



Parent *pages*

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



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BY KIM MARXHAUSEN

Your child's faith development

Most parents understand that their participation in school has a positive influence on their child's learning. Children with parents who demonstrate that learning is important, that school is a good place to be and that teachers are to be respected keep these values with them as they study math, reading and science.

While support of school is important, your participation in church activities is equally important. Many parents participate fully in church activities, some participate when they can, letting things slip when athletic events and other endeavors intervene. Others choose not to participate in church activities because they are not members of a church or are part of a different faith community. In any situation, it can be a challenge to include the church and school activities



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“As parents, you have the primary responsibility for teaching the faith to your children ... experience the growth of your faith by attending church and hearing the Word of God. This is how He empowers you to share that faith with your children.”

in your family's busy schedule. Perhaps it would help to have a better understanding of why these opportunities are offered and how they benefit your child's faith development.

First and foremost, your child's school schedules church activities, such as choir events, to give your children an opportunity to give glory to God in fellowship

with classmates. Certainly, God does not need this glory, so we understand that this activity blesses the participants. Your children are now in a comfortable Christian school setting. Experiences that give them opportunity to worship God with their classmates will stay with them when they find

themselves in more hostile environments later in life. When tempted to deny their faith, they will remember standing with fellow believers and singing to the glory of a shared heavenly Father. They learn that fellow Christian believers are everywhere, even in a church with a different name.

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word presented by various means, children have three areas ready for faith development: head, heart and hands. At a school that integrates faith into all areas of study, your children receive much faith development in terms of head knowledge. Also, when teachers share faith in everyday activities and teach children how to empathize with others, they are experiencing faith development through the heart. Finding opportunities to grow faith through hand activities is another aspect worth considering. A child participating in a school event that collects materials for mission projects, prepares meals for those who are hungry, raises funds for missionaries, or uses his gift of music for Sunday morning

worship enjoys opportunities for showing and growing faith. Service to the faith community is an important part of growing in grace, as it is a response to the gift of salvation.

Church activities also afford your child an opportunity to witness to others about God's unending love. A church service contains the Word of God, and the hearing of the Word causes faith to grow. Church is a wonderful place to witness to God's love in fellowship with other believers. The Spirit works in your child's heart to develop the skill of witnessing that she will use in all aspects of her life. Singing in a choir or participating in a children's Christmas service is a wonderful, appropriate way for your child to practice sharing her faith.



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Because of the Father's unconditional love, the sacrifice of the Son, and the sanctifying work of the Spirit, we are children of God and walk in His light. Fellowship is the result of walking in the light. Fellowship binds us to one another in the knowledge of a shared faith. Church attendance, Bible study and working together to serve God are ways to show faith. As parents, you have the primary responsibility for teaching the faith to your children. Your child's school and the church are here to help you in this monumental task. Experience the growth of your faith by attending church and hearing the Word of God. This is how He empowers you to share that faith with your children. May God bless you in that task!

If you are not a member of a church that belongs to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, you have an additional reason for attending the school-scheduled church activities. This is your best way to find out what the LCMS's dedication to Christian education is all about. Your child's school has made a commitment to teach the faith as a part of every subject and every activity throughout the day. It is good for you to be familiar with the teachings of this church.

As a former teacher in the LCMS, I enjoyed talking with parents from other church homes about our doctrinal similarities and differences. However, I would not have known about the teachings of these other churches, except that the parents informed me. You walk hand in hand with this church in the journey of teaching the faith to your children; get to know the church and its teachings.

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

For further study

Family Room Values is a wonderful site that offers many opportunities to share your faith with your children. Check it out at: www.familyroomvalues.com.

Parenting resources from Concordia Publishing House: www.cph.org/searchnew.aspx?SearchTerm=parenting

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