INTENTIONAL OUTREACH PLAN FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

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THE GREAT COMMISSION

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matthew 28: 18-20).

Our Lord commanded His disciples to “go and make disciples.” That same command is given to us today, as we, too, are disciples of Jesus.

The word “go” in the original Greek holds a nuanced meaning lost in its translation into English. In English, “go” would have the connotation that one must physically go somewhere else in order to share the Good News of the Gospel; however, in the original language, the command would be more accurately translated “as you are going.” The implication of this is that our entire life journey is one in which we have the opportunity to share the Good News of the Gospel. We are not bound by geography or circumstances.

Thus, it is that each one of us has been given a command to make disciples where we are at. It is our joy to be able to live life as His witnesses.

The Comfort and the Power

When Christ gave us the Great Commission, He also gave us a word of comfort: “And surely I am with you always.” We are not alone as we obey His command. He is there with us, every step of the way.

When Christ ascended into heaven and gave us the mission to be His witnesses, He comforted His followers with these words: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you” (see Acts 1:8). We have the power of the Holy Spirit in us. We are not powerless when it comes to being a witness.

THE ROLE OF LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

Historically, the local parish operated Lutheran schools in order to fulfill the Great Commission to the children of the community.

In today’s culture the Lutheran school still plays a vital role in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Lutheran schools best fulfill this role when they

1. demonstrate a clear sense of God’s mission to make disciples;
2. incorporate a distinct Lutheran identity;
3. integrate into the life of the community.

Understanding the Mission

Lutheran schools offer multiple opportunities to know and grow in understanding God’s mission. The school will develop and maintain a culture of outreach, which stems from knowing God’s mission and by providing multiple opportunities for growth. Among these are included the following:
Growing in the Word

- Worship services
  - School staff will invite pupils and their parents to attend with them.
  - A weekly chapel service will be mandated for all who attend the school.
  - Schools will seek involvement opportunities in Sunday and special worship services of the local congregation(s).

- Bible study
  - School staff will engage in individual Bible study.
  - Staff will gather for opportunities for larger group Bible study.
  - Teachers will incorporate daily Bible study in their classrooms.
  - Students and their parents will be invited to participate in congregational Bible studies.

- Scripture reading
  - School staff will read the Bible daily.
  - Students will have daily, classroom opportunities to read a section of Holy Scripture.

- Daily devotions
  - School staff will gather for a devotional thought each day.
  - Teachers will provide for daily classroom devotions.

Living the Word

- Mission support
  - Students will have opportunities to learn of, pray for, and support various mission activities designed to share the Gospel outside the walls of the school.
  - Students will have opportunities to hear first-hand accounts from missionaries.

- Prayer life
  - Students will have the chance to offer personal and corporate prayers.
  - Parents will be encouraged to pray daily with and for their children.
  - Teachers will regularly pray for one another, the students, and the mission of the school.
  - School staff will ask parents, “How can I pray for you today?”

- Lifestyle choices
  - School staff and students will strive to match their actions and their words in their faith walk.

- Stewardship
  - Teachers will model Christian stewardship principles in their use of time, talents and treasures.
  - Students will be instructed and encouraged to live out Christian stewardship principles in their use of time, talents and treasures.

Being Lutheran

Lutheran schools have the opportunity to teach, live and celebrate three, guiding principles:

- “Grace Alone”
  - God loves the people of this world, even though they are sinful, rebel against Him, and do not deserve His love. He sent Jesus, His Son, to love the unlovable and save the ungodly.
• “Faith Alone”
  o By His suffering and death as the Substitute for all people for all time, Jesus purchased and won forgiveness and eternal life for mankind. Those who hear this Good News and believe it have the eternal life God alone offers. God creates faith in Christ and gives people forgiveness through Him.

• “Scripture Alone”
  o The Bible is God's inerrant and infallible Word. In it He reveals His Law and the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is the sole rule and norm for Christian doctrine.

Being in the Community
Lutheran schools have a unique opportunity to incorporate and assimilate people into the life of the congregation, as they include, instruct, influence and invite the members of their school community.

Include
All students and their families will be included in the activities, programs and opportunities of the school, such as, but not limited to

• service projects;
• chapel presentations;
• church presentations;
• prayers of the church.

In addition, all students and their families will have their contact information forwarded to the appropriate congregational board, committee or responsible person for inclusion in the formal outreach efforts of the church. These include mailings, contacts, visits, prayers, etc.

Instruct
All students will be given instruction in

• Scripture;
• prayer;
• worship;
• Christian stewardship;
• Christian lifestyle;
• the chief parts of Luther’s Small Catechism.

Influence
The staff of the school will model Christian virtues to all its students as they interact with the students

• in actions;
• in words.
**Invite**

All students and their families will be invited to participate in the activities of the school and its sponsoring congregation(s).

Students who do not have a church home will be intentionally invited to take part in the activities of the school and the sponsoring congregation(s). Such activities include, but are not limited to

- worship services;
- Sunday school and Bible classes;
- vacation Bible school;
- age-appropriate gatherings – i.e. youth group, retreats, etc.;
- midweek instruction.

In addition, parents of students who are not baptized will be invited to learn more about baptism and have their child baptized.

**THE OPPORTUNITY OF STAFF**

The school provides an opportunity for families without a church home to be in contact with those who do.

The process of integrating school families into the congregation starts with

**School Personnel**

School personnel have daily contact with families. It is their privilege to serve as ambassadors for Christ and His church on earth. They do this as they

1. live lives reflecting Christ and His forgiveness;
2. speak words of grace to their children and the families;
3. offer absolution upon confession;
4. tell their personal stories of faith;
5. model church attendance and involvement;
6. speak to the importance of being in a Christian fellowship;
7. invite others to attend;
8. provide a means to attend;
9. pray for their students—by name;
10. teach Bible stories;
11. model and teach the importance of daily prayers;
12. encourage fellow students to invite their peers to school and church events;
13. record church attendance;
14. educate parents on the importance of church attendance;
15. invite parents to church services and activities;
16. pass along information to appropriate church personnel.
Office Personnel
Office personnel have opportunities to integrate and invite non-member school families as they

1. include them in scheduled church communications;
2. include them in invitations to church events;
3. pass along pertinent information received to appropriate church personnel;
4. pray for these families.

Church Personnel
Church personnel have opportunities and responsibilities to incorporate and integrate non-member school families. This they can do in various ways:

1. Pastor can welcome, visit and pray for families and their needs.
2. Church members tasked with outreach can regularly communicate with non-member school families, encouraging, informing and inviting them to attend and participate.
3. Opportunities can be created to involve school families in worship experiences—as in, for example, school children singing, performing or presenting before, during or after a church event.
4. Make sure invitations to any church event are automatically sent to non-member school families.
5. Pray for these families.

Pastor/Principal Team
The pastor/principal team is perhaps the most important influencer(s) of the climate, goals and effectiveness of the school as an outreach organization. When the pastor and principal work together to create a unified mission and vision for the church and school, both the school and church will experience a great harvest.

When the pastor is active and visible in the school and the principal is active and visible in the church, the effect is they speak and act as a unified voice to the congregation, the school, and the community.

When pastor and principal agree that outreach is a priority, they will dialogue weekly—sharing joys, concerns and prayers for one another.

When the pastor and principal agree to speak supportively of one another in public and keep disagreements private, they present a unified outreach vision and mission to all.

When the pastor and principal set aside significant time each week to intentionally pray for the harvest, outreach becomes a natural priority.

When the pastor and principal seek prayer requests from staff, church members, and guests—and then identify ways the school or church can fulfill these requests—lives are changed.