

The Classroom as Mission Opportunity: Church and School Working Together

*Lutheran Schools are positioned to reach the unchurched and not yet reached children of God with the precious gift of the Gospel. This can best happen as the school and congregation work together to welcome, include, and nurture families who are new to the faith. Too often, the mission relationship of congregation and school is weak or non-existent. Being **Ablaze!** for God's Mission means working together to share the Gospel.*

*The following are examples of activities that can be done to enhance and increase the **Ablaze!** efforts of congregations and schools working together for the sake of God's mission.*

Mission Opportunity

- a. Classrooms are populated with children who are not members of the congregation. In Early Childhood Education, only 11% are from the operating congregation. In the Elementary Schools, while this member children comprise a greater number, those who claim no church connection is often greater than 50%.
- b. We are blessed with the opportunity to see these children (and often their families) are a daily basis.

Challenge

- a. The Critical Event: sharing the Gospel of Jesus
- b. A natural place for the critical event is in the course of the school day.
- c. Most often, the congregation is not connected to the mission outreach possibilities of the school.
- d. How do we strengthen that connection?

Possibilities

- a. Identify a congregational member who is charged with task of overseeing that this happens
- b. Establish a rocker committee
- c. Prepare Good News bags for children to use when they come to church
- d. Have members from the welcoming committee participate in welcoming children when they come to school
- e. Assign congregational mentors to each unchurched family
- f. Invite, invite, invite
- g. Review the worship experience to assess for friendliness factor
- h. Prepare children for the worship experience - help to interpret it for them
- i. Have members be prepared to sit with and assist a new family
- j. Plan for children to sing in worship
- k. Invite congregation to school events
- l. Be certain to include a page or column in the church newsletter
- m. Have pastor regularly write a column in the school newsletter

- n. Adopt a grandparent program
- o. Celebrate baptisms
- p. Establish regular chapel procedures - helps to explain the worship service (liturgy)
- q. Reading buddies program
- r. Chutes and Ladders or dominoes partners
- s. Celebrate faith and family milestones
- t. Have children's work in the hallways
- u. Remember children (from congregation) with cards on their birthdays and baptismal days
- v. Sponsor a Grandparents Tea - invite all the grandparents
- w. Offer a parent's Bible study/parenting group during the school day
- x. Be prepared to show Christian care and compassion when there is a new birth or family emergency
- y. Include your children and their families on the prayer lists of the congregation
- z. Visit them in their homes - school and church
- aa. Invite students to Sunday School. Invite their teacher to school to introduce them
- bb. Pray regularly for each student and their family
- cc. Offer evangelism-witness training session for the congregation, helping them to understand the special challenges and needs of working with young children and families who may have no church vocabulary
- dd. Provide family fellowship activities
- ee. Encourage families to have home devotions