



Spiritual Nurture in the Lutheran Early Childhood Classroom: LEA Training Modules for EC Consultants, Administrators & Educators

Module 1: The Climate and Culture of the Lutheran Early Childhood Environment

Dr. Annette Anschutz, Professor, Concordia University Nebraska & Lisa Aring, Director, St. John's Child Development Center, Seward, NE

Do our classrooms reflect a Gospel-centered learning in an environment where teachers are intentional about how they develop & grow relationships, as the Holy Spirit brings each child to faith? (Rathmann, 2016). How do we plan for ECE environments, routines, schedules, and conversations that nurture children and families in the faith, while supporting children's learning?

Module 2: Telling His Story: The Children Hear God's Story with Wonder & Awe

Andrea Lohman, Preschool Teacher, Zion Lutheran, St. Charles, MO & Cheryl Haun, Early Childhood Consultant

Do we tell His Story with wonder & awe serving as a conduit for the "work of God's Spirit to grasp the heart of the child?" Simple props allow children to "enter" The Story through "doing". We allow children to "wonder and question" and to think out loud (Stonehouse & May, 2010, pp.86). We want to know our students well, keep "play" in the learning, connect faith to their real world, set goals for faith lessons, and give children opportunity to reflect and talk about their developing faith stories (BernardBull, 2016).

Module 3: Authentic Reflections of Children's Understandings of Faith & Bible Stories

Cheryl Haun, Early Childhood Consultant & Andrea Lohman, Preschool Teacher, Zion Lutheran, St. Charles, MO

Teaching the faith is about so much more than a lesson, a prayer, and a song. Faith integration allows children to "understand God's love as it is modeled, as they feel God's love in relationships and share God's love with others" (Marxhausen, 2016). Child authored artifacts of God's Story reflect their understanding of God's unconditional love for them and their role as a child of God.

Module 4: Seasons & Celebrations of the Church Year

Bev Gruenwald, Director, St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center, Des Peres, MO & Lisa Larson, Teacher & Campus Manager at Christ Community Lutheran Schools, Kirkwood, MO

"The rhythms and seasons of the church year keep us rooted in our Christian heritage and are an important part of our spiritual growth and faith development. How do we teach this to our littlest members?" (Danyew, 2011–2021). The church year is so much more than Advent and Lent. The seasons of the church year reveal God's promises and His plan for salvation and forgiveness that is ours in Jesus. The colors, symbols, music, and worship connect God's children to their faith history and redemptive work of Jesus Christ, His Son, our Savior.

Module 5: Faith-Filled Family Communications and Connections

Dian Schlichtmann, Preschool/Pre-kindergarten Teacher, St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, Stevens Point, WI & Tracie Douglas, Early Childhood Consultant, Immanuel Lutheran, Glenview, IL

Are we supplanting or supporting families? Parents benefit when a faith community becomes a place to share and learn from one another—a place of helpful insights and resources, and a safe place to grow family faith. How do we share stories of faith with families? Are we astute in knowing how our families connect with our classroom experiences? Are our children equipped to take their Stories home?