



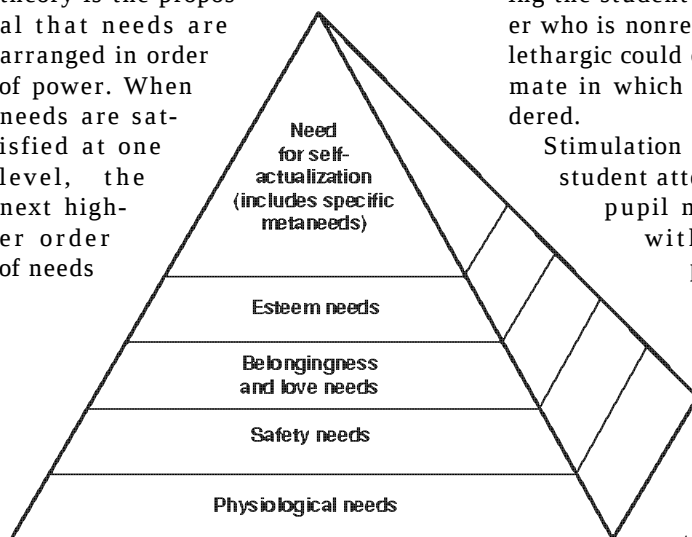
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been told, "Math is tough for girls," an expectancy and explanation for failure is established. A student will need to modify her attitude to realize her mathematic potential.

Attitudes can be helpful or harmful. From a teacher's point of view, attitudes which assist the student to learn, grow, and mature are helpful attitudes. Harmful attitudes decrease the student's potential for learning, growth, and maturity.

The learner's needs are an additional factor in the area of motivation. A need is a condition experienced by the student as a force that moves the individual to move in a direction (Wlodkowski, 1978). Successful teaching may be viewed as a process which meets the needs of the individual student. Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that the student has an interrelated set of guidelines which enhance motivation.

Basic to Maslow's theory is the proposal that needs are arranged in order of power. When needs are satisfied at one level, the next higher order of needs



The Hierarchy of Human Needs (Maslow)

becomes dominant in influencing behavior. Consider the situation in which a student requests to use the restroom and is not permitted to do so. The student's need and powerful drive are directed to fulfilling this primary area. Such drive interferes with the learner's attention to the lesson presentation, regardless of lesson quality.

As teachers, we can help to increase motivation by addressing the student's needs. This can be accomplished by the learning structure. Such structure requires the teacher to be aware of and responsive to pupil needs.

Once attitudes and needs have been addressed, it is important to grasp and maintain student attention. Education is not entertainment. Expecting a teacher to constantly "be on stage" or exciting is not only unrealistic but may prove detrimental to student learning. In contrast, expecting the student to learn from a teacher who is nonresponsive, passive, and lethargic could create a classroom climate in which learning may be hindered.

Stimulation must occur to sustain student attention and learning. A pupil may begin the lesson with an attentive approach because of a need to learn, expectations from parents, a learned response, or a positive attitude toward the teacher. However, the learner cannot sustain attention without stimulation. Other factors will enter the stu-

dent's environment which will vie for attention. The fly on the wall, the rolling of a pencil, a consideration of the upcoming basketball game, or a mischievous act may distract the student from the learning process.

Maintaining a stimulating lesson is not a simple task. It necessitates planning and consideration of the needs, knowledge, experiences, emotional state, and developmental level of the students in the class.

Children are usually interested in information which is somewhat novel and/or more difficult than that which they already know and have experienced. As an example, consider the precocious fifth grade student who has read volumes on rocketry and has been involved in competitive rocket fairs. Now the student is offered a reading lesson in the basics of wiring an open circuit. Even though the curriculum calls for the prescribed lesson, the appropriate match between student and content is lacking. The learner will likely be off-task, disinterested and possibly insulted by the request to follow the lesson presentation and complete the worksheet on "positive and negative poles." Students think and work best on assignments, projects, and learning activities when they are moderately stimulated.



A teacher has various strategies available to maintain student stimulation. Many of these strategies are employed in the typical classroom on a daily basis. The critical component involves teacher planning for such strategies. Attraction techniques may take the form of visual and audio aids, the alteration of the voice of the teacher, the use of hesitation or pause during instruction, movement of body position (of students or teacher), asking relevant questions, creating suspense in students, using advance organizers, or relating the new topic to current student interest. As an example, a teacher may arouse student interest, enhance understanding, and assist in recall by comparing the unexpected trade of José Conesco and the exile of Napoleon.

Student involvement in lesson presentation is critical to student learning. A high correlation exists between on-task behaviors and student involvement. When the student is thinking about the manner in which the numbers nine and 25 are alike, it is difficult for that same student simultaneously to engage in day-dreaming. Variety and repeated opportunities for student response will encourage student involvement. The use of cooperative learning strategies involving many students in the formulation of a response is an excellent means of maintaining student stimulation. The variety of methods in which students are called to respond may include hand signs, visual cues, sharing information with a neighbor, writing one or two words on the 3x5 card at the desk, and keeping students uncertain as to whom the teacher will call for the upcoming answer.

Questioning is an art form. Bloom's taxonomy reminds us that thought processes can be classified from low levels of recall to higher levels of evaluation. All students, regardless of age, can be "cognitively stretched" to answer questions of various levels. The following list of key indicators is provided for "question initiators" (see Table 1).

More than anyone else, the teacher influences the student's feelings on a daily basis. The modeling and expression of the teacher provide the stimulus for the emotional state of the classroom. This relationship can become cyclical. If the teacher feels bored or frustrated, he may express this through a lack of enthusiasm, sighs, physical disposition, angry outbursts, or short-tempered responses. The resultant behavior from students frequently mirrors that of the teacher. In contrast, if the teacher displays enthusiasm and joyfulness, students may have difficulty avoiding the contagion.

Humor, story telling, analogies,

parables, and questioning to relate the lesson to personal experiences enhances student involvement. Humor is a sharing of emotion. It provides a common relief that can be stimulating and attention gaining. The use of humor is often a highly effective tool in breaking tension, redirecting attention, offering a change of pace from an intense situation. In general, humor offers a positive manner of relating to students.

The third and final area of the Time Continuum Model involves reinforcement and student competence. There is good evidence that many learning activities that involve manipulation, exploration, and information processing provide satisfaction in and of themselves (Wlodkowski, 1978). When learning has natural consequences, it is often sufficient to allow the consequences to serve as reinforcement. If a class has constructed a six- by ten-foot relief map of the United States, displaying and photographing the project may serve as a highly satisfying

sense of task completion. If third grade students are involved in an "Adopt a Grandparent" program at a local nursing home, the delivery of the Christmas cards and singing of carols is a natural and very rewarding result.

The most common form of reinforcement involves the assignment of grades on a paper, project, or report card. When grades are used to coerce students or if they are presented as the primary

Table 1
Question Initiators

<i>Low Level</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>High</i>
Define	Describe	Apply
Identify	Compare	Solve
Recall	Illustrate	Classify
Recognize	Interpret	Choose
Who	Rephrase	Select
What	Contrast	Explain
Where	Differentiate	Predict
When	How	Design
		Judge
		Evaluate
		Synthesize

reason for studying or completing worksheets, the intrinsic motivation for the student is diminished. When grades are used to establish a "student ranking," they enhance student competition and encourage a "win/lose" environment. Grades can be used in a manner which impacts positively upon student motivation.

The use of grades as the only form of feedback on student work is restrictive. Even though it is time consuming, a teacher is well advised to write a positive comment on each student's paper. The learner will be encouraged to continue to persist and will sense accomplishment in the learning process.

The Time Continuum Model challenges the educator to plan in a manner which will result in high dividends for learner and instructor. Such dividends may not be immediately visible. "Fringe benefits" may include students experiencing a sense of encouragement to persist, a recognition of effort and correct responses, and a willingness to engage in future learning experiences. When students are motivated, teachers are motivated.

Consider the teacher who practices a variety of grading procedures in the classroom. The first involves a situation in which students are allowed to "throw out" one graded paper of choice in each subject area at the completion of the week. Another technique allows students to receive a grade based on a single oral response. Students receive a grade (pass or fail)

based upon a single response. However, the student is given multiple response opportunities to modify the grade. These are relatively simple but effective means of communicating competence and reinforcement to the student. Teachers can be creative in attempting to balance the need to grade with the understanding of student motivation.

The teacher is the orchestrator of student learning. A sense of mutual learning and success can be established between teacher and student. Planning for successful instruction involves consideration of student attitudes, needs, stimulation, reinforcement, and competency. The challenge is to the educator.



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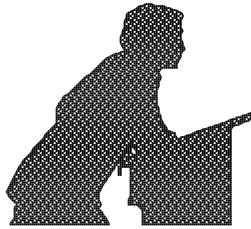
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(The next article in the series will involve specific strategies for motivational planning.)

...for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge to the young—let the wise listen
and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance...
Proverbs 1:4, 5

Profiles of Ministry:



Questions and Answers

Michael S. Hertig

Within five minutes of arriving at school, I knew it was going to be “one of those days.” It had actually started the evening before. One of my students, actually a rather bright individual, had been falling behind in most of his subjects. I called his parents to encourage them to push their child to do a better job with his school work. It’s not that he wasn’t capable, but his performance level was far below his ability. Now came the not unexpected phone call from his parents.

“Johnny couldn’t finish his assignments last night because we had to...,” and I didn’t really listen to the rest of the excuse. While the parent talked, my mind drifted to thoughts of ideal parent-teacher relationships, of previous students with similar problems, and of faculty members who had “warned” me about Johnny’s work habits.

I caught the last sentence from the parent, “We’ll keep trying to help Johnny get his work done.” I responded with a weak, “Thank you, I’ll keep trying, too.” It wasn’t the best start for a day.

The opening devotion thirty minutes later centered on differences between the law and the gospel. The Bible study lesson that day would be a discussion of Elijah’s ministry and his flight to the Sinai because of Jezebel’s threats to kill him. In the

devotion I made the point that the hammer of the law, while impressive and mighty, was in reality weak in comparison to the gospel. Our natural reaction to the law is rebellion and hatred; nobody wants to obey it gladly and willingly. It never will change the attitudes of the heart. In contrast, the gospel, which seems to be weak, has the real strength to change people’s hearts and attitudes. It alone gives us the desire to please God.

As I presented the devotion to my students, however, my own thoughts kept returning to the phone conversation earlier that morning. I was asking myself questions: What am I here for? Why do I keep on teaching? Is it really worth it all?

As questions like these arise in our various ministries it is good for our spiritual health to consider them carefully. Each one of us has been called into a position that provides unique opportunities for us to serve our Lord and Savior. At the same time, each of us is a redeemed child of God who daily struggles like St. Paul: “For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing” (Ro 7:19).

Let’s consider the first question I posed, “What am I here for?” It can be very simple to give the obvious answer—I’m here to serve as teacher of grade (fill in the blank) at (fill in the blank) Lutheran School.



Certainly this is the obvious answer, but it's also a very superficial answer! Our real purpose runs deeper. Each of us interacts seven hours a day, five days a week, nine months a year with a group of extremely impressionable young people. What we say and do has a tremendous impact upon them. We have the opportunity to guide, correct, and mold students who soon will be the adults and leaders of our congregations. Every day we evaluate and grade many assignments, but do we ever evaluate ourselves? If we do not, we ought to.

After devotion I continued with the Bible study lesson and sought to apply its truths to the students' lives. "Sometimes you might feel like you're the only one who believes," I exhorted. Then it hit me! The Lord's question to Elijah at Mt. Horeb, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" was the same as my question. Elijah had been running away from Jezebel, who was seeking to kill him. Convinced that he was a total failure, Elijah believed that obviously he was the last believer left on the face of the earth. Graciously, the Lord showed Elijah that he exercised his power to change hearts not through the law but through the gentle whisper of the gospel. Then the Lord told Elijah to get back to his job and faithfully carry out his assignments.

How many times haven't we taught this lesson to our students! Yet, if we do not apply the lesson to our own lives, we can easily fall into the same trap that Elijah did. The point of the matter is that each one of us also has a job to do, a job that the Lord has appointed. God will prove himself faithful, and will grant us the suc-

cesses or failures (as we see them) according to his good and gracious will.

The second question I asked myself was, "Why do I keep on teaching?" When people ask such a question, we can give what sounds like a wonderful answer, "I want to serve my Lord and Savior," or something similar. Meanwhile, other reasons can be passing through our mind: "I can retire in only three more years." "What else would I do for a living?" "I can't quit because I'd really disappoint..." Let's face it, most of us have been tempted to give it all up and move on to some other vocation. After all, who enjoys facing frequent problems and setbacks? Such attitudes, however, are rooted in doubt and fear.

Not too long ago I received an invitation to a high school graduation from one of my former students. Along with the invitation was a short heartfelt note that read in part,

"I'm writing to say THANK YOU. As much as anyone else, you are responsible for me becoming valedictorian of my class. You pushed me harder than any other teacher that I remember. You gave me the base for my education. I couldn't have achieved this without you."

This was one of several notes I had received from this student over the years. Because I knew he would be attending a public high school, I realized that he needed to be firmly grounded in his religious convictions. In one of those notes he related to me that holding to creation rather than evolution in his biology class caused him some difficulties. His faith was assaulted, but it did not waver. Truly, his is a real success story.



For every success, though, it seems that there is also a failure. Other students of mine have not achieved as I would have hoped. There are always the students about whom we make the comment, "Whatever happened to...?" We seldom see them attending church; some fail to "show up" even at Christmas or Easter. At times such as these, we tend to question our calling and evaluate ourselves very negatively, yet these are the times when we can truly boast. St. Paul understood this truth when he said, "I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Co 12:9).

The third doubt I raised earlier was, "Is it really worth it all?" There are times when the Old Adam within me answers this question with a "No." After I've exercised my best judgment in disciplining a child, it is indeed disheartening to receive a telephone call from the parents questioning my methods or motives in the situation. You know it—that sinking feeling that leaves you unmotivated and depressed. That's when we feel that no job needs to be that aggravating.

When I was in eighth grade, teaching was about the furthest thing from my mind. Yet my eighth grade teacher thought I should pursue the teaching ministry. I told him, "No, I'm going to pursue a career in science." He replied that I could be a science teacher. Even though I had my own plans, the Lord guided my life other-

wise. My confirmation verse, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go (Jos 1:9)," has meant a great deal to me during the years of my teaching ministry. It's almost as if my pastor knew I would need this comfort in the years to come. When I again ask myself the question, "Is it really worth it all?" the New Man within me answers with a resounding "Yes!"

There is an overworked expression, "Misery loves company." Instead of taking this self-pitying attitude and sulking in our own failures, we can rejoice in the Lord who richly blesses each of our ministries. Instead of boasting in our successes, may we collectively thank the Lord who has indeed been gracious to each of us. He has promised us, "[My Word] will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I desire

and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Is 55:11). What a great comfort this is! By the standards of the world, we may not be a very big success. We may even be branded a failure. However, it is the Lord who defines what success and failure are. God has called us to be faithful in our callings. Period! May we all be faithful servants of our gracious and loving Savior.

Michael Hertig serves as principal and upper grade teacher at Trinity Lutheran School, Caledonia, WI.

**“
It is the Lord
who defines
what success
and failure are.
God has called
us to be faithful
in our callings.
Period!
”**

The Coordinated Religion Curriculum— Checking the Course

Gerald F. Kastens

The 1989 Synod convention set into motion plans for an ambitious publication program for youth when it authorized the development of a coordinated religion curriculum. The project was launched by the Board for Parish Education when it responded by commissioning David Kuske, Professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to develop the framework for the curriculum. In 1991, the reorganized Board for Parish Services further responded to the 1989 enabling motion when its members assigned to the newly formed Commission on Youth Discipleship the responsibility for directing and carrying out a \$2.8 million publication proposal. Over a year has passed since Professor David Kuske completed the initial planning of the scope and sequence for the Christ-Light Coordinated Religion Curriculum. So how have things been going? Is the project on course? When will things become available?

During the summer of 1992, thirty-one pastors and teachers were assigned and began writing the first lessons. All of the Bible study courses

for grades seven and eight and one-third of the material for grades nine through twelve are scheduled to be completed and ready for field testing by late 1993. The schedule also calls for the completion of cradle roll materials and Bible lessons through age five late in the summer of 1993. Generally, these writers are on sched-

ule. Writers workshops scheduled to be conducted in June of 1993 and 1994 will launch the development of the remaining high school, elementary school, and vacation Bible school lessons. While some materials will become available earlier, the completion of the entire curriculum is tentatively planned for 1997.

Elements of the existing curriculum will be phased out as new resources become available.

The authors of Christ-Light continue to be guided by four key elements in their approach to the development of learning activities for the curriculum. Each lesson of the curriculum builds upon what was learned earlier and can be integrated easily with that which is to be learned in Sunday school, elementary and high school,



vacation Bible school, and confirmation class. The Bible lessons taught during the elementary years present God's plan of salvation in a chronological order with Christ at the center. Beginning with grade seven, lessons will provide youth an opportunity to be involved in topical Bible study for a more in-depth study of key spiritual truths. The leaders' manuals and student activities are being written to provide parents with the opportunity to be directly involved in the nurturing process. At the same time, we have asked our writers to suggest a variety of teaching techniques and activities for teachers. Finally, activities developed for each lesson are to center around knowing God's Word (cognitive), and remembering and putting God's Word into practice (affective).

One of the unique features being utilized for curriculum development is the use of consultants. Each author has selected two individuals who have been identified as creative and able to generate a variety of approaches and activities for a Bible lesson. The writer then meets with the consultants to do some brainstorming before writing the lesson. This strategy has become an effective way to provide variety in lessons and a means to prevent writers from becoming bogged down in the writing process.

Early childhood teachers, youth workers, pastors, high school teachers, Lutheran elementary and Sunday school teachers, and parents continue to be consulted at each step of the curriculum's development. Preference for the style of art work, layout of pupil pages, the content of a new hymn course, and minor revisions

of wording of the Enchiridion are areas currently under consideration.

Enthusiasm and support for the development of the project is a clear indication that the curriculum is needed and anticipated. The most striking examples are the three area Lutheran high schools who have already begun to use the goals, scope and sequence, and lesson outlines in anticipation of the advent of Christ-Light.

Is the curriculum sailing on the course it should be? I believe so. When will the materials be completed? The answer to that question rests in the hands of our authors who are also busy classroom teachers and parish pastors. Please remember to pray for these talented and dedicated individuals who have agreed to serve their Savior by committing time and talents to this critical undertaking. May God give them the ability to accomplish that which they have set out with God's help to do.

Gerald Kastens is the Administrator for Youth Discipleship of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.



REVIEWS

REVIEWS

Your VCR and Educational Programming II

John W. Paulsen

In a previous article, I gave information about using a VCR to record educational programming from your local TV cable for classroom use. Recently a series of programs has been produced by The Discovery Channel (TDC) and The Learning Channel (TLC) that are worth using in the classroom. These are on-going programs and will be repeated in the fall of 1993. The current spring offerings consist of three major series (all times are Central Standard Time):

TLC Elementary School—Tuesday from 3:00-4:00 a.m. TLC

Assignment Discovery— Monday - Friday from 8:00-9:00 a.m. TDC

Teacher TV—Sunday from 5:00-5:30 p.m. TLC

The schedule for *TLC Elementary School* consists of the following one-hour programs with each being divided into shorter segments: Caterpillars and Other Small Creatures; Tales From the Brothers Grimm; Stories From Around the World; All Around the World.

These programs focus on language arts, mathematics, science or social studies. The segments should be easy to fit into the class day. The tapes may be kept and used for two years.

A more extensive series is also in *Assignment Discovery*. Each program consists of two commercial-free, twenty-five minute segments with questions and answers before and after

each segment. Each day of the week a different area of the curriculum is featured: Monday— science and technology, Tuesday—social studies, Wednesday—natural science, Thursday—arts and humanities, and Friday—contemporary issues.

The broadcast of the programs is complete in seven weeks. However, in the course of the spring schedule each program is aired three times for a total of 21 weeks. The repetitions provide a chance to record any that might have been missed. These programs may be kept for one year.

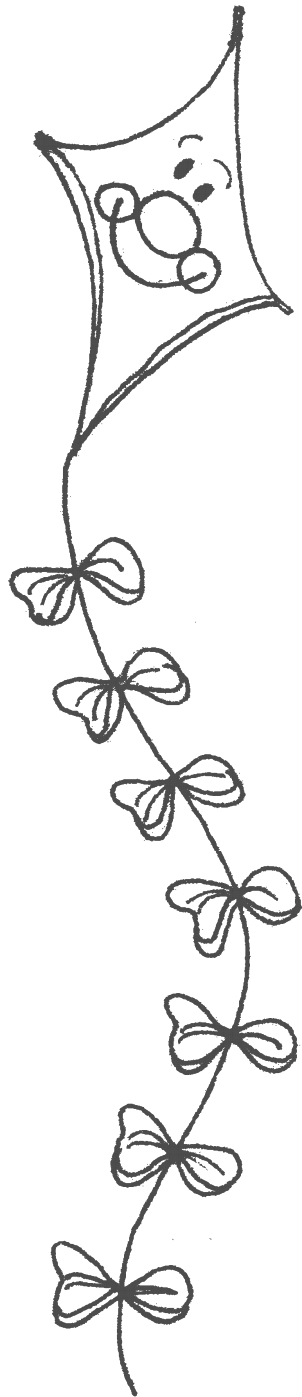
Teacher TV is a twelve-part series of programs for faculty development. These 30-minute programs could be used in faculty discussion groups or meetings. Some of the titles include Higher Order Thinking Skills; Student Health and Well-being; Throwing Out Rigid Structures.

As you begin planning for a new school year, remember to investigate the new fall series of these programs. They are well worth the small cost of blank videotapes and the effort to record them from the TV cable.

More information may be obtained by calling 1-800-321-1832 to request a free copy of *The Discovery Networks Educator Guide*. For detailed scheduling, call 1-800-347-6969 to subscribe to *Destination Discovery* for \$14.95 per year or *TLC Monthly* for \$9.97 per year.

John Paulsen is Media Director at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Teachers Share Ideas



A Birthday Cake for Jesus

Teachers of the younger children may want to plan special experiences for their students at Christmas time. To make Jesus' birthday celebration more real and meaningful, have a special birthday cake for Jesus. Put one candle on the cake for each child, because Jesus loves and was born to be the Savior of each one of them. Invite everyone to join in singing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus. Then ask everyone to help blow out the candles.

Rosalie Kutz
St. Paul's, Fort Atkinson, WI

Kindergarten Clay Time

Kindergarten children like to play with clay. To make the clean up easier, use masking tape to attach waxed paper to the surface of a table or desk. Tape the waxed paper down securely and have the children use only this area for their play with the clay. When it is clean-up time use handi-wipes for quick and easy cleaning.

Rosalie Kutz
St. Paul's, Fort Atkinson, WI

Kindergarten Snack Time

A snack which kindergarten children enjoy is the traditional "nuts and bolts" mixture of cereals, chips, raisins, peanuts, candy, etc. Such a mixture can also be a learning opportunity. Before eating the snack, have the children sort their portion according to size, shape, or color. Encourage the students to eat the group with the most first and the group with the least last. If there are M&M's or colored marshmallows, direct children to first eat the red ones, next eat the brown ones, and last eat the yellow ones. Then count groups of other colors.

Teachers Share Ideas

Snack time will be both purposeful and enjoyable with such activities.

Rosalie Kutz
St. Paul's, Fort Atkinson, WI

Mystery Box

Often it is difficult to help children form questions. To assist them in this task and to help them listen to each other, a mystery box can be used periodically.

Show a brightly wrapped, sealed box to your children. Explain that something is in the box and tell them that they will guess what is in the box by asking 20 questions. These questions must be worded so they can be answered by "yes" or "no."

As questions are asked, keep track of them with a tally on the board. If a question is repeated, answer it again. Questions and responses may be written on the chalkboard also, if desired.

Encourage the children to ask questions which will classify the object, such as, "Is it a fruit?" Items in the box can be selected to enhance a lesson also. As an example, lollipops, in the mystery box are great fun when the sound of the letter L is being studied. In the fall, we wrap up a pumpkin as our mystery box. Later it will be used to learn about weight estimation and for weighing experiences.

Pat Koch
Grace, Glendale, AZ

Again, a sincere thank-you to all the teachers who sent in ideas for "Teachers Share Ideas." A special thanks to Joy Klatt for her clipart. If your idea didn't get into this volume of the *Educator*, it will appear next year. If you have an idea, send it in. If you have some good clipart, send that also. Have a relaxing summer. IRM



Clipart
courtesy of
Joy Klatt



Fair Art

Ramona M. Czer

Dear Teachers:

Yes, I'd love to help judge your upcoming Art Fair! Thank you for asking me. What a welcome change from selling popcorn at the basketball tournaments!

But I'm not writing today just as a thankful parent. As you may know, I'm the temporary instructor this year for DMLC's "Art in the Elementary School" course. I feel blessed to have been allowed to develop these young people's attitudes towards art, as well as improve their knowledge and skills. Because of this experience and my own children's artistic endeavors, I have some thoughts I'd like to pass on to you about art and this upcoming Art Fair.

1) Students want to experience and enjoy art but they also fear it. Somehow—perhaps due to a society that scorns the aesthetic realm or to insensitive teachers or parents or to limited backgrounds—visual expres-

sion intimidates them. Even otherwise capable and confident students wail bleakly, "I just can't draw!" Teachers must actively chip away at this fear by breaking processes down into manageable steps and by encouragement, encouragement, encouragement. Tell them often, "Well, maybe you won't be the next van Gogh, but if you have eyes and fingers, you can learn to draw, paint and sculpt."

2) Provide them with as many materials as funds and creative acquisition will allow. As they explore new tools and media, they begin to see art as exciting and limitless and their cliched symbols miraculously disappear.

3) Make art a priority—not a once-a-month, Friday-afternoon kind of thing. One teenage artist told me he wished art was on the same level as music—"Instead of being more like recess!"

4) Be flexible with most projects so the risk-takers are rewarded not penalized. If you can allow changes in media or subject matter or style without compromising your goals for the lesson, do it. Often the students who ask to bend the "rules" have passion and produce something better than even you envisioned.

5) Remind them constantly that art can express our love for God. Show them Christian art of bygone eras



and how it is used today to honor and serve Him. I suggest we even have a Christian Art Exhibit someday and urge the children to explore spiritual themes in all media (not just with burned matchsticks and Luther seals).

6) Which brings me to a sticky point: I hope we will be instructed how to judge creative works alongside structured works at the Art Fair. Many projects teachers label "art" are really crafts or busywork that all turn out basically identical. Could there be a separate category for these sometimes worthwhile but less "creative" projects?

7) As you decide how to reward the young artists, consider this: they will deeply resent both the overcritical approach and the overly kind one. If

they have worked hard on their art and invested themselves in it, rewarding only the best of the best will frustrate them. "Why did I bother?" they'll say. "We knew those kids were going to win anyway."

On the other hand, if everybody gets a blue or white ribbon their effort seems wasted too. "My project took ten times longer than hers—how come we both got blue ribbons?" Does the ribbon explain why?

I would suggest a criteria-based ballot which the students can later see and learn from. There should be a true range of awards (first, second, and third) in many different categories, but be sure you don't allow more than half the projects to receive awards—that keeps them special. Certificates however could be awarded to all participants.

I'd also like to see our school have non-judged art exhibits more frequently. We need to communicate to children that, like sports and music, art can be participated in competitively or shared informally for pure enjoyment as well.

I hope you haven't minded me sharing these lengthy thoughts. Mull over the ones that interest you; then use or discard them as you see fit. If our Art Fair does nothing more than encourage young Christians to grow creatively, I will applaud it. As Emerson said and I believe, "Imagination is not a talent of some men but is the health of every man."

A Parent and Fellow-Teacher

Ramona Czer teaches art in the Education Division at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Enchiridion Review

The Board for Parish Services has appointed a committee to review the wording of the Enchiridion (Six Chief Parts). The committee will consider the replies to the proposed changes which were mailed to all called workers in July 1992. The committee will also review other parts of the Enchiridion. This review is being done so that any changes can be included in the new Christ-Light Coordinated Religion Curriculum. Pastors, teachers, and laypersons are invited to comment and give suggestions to any of the committee members listed below.

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