

What Do Lutheran Teachers Do?

The next day, Mr. Johnson was standing at the edge of the playground, keeping an eye on the kids before school started. Kelsey jumped off the swing and walked over to him. She dragged along her friend Sophie to give her courage.

“Uh, Mr. Johnson,” Kelsey said, “I know you got a call yesterday. My mom wanted me to say—well, *I* wanted to say—that . . . that . . .”

Sophie jumped in. “You can’t go, Mr. Johnson! You’re the best teacher we’ve ever had, and you’re so cool, and you tell the Bible stories better than anyone else, and you help us with our memory work, and you can’t go to that other school, really, you can’t, and—”

“Okay, okay!” Mr. Johnson laughed. “I think I get the picture! Listen, I’m going to talk to the class about my call after our devotion today. But thanks for the encouragement, girls. That was nice of you.”

Later in the classroom, Mr. Johnson said, “You’ve maybe heard that I received a call from another Lutheran school. I want to tell you a little about that call.”

No one looked surprised. News travels fast.

“Here,” he said, “I coach soccer and play organ and, of course, teach a really great fourth grade class.” They all smiled. “At the other school, I would teach sixth grade, direct the church choir, and be the athletic director.”

Kelsey made a mental note: “That call is for sixth grade! If he goes, we can always move to that other school before I get into sixth grade.”

“But no matter where I go,” he continued, “some very important things will stay the same. Do you know what they are?”

He paused, then said, “I’ll still teach God’s Word to great kids like you. I’ll still spread the good news of Jesus. I’ll still serve people by teaching, doing music, and . . .”

“And telling bad jokes?” Sophie said. Everybody giggled.

“Sure!” Mr. Johnson said. “I’ll use all the gifts God has given me to serve him.”

Mark 16:15: [Jesus said,] “Go into all the _____
and preach the _____ to all creation.”

Discussion

1. What did Kelsey and Sophie tell Mr. Johnson? *They told him they really liked him as their teacher, and they didn't want him to go to the other school.*
2. How would Mr. Johnson's teacher duties change if he accepted the call to the other school? *He would teach sixth grade instead of fourth grade, he would become the athletic director, and he would direct the church choir.*
3. What important part of Mr. Johnson's work would not change? Underline the answer in your devotion. *Last three paragraphs from the bottom: "I'll still teach God's Word . . . I'll still share the good news of Jesus. I'll still serve people . . . I'll use all the gifts God has given me to serve him." Students could also underline "telling bad jokes," as a sense of humor is a God-given gift too!*
4. Why is teaching God's Word the most important kind of service? *Teaching God's Word has results that last forever. Math, English, and science are important subjects too, but nothing is more important than learning and then telling others that Jesus is our Savior, who died for us and who wants to bring us to heaven.*
5. Let's look at Mark 16:15: What two words are missing there? *World, gospel. Mr. Johnson will be obeying this command of Jesus, whether he teaches at Kelsey's school or at the other one. What other people go into all the world and preach the good news that Jesus is the Savior? Lead the students to two answers: First, God calls certain people to do this work publicly—teachers, pastors, staff ministers, missionaries, professors, and others. Second, every Christian is to spread the good news about Jesus. This command is for all of us, even kids!*
6. How many of you think Mr. Johnson will accept his call to that other school? How many think he will stay at Kelsey's school? *Of course, the students' responses don't matter much. This question will simply keep their curiosity piqued. It may also give you an opportunity to share an experience you have had with a call.*

Activity – Gifts and Talents

1. Students can put a checkmark by all of them. Discuss when and how called workers can use different gifts, depending on the roles they fill: Bible study leaders, counselors, coaches, choir directors, etc.
2. Students can circle any of them. Depending on the dynamic in your classroom, you may tell them ahead of time that this will be a private exercise, and no one will know what they circled. Or you could have each student compliment the student in front of them by pointing out a gift they have.
3. Encourage students to picture themselves using these gifts as a pastor, teacher, or staff minister someday. Perhaps the boys can see themselves in a pulpit, preaching a sermon, or any of the children can see themselves teaching a math lesson at a whiteboard, or coaching a basketball team, or directing a band. The public ministry is about sharing the gospel, but that can be done in many different ways and in many different settings.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord Jesus, for pastors and teachers who serve churches and schools by spreading the good news about Jesus. Thank you for all the different gifts you give to each of them. Thank you for the gifts that you give to me too. However I use those gifts—as a pastor or teacher . . . an architect or police officer . . . or anything . . . please help me to love and serve you all my life. Amen.

Optional Hymn: 898 Send, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit