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Making
Disciples
for Life



**NATIONAL
LUTHERAN
SCHOOLS WEEK**



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This manual uses the following hymnal abbreviations:

Lutheran Service Book (LSB)

All God's People Sing! (AGPS)

One and All Rejoice (OAR)

WELCOME LETTER

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Every year, we look forward to National Lutheran Schools Week (NLSW) and the opportunity it brings to celebrate with over 1,850 schools nationwide. We give thanks for the gift of Lutheran schools to our students, families and the communities they serve. Churches and schools rejoice in partnership with a shared vision for proclaiming God's grace and mercy to equip the next generation of faithful Christian servants. We give thanks to God for the opportunity to touch the lives of thousands and thousands of children and their families who attend Lutheran schools.

"Making Disciples for Life" is the NLSW theme this year, inspired by Matthew 28:18–20: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with always, to the end of the age."

In our schools, we make ourselves known as followers of Jesus by following His example. It's the message that is taught and lived daily in Lutheran school classrooms across the nation and abroad. We share the Good News of Jesus so that all who believe in Him will have eternal life.

Lutheran schools make an eternal difference, emphasizing that every aspect of life focuses on learning and living as disciples of Jesus. In classrooms, chapel and the myriad of activities that students and their families experience, Lutheran school disciples follow Jesus. From school to home and in their communities, students are equipped to "make disciples of all nations."

Students look forward to NLSW every year. In the mix of open houses, spirit days, service-learning experiences, and the many creative ways schools celebrate this special week, we have joy in the promise of eternal life. Jesus' commission ends with His promise, "I am with you always, to the end of the age," (MAT. 28:20). We rejoice that through His Word, He continues to dwell in His disciples. As disciples, we live in His victory and share the Good News with one another and the world. May the work of our Lutheran school disciples be a blessing to all.

IN HIS SERVICE AND YOURS,

Dr. Rebecca Schmidt

Director, LCMS School Ministry
The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod



PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION



Whereas, God loves us and sent His Son to be our Savior; and

Whereas, God alone works to save us from sin, death and the power of the devil; and

Whereas, God delivers that salvation to us by grace through faith because of Jesus; and

Whereas, Lutheran schools provide opportunities for teachers and students to teach and hear this Good News of God's love; and

Whereas, Jesus told His church to “make disciples of all nations”; and

Whereas, Jesus told His church to make disciples by “teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you”; and

Whereas, Faith comes through hearing the Word of God; and

Whereas, The students in Lutheran schools are disciples of Jesus through their Baptism and faith that come through hearing; and

Whereas, The teachers in Lutheran schools are also disciples through Baptism and faith; and

Whereas, Salvation by grace through faith because of Jesus comes through God's Word; and

Whereas, Lutheran schools teach the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection for sinners; and

Whereas, Hearing and learning God's Word marks the life of each Christian; and

Whereas, Hearing and learning God's Word continues throughout a Christian's life; and

Whereas, Every Christian bears witness to Christ to his neighbors; and

Whereas, Lutheran schools strive for excellent instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and all areas to prepare students for service in this world; and

Whereas, National Lutheran Schools Week is an occasion to encourage the church to Make Disciples for Life; therefore, be it

Resolved, That Jan. 22–28, 2023, be officially proclaimed as National Lutheran Schools Week in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

INTRODUCTION



JESUS “MAKES” DISCIPLES. Other rabbis of Jesus’ day gathered disciples by promising wisdom, dynamic personality, church or community reputation, or other human standards. Jesus calls fishermen, tax collectors, zealots and doubters and says, “Follow me” (MATT. 4:19). Jesus “makes” them His disciples by demonstrating His miraculous power. Jesus “makes” them His disciples by teaching them that His is not an earthly kingdom of glory, but a kingdom gained only through His sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus “makes” them His disciples by showing them His scarred hands and feet and the visible proofs of His resurrection from the dead. Jesus “makes” His disciples by giving them the Pentecost power of the Spirit. Jesus “makes” the Twelve His disciples “for life” during their earthly journey with Him; but more importantly, He makes them His disciples for eternal life.

JESUS STILL “MAKES” DISCIPLES. His Great Commission gives the means: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (MATT. 28:19). Blessed to administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the church makes disciples of Jesus. Lutheran schools are blessed to teach and share the power of Baptism. Baptismal “birthdays” are celebrated, as are the gatherings of parents and their children at the baptismal font.

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS “MAKE” DISCIPLES by “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (v. 20). Jesus’ redeeming work is the message shared in Lutheran school worship settings, classrooms, extracurricular activities and in all contexts with families and friends. While Lutheran schools make disciples for every aspect of life during their Lutheran school education and for life experiences thereafter, the ultimate desire is to have students, staff and every constituent be disciples of Jesus for eternal life. Every aspect of daily, annual and decades-long ministry of a Lutheran school is to have every child and “all nations” receive eternal life, believing in the crucified and risen Savior.

THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL IS BLESSED to “make disciples” as an extension of the local congregation. A National Lutheran Schools Week celebration with the church family is encouraged. A message based on the theme text is included. Consider including a school choir or another form of involvement/recognition of the “disciples” in the Lutheran school to enhance the theme of the celebration.

THIS YEAR, National Lutheran Schools Week emphasizes the “making” of disciples: children, families and all nations. It also emphasizes the role of the church and disciplers (teachers, pastors and other “disciples”) as God’s instruments in making and equipping disciples. While themes are initially assigned to National Lutheran Schools Week days, you may choose the order that best fits your local celebration. In addition to daily devotional themes used by staff and students, “Other Assignments” exploring the disciples theme are included for classroom, school or church celebrations.

May Lutheran schools continue to “make disciples for life” in Jesus’ name.

HYMN

“Once, a Long, Long Time Ago”

A NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK HYMN FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Based on the 2022–2023 NLSW theme: “Making Disciples for Life” and Matthew 28:18–20

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

BY JEFFREY E. BURKART

Sung to WEIL ICH JESU SCHÄFLEIN BIN — “I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb” (LSB 740)

Once, a long, long time ago,
Jesus told His students, “Go!
Tell all people of all nations
That I’m King of all creation!
Tell them I came from above
To this world to show God’s love.”

Matthew 28:18

Colossians 1:16–20

John 3:16–17

Jesus said, “Trust what I say.
Make disciples ev’ry day!
In the name of God the Father,
Son, and Spirit baptize others
So they come to faith in Me
And from all their sins are freed.”

Matthew 28:19

Acts 2:38

“Tell Good New, proclaim God’s Word
To all nations so it’s heard
In all times and in all places
To all people of all races.
Teach the world about God’s grace
Till, in heav’n, they see My face.”

Matthew 28:20

Jesus said, “I am with you!
To you I am always true.
In those times when you are cheerful,
And whenever you are fearful,
You are Mine and I will be
With you through eternity!”

Matthew 28:20

Isaiah 43:1

Once, A Long, Long Time Ago
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WEIL ICH JESU SCHÄFLEIN BIN
Meter: 778 877

2/8/22 – Revised 3/15/22

HYMN

“To His Disciples, Jesus Said”

THE 2022–2023 NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK HYMN

Based on Matthew 28:18–20 and the NLSW theme: “Making Disciples for Life”

BY JEFFREY E. BURKART

Sung to ALLEIN GOTT IN DER HÖH (“All Glory Be to God on High,” LSB 947)

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

1. To His disciples, Jesus said,
“All pow’r on high to Me is giv’n. *Matthew 28:18*
Now go forth, as Good News you spread,
To all of those so riven *Riven: torn apart, broken*
By sin, despair, and lack of love,
Who seek salvation from above,
Yet know not of their Savior.”

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”

2. “Go, therefore, and proclaim My Word *Matthew 28:19*
To ev’ry nation freely.
Make new disciples who are stirred
To live in Me completely. *Galatians 2:20*
With Word and Sacraments you’ll go; *Ephesians 6:10–20*
By grace, through faith, My love they’ll know
And trust in Me, their Savior.”

“...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”

3. “Baptize them in the name of God, *Matthew 28:19*
The Father, Son, and Spirit!
In faith, they’ll speak God’s truth abroad *John 6:14*
Till all the nations hear it.
Then they will baptize others who
Will spread God’s Word in all they do; *1 Corinthians 10:31*
And glorify their Savior.” *Romans 6:4*

“...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

4. “Then teach God’s children, young and old, *Matthew 28:20*
To keep all I’ve directed.
Teach them to love, to serve, to hold *John 13:34–35*
The faith, as they’re connected *Ephesians 3:14–19*
To all the saints in heav’n and earth,
Through words of grace that grant new birth
To all who know their Savior.”

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- Δ 5. “Remember, I am with you now; *Exodus 3; Matthew 28:20; John 14:6*
I’ll stay with you forever.
I walk with you, and this I vow,
No pow’r can end or sever *Romans 8:38–39*
The love of God, the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
You are My own forever!” Amen. *Isaiah 43:1*

SUNDAY OR CELEBRATION SERVICE

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:18–20

SONGS

“Listen, God Is Calling” (LSB 833; OAR 305);
“Go into the World” (AGPS 101)



MESSAGE: “THE GREAT ASSIGNMENT”

Teachers give assignments. The type and complexity of the assignments vary with the age of the student and the content of the subject matter. The early childhood instructor says, “Take this worksheet home with you.” The first-grade teacher assigns students to practice reading with a parent. The fifth-graders may have math problems assigned as homework. High school students get more sophisticated projects assigned.

Teachers (rabbis) in Jesus’ day gave assignments, too. Seeking human knowledge and favor, they taught what Timothy later described as “different doctrine,” “myths” and “endless genealogies.” They were “teachers of the law” (1 TIM. 1:3–7). Their “assignments” led disciples to the philosophies and ways of the world and away from the truth. The lessons taught a life of guilt and, ultimately, eternal condemnation.

Jesus was “a teacher come from God” (JOHN 3:2). Jesus, the Son of God, was given an “assignment” from His heavenly Father. The assignment was to enter the “classroom” of the fallen creation. Jesus, the holy, all-powerful Son of God, was to take on human flesh so that He might not only teach the lesson of the kingdom of God but complete the greatest assignment ever given: the saving of sinners.

Jesus humbly took on the Father’s assignment. As the 12-year-old temple “student,” Jesus is already the teacher: “All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers” (LUKE 2:47). Jesus clarifies His immediate assignment, “I must be in my Father’s house” (LUKE 2:49). All that Jesus does is in keeping with God’s divine curriculum. Jesus’ ministry begins with His Baptism, “to fulfill all righteousness” (MATT. 3:15). The Father affirms His Son’s obedient and perfect response as His journey to the cross begins: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (MATT. 3:17). As Jesus is about to enter the “final” stage, the Father again affirms, “This is my beloved Son, with

whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (MATT. 17:5). The Master Teacher was the perfect student.

Classroom students of all ages may have incomplete assignments. Students often have less-than-perfect scores on their assignments. It is impossible for us to meet God’s demand to be perfect students. God’s test of the Ten Commandments gives our grade: “Failed!”

By His sacrificial death, Jesus completes all that is required for our salvation. From the cross, Jesus announces, “It is finished” (JOHN 19:30). The sacrifice is completed and accepted. Jesus’ completion was affirmed and announced to the disciples, “He has risen from the dead” (MATT. 28:7). Jesus’ resurrection affirmed that His completion was for the disciples and for the world.

Jesus’ completion was witnessed by the disciples. Jesus’ resurrection was the message of the Pentecost appearance of the Spirit and was the proclamation of those whom the Spirit had visited. The blessings of Jesus’ completion were not received by intellectual assent or completing human assignments, but by faith alone. The salvation “assignment” is completed and is ours by grace through faith (ROM. 3:22–28).

Lutheran schools operate under a necessity and sequence of assignments: Congregations give “assignments” to boards; boards give “assignments” to administrators; administrators give “assignments” to staff; staff give “assignments” to students. However, the mission and ministry of a Lutheran school is to celebrate and share that the Father assigned salvation to the Son. The Son perfectly completed the assignment; the Spirit, through the Means of Grace, brings the message and blessings of the completed assignment to the church, children, staff, parents, friends, neighbors and the world.

Matthew 28, commonly called the Great Commission, is also Jesus’ Great Assignment. Jesus demonstrates His completion through the 40 days of His

resurrection appearances. Shortly before His ascension, Jesus “assigns,” “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (v. 19). The apostles’ Spirit-led response to the assignment is shared in the Book of Acts. Peter and John witness boldly on the streets of Jerusalem. Saul, a persecutor of Christians, becomes a missionary to Gentiles. Deacons serve widows and the needy. Martyrs give their lives to defend the Gospel (Stephen). Others share their witness with travelers (Philip) who take the message to another area of the world.

Student responses to assignments are often less than energetic: “Do we have to do the assignment?” “How long is this going to take?” “When do I have to have it done?” However, the response of Jesus’ disciples was always the work of the Holy Spirit. They went boldly and with great joy.

In the centuries since the call of the first disciples, Jesus, through His church, has continued to call and equip His disciples to “make disciples.” Pastors begin their service to the congregation promising to nurture disciples as they “faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine” (*Lutheran Service Book: Agenda*, p. 179). Our Lutheran school teachers are privileged to “make disciples,” “trusting in God’s care, [seeking] to grow in love for those you serve, [striving] for excellence in your skills, and [adorning] the Gospel of Christ with a godly life” (*LSB Agenda*, p. 216).

Consider this: “_____ Lutheran School has been blessed to see God at work through the service of...”

(The pastor may want to note the faithful disciple-making of past or present pastors and teachers.)

Lutheran schools continue to make disciples “of all nations.”

(Examples might include missionary teachers who continue to make disciples in schools and other settings in various countries and cultures. Perhaps the school/church adopted a missionary or mission field. Examples might include a Lutheran school ministry in Vietnam and other Asian countries, or a Lutheran school ministry in the inner city or to minority groups.)

The devil may tempt us to sometime question the “business” of a Lutheran school ministry. Additional personnel and facilities sometimes put a strain on budgets. It may be difficult to find qualified Christian teachers. Sometimes state and other worldly

standards of accreditation challenge boards and administrators. The time and energy demands for the pastoral ministry and other staff may increase. At times, we may question the “assignment” of Lutheran education. Why is this so hard? Couldn’t we use our resources in better ways? How do we assemble a strong ministry team?

The answer is, “We have been given the assignment to make disciples.” We have heard Jesus say, “Let the little children come to me,” and we are humbled to make disciples of little children. We had the joy of unchurched parents asking to have their children baptized because a teacher or another parent has taken Jesus’ assignment personally and witnessed to another family. The school/church family demonstrated deeds of discipleship in caring for another child and family who has faced illness or experienced grief.

Lutheran schools make disciples for life and for eternal life. In her book *Go and Make Disciples* (Concordia Publishing House, 1992), author Jane Fryar tells the story of 7-year-old Jon. Jon’s single mother brought her struggling son to the principal’s office at the neighborhood Lutheran school to enroll him. Throughout the school year, Jon grew academically, socially and spiritually in his new school.

Late one Friday afternoon in early spring, the telephone rang in the principal’s office. Jon’s mom called to share that Jon would not be coming back to school. A drunk driver had hit Jon as he was riding his bicycle, and Jon had not survived the accident.

At the funeral home, Mom let the principal hold her close as the two cried together. “I’m so, so very sorry,” choked the principal. “I wish I could have ...” “No, don’t ... don’t apologize,” the grieving woman whispered through her tears. “I asked you to tell Jon about Jesus, and you did. Jon is with Jesus now, and we will be, too, someday. Thank you. Thank you for what you gave him, and for what you gave me.”

The Lutheran school had been God’s instrument of sharing the Means of Grace with Jon and his family. God’s servants in the Lutheran school had been called to “make a disciple” of Jon, and they had done so for his life in the school and for life eternal.

May God continue to direct and bless us as we “make disciples for life” in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHAPEL TALK

MAKING DISCIPLES FOR LIFE



SCRIPTURE

Matthew 4:18–20

TEXT

“And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ ... Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him” (MATT. 4:19, 22).

SONGS

“Come, Follow Me” (LSB 688; AGPS 85);
“Go and Baptize All the Nations” (OAR 349)

MESSAGE:

“JESUS CALLS DISCIPLES”

“Dinner’s ready!” the parent calls to the children. “Time to come in from recess!” the teacher calls to the class. “Hustle!” the coach calls to the team. “Love you!” the grandparent calls to the grandchild. Those and many other “calls” are part of our school and home life.

“Follow me!” Jesus calls to His disciples. Jesus was ready to begin His earthly ministry. Jesus chose 12 disciples who were invited to follow Him. They would follow Him walking to small towns, on boat rides across lakes, to the homes of friends, and they would know that He was true Man. They would follow Him to see His miracles and hear His teachings and know that He was true God. They would follow Him to the cross and see that He was the sacrifice for the sins of the world. They would follow Jesus from the empty tomb and know that He was truly alive and that His victory over death and the grave was certain.

Jesus concluded His earthly ministry with a commission (MATT. 28:18–20) to His disciples to “make disciples.” The disciples who followed Jesus invited others to join them in following Him.

Lutheran school students, staff and families also hear Jesus call, “Follow me!” Listening to and learning from God’s Word in classrooms and worship settings, we join the disciples in seeing Jesus as true Man and true God. We learn of Jesus’ call to Old Testament

followers to hear and follow the words of prophets. We follow shepherds to Bethlehem, Jesus and His parents to the temple, disciples to watch miracles take place. We follow Jesus to the cross and empty tomb.

We rejoice that we have received Jesus’ invitation to follow through our Baptism and are blessed to follow Him for life. Jesus promises His disciples, “I am with you always.” We follow Jesus at school, at home, while playing with friends in the neighborhood, and while practicing our favorite sport or activity with teammates. We are Jesus’ followers daily and for life. Following Jesus, we are assured that we receive eternal life.

Jesus’ commission also comes to us, “Go therefore and make disciples ... in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” During this National Lutheran Schools Week, we will celebrate following Jesus in our church, with our family, with our teachers and school leaders, and with other church members. We will learn what it means to “call” to our friends and to the world, “Follow Jesus!”

PRAYER

O Spirit, who didst once restore
Thy Church that it might be again
The bringer of good news to men,
Breathe on Thy cloven Church once more,
That in these gray and latter days
There may be those whose life is praise,
Each life a high doxology
To Father, Son, and unto Thee. (LSB 834:4)

MONDAY



MAKING CHILDREN DISCIPLES FOR LIFE

THE WORD FOR DISCIPLES

"Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" (MATT. 21:16B).

TEXT

Matthew 21:6–11, 14–16

STUDENT DEVOTION

Have you ever been to a parade? Have you ever been in a parade? Parades are fun — marching bands, floats and other entries. Today's Bible reading describes a parade. It's a parade on what we now call Palm Sunday. Jesus is the main "entry" in the parade as He rides a donkey down the streets of Jerusalem. People welcomed and praised Jesus, paving the streets with their cloaks and palm branches.

The crowd watching the parade, including children, honored Jesus with their chants, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Jesus was the Messiah who had been promised to and through the family of King David. Jesus' earthly ministry was about to be completed. Jesus, who rode on a donkey hearing the words of praise, was also the One who in a few days would be walking down the streets of the city, carrying a cross, hearing the jeers of the crowd who had begged for His crucifixion.

The Palm Sunday participation of children was no accident. The psalmist (PSALM 8:2) had prophesied, "Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise" (v. 16). Jesus welcomed children as His disciples. Jesus celebrates the praise of children.

Through the waters of our Baptism, Jesus has called us to be His disciples. In our Lutheran school, we are blessed to hear God's Word and in faith "see" the "parade" of Jesus' saving work for us: Jesus coming to earth as a baby, working miracles and sharing His teachings, riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, walking to the cross to die for our sins, and rising from the grave victoriously on Easter Sunday. For all that Jesus has done for us and for calling us to be His disciples, we also share our praise: "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, we celebrate that You welcome the praise of children. We praise You for coming to be our Savior, dying for our sins and rising again. May the children of our school praise You this week and forever. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

Visitors to Hamelin, Germany, see a "flow" of metal rats cemented on the streets highlighting Robert Browning's story of the Pied Piper. The Piper, angered for not receiving payment for ridding the city of rats, retaliated by leading the children to their demise.

Sadly, the "pipers" of the world are still playing their enticing songs. Lutheran school teachers and administrators observe and hear the "pipers" daily. Children use profane words heard from peers or adults. Children and families are more attune to media distractions rather than family devotions. Reports on weekend activities include many social, athletic and other activities rather than family worship. The "piper" plays, and the parade of children follow.

Lutheran school servants are blessed to see another "parade" not only on Palm Sunday and Holy Week, but every school day. We see Jesus riding down the streets of Jerusalem, walking to the cross and risen from the tomb. We see Jesus not just as random observers in the crowd. We see Jesus as His disciples, first called to follow in our Baptism. Through the hearing of His Word and the receiving of His body and blood, we continue to faithfully follow Jesus.

As Jesus' chosen "pipers," we share a different "tune." We share the songs of "Hosanna to the Son of David!" and "Alleluia to the risen Lord" and invite children to follow us as we follow Jesus.

What a joy it will be to see the parade that gathers with "all nations" as they are welcomed by the triumphant King.

DIALOG FOR DISCIPLES

What “pipers” are children hearing today that are leading them away from Jesus?

What are the blessings of being in the “parade” following Jesus? What are the joys of joining children on the parade “route”?

PRAYER

Christ the eternal Lord,
Whose promise here we claim,
Whose gifts of grace are freely poured
On all who name Your name;
With thankfulness and praise
We stand before Your throne,
Intent to serve You all our days
And make Your glory known. (*LSB* 829:1)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR MAKING DISCIPLES OF CHILDREN

- › Jesus makes children His disciples through Baptism. Have a baptismal birthday celebration!
- › Explore and celebrate children of the Bible: the boy who shared loaves and fish with Jesus, Naaman’s servant girl, shepherd “boy” David, “boy” Jesus in the temple, etc.
- › Discover opportunities to make “children in need” disciples: foster children, children in homeless shelters, etc.
- › Consider ways to involve children in worship. A dated but excellent resource is “Children Are Members” (published in 2004 by LCMS District and Congregational Services—Children’s Ministry).
- › Host a “Jesus loves the children of the world” celebration and learn about life in other countries.
- › God may call some as children to “make disciples” through professional church work. Share the joys and opportunities of making disciples as pastors, teachers, deaconesses, directors of Christian education, missionaries and other ministry vocations. Introduce students to Concordia university and seminary settings.
- › Learn about children’s advocacy groups in the community: protection of the unborn, safety for the abused, etc.
- › Coordinate a children’s parade through the school neighborhood.

TUESDAY



MAKING FAMILIES DISCIPLES FOR LIFE

THE WORD FOR DISCIPLES

"From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 TIM. 3:15).

TEXT

2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14–15

STUDENT DEVOTION

Do you have a favorite family "tradition"? Is there something you "always" do at birthday parties, Thanksgiving gatherings or Christmas celebrations? Is there a place you often go to for a family vacation? (Have students or teacher share "traditions.") A "tradition" is something that a family or group shares, perhaps from one generation to another.

Timothy's family shared something more important than a family activity or gathering place. Timothy's grandmother and mother shared their faith with Timothy. The Bible introduces us to Timothy in the Book of Acts (16:1–5). Timothy joined the apostle Paul on his missionary journeys. Paul considered Timothy a spiritual "son" (2 TIM. 1:2). Paul wrote two letters to Timothy encouraging him as a pastor and missionary. Timothy was told about Jesus by his grandmother and mother. The Holy Spirit used Timothy's family to teach him the truth of the Bible and the Good News of Jesus as His Savior.

God still uses families to teach His children about Jesus. Your family members are the Lois and Eunice whom God may have used to make you His disciple. Your family brought you to the waters of Baptism. Many of you are at our Lutheran school because your parents, grandparents or other family members wanted you to learn about Jesus in a Lutheran school.

Our families do many important things for us and with us. Our families provide us home, food, clothing and much more! Our family may provide us many special memories and activities. The most important thing that families can do for us is to teach us about Jesus and to worship Him together.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank You for bringing us into Your family through our Baptism. Bless our families to be places where our faith is shared each day and where our faith is passed on to future generations. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

Who was a significant faith "influencer" in your life? (Invite responses.) If that were a "Family Feud" question, the most popular responses would be mother (first place), father, other family member (grandmother, etc.) and then a variety of other "means" (friend, neighbor, etc.). We thank God for all those the Spirit uses to share "the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 TIM. 3:15).

Certainly our role as Lutheran school teachers and administrators is significant in faith teaching and growing. However, the reality is that our influence is secondary to the influence of the family. We thank God for those families who take the calling to "make disciples" of their children seriously and partner with us and support us in our day-to-day ministry.

In every school and classroom, there are families who do not know of the examples of Lois and Eunice. They do not know of the admonition of St. Paul (EPH. 6:4), "Fathers, ... bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." It is our privilege to not only make disciples of the children in our classrooms but to also disciple the families who bring their children to us. We pray for families and the Christian home, that they might be faith incubators. We invite families to join us in classroom devotion, school chapel and the Divine Service so that they, too, might hear the Good News and become disciples with and to their children. We can provide faith-nurturing resources for in-home Bible reading and devotions.

The Lutheran school is blessed to "make disciples" of children AND FAMILIES.

DIALOG FOR DISCIPLES

How have families been blessed through your Lutheran school ministry?

What family ministry initiatives have been undertaken by your church and school?

PRAYER

Christ the unchanging Word
To ev'ry passing age,
Whose timeless teachings still are heard
Set forth on Scripture's page;
Transform our thought and mind,
Enlighten all who read,
Within Your Word by faith to find
The bread of life indeed. (*LSB* 829:2)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR MAKING DISCIPLES WITH FAMILIES

- › Develop a “library” of family devotional and faith-nurturing resources; share appropriate “apps” for families to reference or download.
- › Offer Christian parenting classes for school and community families.
- › Invite families to attend school chapel services and Sunday worship with their children.
- › Introduce the church family to school families and introduce school families to the church family.
- › Offer family financial education and other opportunities to help families manage money, time, media and other resources.
- › Host a “family fun” afternoon or evening.
- › Introduce a “Family (or Families) of the Week” in school newsletters and other communications.
- › Offer support and resources for single-parent families or grandparents who parent children.
- › Invite the area Lutheran family agency (counseling, adoption, etc.) to share opportunities and resources for family ministry.

WEDNESDAY



MAKING DISCIPLES FOR LIFE IN THE CHURCH

THE WORD FOR DISCIPLES

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers"
(ACTS 2:42).

TEXT

Acts 2:42-47

STUDENT DEVOTION

What's the church? (Get responses from students: building, pastor, group of people, etc.). There's a song ("We Are the Church" from *All God's People Sing*), with the chorus that states, "I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus all around the world! Yes, we're the church together." The lyrics of the song state that "the church is the people!"

Many different nations of people were gathered in Jerusalem for the Pentecost celebration (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit filled the assembly, and the apostle Peter preached about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Luke, God's inspired author of the Book of Acts, tells us, "Those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (v. 41). Pentecost is sometimes called "the birthday of the church."

The verses of our text (Acts 2:42-47) share the church activity of those who were called to be disciples and the first members of the church. They believed in the crucified and risen Jesus, were baptized, worshiped, studied God's Word, broke bread (celebrated the Sacrament of the Altar), prayed and shared with those in need. The church was a gathering of disciples who continued to grow as disciples to make disciples.

Our Lutheran school is the ministry of our local Lutheran church. The school is the church gathering in classrooms every weekday. The teachers and students gather in the church building every weekend for worship. We are the church doing acts of kindness in Jesus' name in our school and community. Through our offerings, we are the church bringing the Gospel to the world.

The church was in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. The church is here in our church and school. The church is each one of us baptized and believing in Jesus as our Savior. "I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together!"

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank You for making us disciples and members of Your church. Bless the churches that support the ministry of Lutheran schools. Bless the pastors and all who lead the church in following You. Bless us as we make disciples in the church. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

"Church" and "school" dialogs, and even debates, are common in Lutheran school ministry. "If only the church would ..." "The school is taking too much of the church's resources." "I work for the school, and the pastor works for the church."

A frequent review of church history according to Acts 2 is always helpful. Here, God's inspired writer, Luke, shares the exciting Pentecost "birth" of the church. The Spirit brings together "all nations" to Jerusalem. Peter is Spirit-inspired to share a Law/Gospel sermon: the audience's role in the crucifixion of Jesus, the reality of the resurrection and the rebirth through Baptism. The Spirit was at work: "Those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (v. 41).

The Pentecost Spirit continued to work in Jerusalem, and the life of the church is described in verses 42-47. The church preached and taught the Word, administered the Sacraments, prayed, and cared for one another in word and deed.

Obviously, the church in its infancy was much "simpler" than the church of today. Our various ministries, staff positions, boards, district, Synod, etc., are all a part of the church of today. We give thanks to God for the Spirit's work through various phases and partners of ministry. However diverse or complex our ministry, we go back to the Pentecost message of a crucified and risen Jesus, and the Pentecost power of

the Holy Spirit working through water and the Word. We go back to the “life” of the Early Church: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (v. 42).

DIALOG FOR DISCIPLES

What distracts from the “church” in our ministry setting?

How do we demonstrate that “church” and “school” are the church together?

PRAYER

Christ the redeeming Son,
Who shares our human birth,
And by His death salvation won
For ev’ry child of earth;
Inspire our hearts, we pray,
To tell Your love abroad,
That all may honor Christ today
And follow Him as Lord. (*LSB* 829:3)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR MAKING DISCIPLES IN THE CHURCH

- › Review the local Lutheran school history and its connection to the congregation(s).
- › Invite the church family into the school setting to share how the Spirit continues to make an impact on children and families.
- › Explore new initiatives to invite children and families into the church setting and get them involved in worship and fellowship.
- › Offer “This is what we believe ...” resources and classes for school families.
- › Bring aspects of the school ministry into the sanctuary and the Divine Service: children’s choir, school band, students sharing a chancel drama or other acts of praise.
- › Organize a “We are the church together” event involving school children and families and congregation members.
- › Invite a district representative to the school and church to share their role in supporting church and school ministry.
- › Share information on the Lutheran school ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

THURSDAY



CELEBRATING DISCIPLES WHO ARE MAKING DISCIPLES FOR LIFE

THE WORD FOR DISCIPLES

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (EPH. 4:11-12).

TEXT

Ephesians 4:11-15

STUDENT DEVOTION

Review some basic botany. What does it take to grow a plant? (Seed, soil, water, sunshine, someone to plant the seed and continue to water, etc.) God provides all that is needed to grow plants.

What does it take to grow a disciple of Jesus?

In the Great Commission (MAT. 28:19-20), Jesus teaches what is needed to “make” and grow disciples: The apostles were to make disciples by baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; they were to teach what Jesus had commanded. The means to “making” (planting, growing) disciples is and will always be the same: water and the Word.

The apostle Paul was a tentmaker and not a gardener or farmer. However, Paul shared what the Spirit had directed him to share about growing in faith: “We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (EPH. 4:15).

Gardens and farmers’ fields need the sowers and planters of the seed of the Word that God provides. In our text, Paul describes the planters: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds (pastors) and teachers. Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets had planted in the Old Testament. Peter, James, John, Paul and others planted in the Early Church.

In the history of our church and school, God has used many pastors and teachers (and perhaps directors of Christian education, deacons, deaconesses, ministers of music, etc.) to plant the seed of His Word. We are thankful for the planters who continue to share the seed of God’s Word with us in the “garden” of our Lutheran church and school. May God

bless their planting and tending, and may we grow to share the fruits of our faith.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank You for planting the seed of the Word in my heart. Thank You for blessing me to grow in faith in a Lutheran church and school. Bless our growing in our Lutheran church and school. Give us the fruits of the Spirit. Help us to bear a harvest of praise to You. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

How’s your garden? Many people enjoy a seasonal diversion from classroom or office duties by tending to a garden. The fresh vegetables are healthy and enjoyable. The flowers bring beauty to the yard and neighborhood. The outdoor atmosphere is invigorating.

How’s your Lutheran school “garden”? We’re not looking at the few plants in the classroom or even the outdoor landscaping around the church and school. Consider the preschool classroom, the fifth period math class, the choir room, the gym, the lunchroom, the nurse’s office and every other setting welcoming and serving children as a “garden.”

Each is God’s garden. He has planted each child in this context. Each “plant” is unique, requiring individual attention — continued “watering” in baptismal grace, a little more Son shine, just the right combination of Word “nutrients,” perhaps some “weeding” with the Law or “fertilizing” with the Gospel.

Throughout the ages of the church, God has chosen and equipped His gardeners — Old Testament prophets, New Testament apostles, pastors and teachers who have worked the “field” of the local church and school. Now God has chosen you to “equip the saints” and “build up the body of Christ.” You are God’s gardener in this Lutheran school field.

Gardening can be hard work. Sometimes the soil is rocky. Sometimes the weeds want to overtake the plants. But God promises to bless your sowing and the growing. He promises that there will be the fruits of faith. God bless your Lutheran school gardening.

DIALOG FOR DISCIPLES

How is your school and home “garden”?
Where have you encountered “weeds”?
Where have you seen the fruits of the Spirit’s work?

How are you doing as God’s gardener?
Who is nurturing your physical, emotional
and spiritual growth?

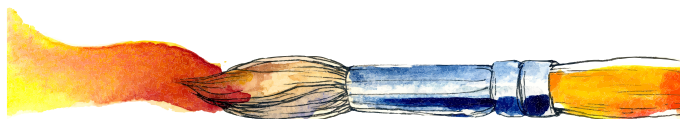
PRAYER

Christ the unfading Light
Of everlasting day,
Our Morning Star in splendor bright,
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
That light of truth You give
To servants as to friends,
Your way to walk, Your life to live,
Till earth’s brief journey ends. (LSB 829:4)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR CELEBRATING DISCIPLES WHO ARE MAKING DISCIPLES

- › Visit a garden center or have a master gardener visit the school to share their vocation.
- › Volunteer to tend to a church or community garden.
- › Review the “fruits” of the Spirit (GAL. 5:22–23). Where do you see the fruits in the classroom? In the school setting?
- › Celebrate pastors, teachers and other leaders who are/were faithful servants to the church/school ministry.
- › Recognize significant ministry milestones (10 years, 25 years, etc.).
- › Host a volunteer recognition event. Whom has God placed as partners in His garden?
- › Gather resources for professional and personal health and support of local “disciplers.”

FRIDAY



MAKING DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS FOR LIFE

THE WORD FOR DISCIPLES

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (MATT. 28:19).

TEXT

Matthew 28:18–20

STUDENT DEVOTION

It’s important to get assignments completed. Completing the math assignment leads to understanding the mathematics concept. Completing the social studies assignment leads to a more successful test result. Completing the assigned chores at home makes the family a better team.

Jesus gave His disciples an assignment: “Go and make disciples.” The disciples were to share the Good News of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and the assurance of salvation for all who were baptized and believed in Him. The Book of Acts shares how the Holy Spirit directed and blessed Peter, John, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Lydia, Stephen and others who were called to share the Good News of Jesus. The history of the Early Church shares more facts about the disciples going to “all nations” to make disciples.

We thank God for the pastors, teachers, leaders and many other “disciples” who make disciples in our Lutheran church and school. As we gather for the Divine Service, assemble in our classrooms and in other ways gather around God’s Word, disciples are made of children, families and others that God calls into our setting.

As a church and school, we continue to make disciples of “all nations.” Immigrant children come to Lutheran schools in some settings. Missionary pastors and teachers “make disciples” in countries and cultures around the world. Perhaps someday God may choose some of you to be His missionaries to another nation. Through our chapel offerings, we support missionaries going to overseas mission fields, or we support the mission of helping those in need

in our community so that they will hear about the Savior who cares for them and cares that they will be in heaven with Him. May God bless us as we complete all our assignments, especially the assignment to “make disciples for life.”

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank You again for making me Your disciple through Baptism. Help us to hear and to complete Your assignment to “make disciples of all nations.” Help me to be a faithful disciple now and always. Bless my witness to my friends and family. Amen.

STAFF DEVOTION

While teachers are used to giving assignments, they also receive assignments. The board may assign extracurricular school or church responsibilities to teachers. The principal may assign a project to the staff. We may confess that some assignments are more burden than blessing. We may respond to some assignments grudgingly or even resentfully.

The Great Commission (MATT. 28:18–20) is also the Great Assignment. Jesus’ assignment to the disciples to “make disciples of all nations” (v. 19) is His assignment to the church. We continue to “make disciples” by baptizing children and adults into the Christian faith. We continue to “make disciples” by “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded” (v. 20), sharing the truths of sin and death and Jesus’ response of His crucifixion and resurrection.

How do we respond to Jesus’ assignment to each of us? We certainly respond humbly in the privilege of being the Spirit’s instruments to make disciples in the Lutheran school. We respond faithfully sharing the truth and power of the Holy Scripture. We respond joyfully to the privilege of being Jesus’ witnesses.

We also respond by praying for hearts open to the mission field before us. The new child that comes to our classroom may have behavioral issues and may be socially challenged. Jesus assigns, “Make him My disciple for life.” A new unchurched family in the

community enrolls their children in the Lutheran school. Jesus assigns, “Make them My disciples for eternal life.” The student in the principal’s office shares the hurts in her home and her concern for her family. Jesus assigns, “Make her My disciple and share My peace and hope.” Every day in a multitude of ways, the assignment to make disciples comes to those blessed to share in Jesus’ assignments to Lutheran schools. Jesus also says, “Behold, I am with you always” (v. 20b), giving you everything you need to complete His assignments.

DIALOG FOR DISCIPLES

How has the Spirit brought “all nations” to your church and school settings?

What special “assignments” may the Spirit be giving you at this time?

How could your church and school be more intentional about making disciples of all nations?

PRAYER

Christ the ascended King
Exalted high above,
Whose praise unending ages sing,
Whom yet unseen we love;
When mortal life is past
Your voice from heaven’s throne
Shall call Your children home as last
To know as we are known. (*LSB* 829:5)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR MAKING DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

- › Invite a missionary to speak to the students in person or online.
- › Host a “world mission tour,” and invite classrooms to adopt a country or culture. Invite other classes, parents and guests to “visit” the country.
- › Contact the LCMS Office of International Mission for information on mission fields and missionaries.
- › Contact your district for information on current mission fields in your district and region.
- › Engage in a demographic study of the community. Explore how the “nations” may be coming to your community.
- › Invite long-tenured church members to share “mission festival” events of the past. Have the school help organize a mission festival — mission hymns, speakers, etc.
- › Explore the resources of Lutheran Hour Ministries and other mission partners.

POSTER SAMPLE



BULLETIN INSERT SAMPLE

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION OF FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES

- › Experiencing and celebrating God's lavish gifts of love, grace and mercy
- › Sharing those gifts with others
- › Being transformed by God's Word
- › Clinging to the cross of Jesus

SCHOOLS > 1,854
TEACHERS > 21,312
DISTRICTS > 35

PROVIDING EXCELLENT ACADEMIC PREPARATION

- › Developing love for and excitement about learning
- › Excelling at reading, writing and effective communication
- › Training minds for success at the next academic level
- › Creating a strong work ethic, critical thinking skills and the ability to relate well with others

LEARN MORE
888-THE LCMS (843-5267)
lcms.org/school-ministry



SHARING THE
LIFE-CHANGING
MESSAGE OF
JESUS' LOVE WITH
MORE THAN

180,000

STUDENTS, THEIR
FAMILIES AND THE
COMMUNITY



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GRAPHIC SAMPLES

Making
Disciples
for Life



**NATIONAL
LUTHERAN**
SCHOOLS WEEK **2023**

Making
Disciples
for Life



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SCHOOLS WEEK 2023**



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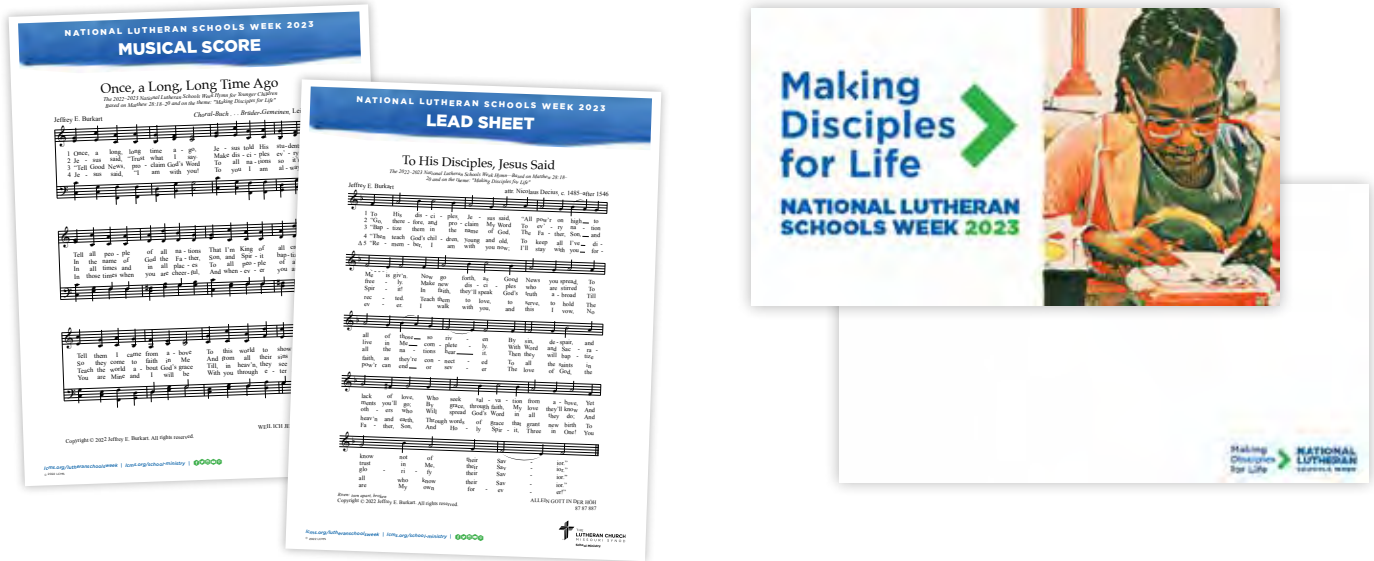
**NATIONAL
LUTHERAN**
SCHOOLS WEEK **2023**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HYMNS AND MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

- › “Once, a Long, Long Time Ago”
- › “To His Disciples, Jesus Said”

PRESENTATION SLIDE TEMPLATES



DAILY POSTERS





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