

Early Childhood Place

LEA's Early Childhood Educators Network

Summer 2003

WELCOME!

Reception Desk

**THINK BACK
TO A MEMORABLE
VACATION.** More than

likely, you took pictures to remember places and events. These memories and events each have had an impact on your life. You were changed and have grown by your experiences.

The Bible is a picture-less photo album filled with historical and spiritual events that have made an impact on our faith and continuous walk with the Lord. Several that come to mind are:

- God's promise to send a savior to Adam and Eve
- The shepherds worshipping the newborn King
- Jesus hanging on the cross for our sins
- The empty tomb on Easter morning

The list goes on and on. When you need comfort, support, or when you feel joyful and want to celebrate, you can turn to the Bible and find the peace and joy that waits for you there.

As directors, teachers, and assistants in Lutheran centers, it is

your job to imprint these spiritual events into the hearts of the children as they grow in faith.

Think of ways you can make a Christ-centered impact on your children's lives. Develop ways to give your children mental pictures of how God and Christ can change them as they grow in His love. Get children and families excited to look, read, and learn what the Bible has to say to them in the same way they enjoy looking at a vacation album.

Each day children go home with memories and mental pictures from your room. Do they leave with a positive spiritual mark that will change their life, or with an historical event that only touches the head and not the heart? Each day consciously look for ways to impact the children and their families as they continue on their spiritual growth journey.

And as always, encourage your children through God's word to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Matthew 22:37 NIV).

Eunice McCarty

LEA Early Childhood Educators
Network Chair

Teacher's Desk

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen”

(2 Peter 3:18 NIV).

AS ADULTS, WE ARE NOT AS EXCITED as our students about our physical growth. Our growing happens because of too much eating and sitting and not enough moving and doing. In fact, we turn to exercise and diet programs to fight this kind of growth. Perhaps you have a plan to begin that daily walking regimen?

Other kinds of growth are more than welcome in our lives. For instance, we always have room to grow professionally. Workshops, classes, reading, and maintaining membership in organizations like

LEA are ways we can grow and learn as professionals in a critical profession. Perhaps you have a plan to read that journal article, visit a new Web site, or attend a conference this summer?

The Bible verse reminds us of another welcome kind of growth. Through the blessing of our Savior we can look forward to “growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” God’s Word, as a part of our daily routine, is more than wisdom to meet the challenges of our ministry. The diet of His word is more than the comfort He offers as He helps us with the struggles of our life and work. The daily exercise of opening our Bible feeds our faith, strengthens our

relationship with our heavenly father, offers a clearer understanding of His plan for us, and causes us to grow in grace.

By all means, develop a plan to improve your health by limiting calories ingested and increasing calories burned. Certainly, as your professional organization, we recommend that you grow professionally. Please, also remember to exercise your Bible muscles and increase your diet of His word.

God’s promise is clear. With His word and His blessing we will grow in His grace. However your routine change, may you always continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of your precious Savior.

GETTING READY FOR A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

involves lots of planning.

While your curriculum is mostly set, there are many other details to handle before kids step foot inside your center or classroom

door. An important part of getting ready is building relationships with staff members. A staff that works

well together is one that trusts each other and has built a rapport with each member. A staff that works well together can work well with parents and children also.

A Web site that can help is maintained by the Circle of Inclusion project at the University of Kansas (www.circleofinclusion.com). On this site, you will find methods for in-service meetings regarding staff building, roles and responsibilities of how early childhood professionals can work together to create more positive staff relationships, and working with parents to ease the transitions between home and school. Check out this site and see how you can build up your colleagues as you work together to link, equip, and affirm them in their ministry.

Do you have a Web site that has been helpful to you in theme planning, relating with parents, or is simply uplifting? You can share this site by sending information to others via the ECEnet listserv. Or send the site address to us at suzanj@pngusa.net.



Media Center



THOUGH THE EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP ACADEMY was canceled this summer for lack of enrollment, the training available through this program remains invaluable.

The Early Childhood Leadership Academy is a unique way for professionals to work together to discuss situations facing those in early childhood related ministries. The academy process shares what has worked in the past and new ways to respond to common situations. Together, the group is able to build upon each person's experience and come to understand how to work with parents and other church leaders to better serve their center or school.

As educators and leaders in the Lutheran church, we recognize that strong and capable leaders are a key to successful ministry programs. From positive feedback received in the past, we know the Early Childhood Leadership Academy is a good way to build strong and capable leaders.

LEA's Early Childhood Educators Network leadership plans to package this academy in a design what will make it more accessible in the future. Watch the LEA Web site for information about the next Early Childhood Leadership Academy. Plan to make this conference a resource for your professional growth.

Playground

GROWTH HAPPENS BEST in the early childhood years when children are encouraged to use all five senses for learning. Here are some fun classroom ideas you can try with the children in your ministry. These activities are especially good for outdoor play areas. Have fun, and may God richly bless you.

- Mix one cup Dawn® or Joy® dish soap with two cups of water and a capful of glycerin (available at pharmacies) to make a bubble mixture. Add equal parts tempera paint and allow the mixture to sit for 3 hours. Children use wire whisks to create colorful bubbles. Place a sheet of paper gently on the bubbles to create "bubbleful" pictures.
- Add pinwheels and wind chimes to the playground or flower garden area.
- Make musical instruments and form a "praise band" to march around center property. Perhaps your marching band or choir could make a field trip to a local retirement community.
- Finger paint with shaving cream or pudding. (But not on the same day!)
- Make peanut butter clay with 16 ounces of creamy peanut butter, 6 tablespoons of honey, and 2 or 3 cups of nonfat dry milk. Mix all together by adding the milk one cup at time. Additional milk will solve stickiness. Check for peanut allergies before attempting this project.
- Layering chocolate cookie crumbs, pudding, and gummy worms in a cup creates a yummy "dirt" snack.
- Mix equal parts water and cornstarch in a dish pan or water table to give the children an experience with "goop."

Growing with our five senses can be a messy experience! We hope you are blessed with warm weather that allows you to use some of these ideas in your outdoor play area.



Mailbox!

OUR LEA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS NETWORK THEME for this year is “Sharing your Faith with Families.” In keeping with this theme, we are pleased to include directions and devotions for a send-home devotion project for your students.

Assemble the kits as described and send the supplies, directions, and the age-appropriate devotion home with your students. The activity is designed to be completed by each family at home. Young children are excited to do homework, and sending the supplies will make it more likely that families will find time to complete the activity.

We pray this activity will be a blessing for you and your families as you help the children in your care to “grow in the grace.” (2 Peter 3:18 NIV)

IT WAS OUR EPIPHANY CHAPEL when I was reviewing the Christmas story. “The skies were dark all around and the sheep were sleeping, when all of a sudden there was a powerful light! It was an angel. And do you know what the angel said?”

A little four year old blurted out with glee: “It’s a boy!”

Thank you to Heather Olsen, Director of Woodlands Lutheran Preschool

Send your best “Heard in the Halls” to us at kmarxha@lps.org

**Heard
in the
Halls**