
First Steps

A Handbook for New Teachers in Lutheran Schools

A **R**evised and **R**elevant **R**elease (3R series) of *First Steps*

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Originally published and distributed as a professional service
by Lutheran Education Association in 1992.

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Forest, Illinois 60305.

www.lea.org

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Dear Colleague in Ministry:

Welcome to Lutheran education! You have chosen to become part of a noble profession and an essential ingredient in the ministry to God's people. Your days (and many evenings and weekends!) will be filled with joy, excitement, anticipation, frustration, and surprise. Your hours will pass quickly as you continually find new ways to serve. Every minute of it will be blessed by God!

Your professional organization—Lutheran Education Association—exists to support you in your ministry every step of the way. We look forward to having you as an active participant in LEA's events and network interaction, and we encourage you to make full use of all resources provided as member benefits. We especially hope that the suggestions made in this publication will equip and affirm you as you take your "first steps" into the teaching ministry.

God's continued blessings in service to Him!

Jonathan C. Laabs, EdD
Executive Director



Management Maxims

- Be consistent. The essential element of fairness is that children will recognize if it is not present—and you will pay the price
- Do not raise your voice in anger. Voice modulation has too many other good uses to be wasted on misbehaving children.
- Do not paint yourself into a corner with your principal, colleagues, students, or parents. Always allow a little room to maneuver or negotiate. It preserves everyone's self-esteem.
- Write out your expectations and your rules. Give them to parents, your principal, and any other teacher who may be in your classroom. Post the rules in several places in your classroom. Students can memorize carefully constructed, brief rules.
- You set the tone in your classroom. Your students need to be confident that you expect each day to be a blessing from God and that exciting things are going to happen.
- Be sensitive to whether the classroom environment is one of trust or one of control. Long term success is more likely if students are motivated to behave because they see the good that results—rather than fear consequences.
- Recognize that every student can change. Your first impressions are not always correct. Form your own opinions rather than completely accepting the previous teacher's experiences or the observation of others.
- From the outset establish who is in charge. Students need to learn that God gives the blessing of authority to parents and teachers.
- Encouraging children to make wise choices is one way to build an environment of trust. Carefully constructing the framework of those choices allows children to develop some autonomy and responsibility while maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Establish routines and practice the daily procedures until they become ingrained. Getting in line, sharpening pencils, and going to the lunchroom (just to name a few) are opportunities for mischief unless proper behavior is a developed habit. Just telling students is never enough in these cases.

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- Respect is due you because you are serving God in the teaching ministry. Respect is maintained by serving well. Respect is lost by looking to be a friend first and a teacher second. Teach well and you will gain students as friends; teach poorly and you will be a bad memory.
 - Ask forgiveness as often as you need it. Admitting error or sin is not a sign of weakness. Seeking forgiveness is a sign of character. You are an important role model for your students in this area.
 - Never embarrass a student, especially in front of peers.
 - Once a discipline situation degenerates into a power struggle you will likely win the battle but inevitably lose the war.
 - Nothing is so unfair as the equal treatment of unequals... and, yes, consistency is still the mark of good classroom management; but wisdom recognizes that two situations are rarely the same.
 - In disciplining, always attack the sin, not the sinner. We are made righteous by faith, not by what we do. Faith calls us to live a God-pleasing life. Apply Law and Gospel appropriately.
 - Limit classroom rules to 4–6. Arrive at the rules democratically as the age level permits (but remember you can frame the choices you make!). The following have worked with older children:
 - Follow the procedures.
 - Respect other speakers.
 - Respect others' space.
 - Respect others' property.
 - Demonstrate Christian values.
 - In any discipline system that includes negative consequences, also include positive ones.
 - Remember that discipline is an outgrowth of the fundamental principle that every child has a right to the best possible learning environment and that your role as a teacher is to insist on maintaining that environment.
 - The old maxim of “Don’t smile until Christmas” is rooted in some truth. The first few weeks of school are crucial in establishing a climate. You can more easily loosen the reins than tighten them.
 - Once the rules are established, they are not subject to negotiation. If you find you must constantly negotiate, the rule is defective—or poorly worded.
 - The first and best motivation to behave is intrinsic; the second is the effect of peer group pressure. Remember that “I said so” is third on the list of reasons why students behave.
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You likely will get other advice—or have personal experiences—that will lead you to add to this list. Here is some space to add your own management maxims:

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Organizational Hints

Inventory One of your first tasks will be to inventory your classroom, especially your file cabinet. It offers an early opportunity to develop a filing system that is easy for you to use. One suggestion is to organize resources by months. If you plan to maintain a file for each student (an exemplary idea), assign each student a number and label the files by number—it makes the files reusable from one year to the next.

Faculty Handbook Your faculty handbook is your friend. Get to know it well. Remember that policy, regardless of whether you're comfortable with it, was established for a reason. If you are confident you have a better way, don't hesitate to make suggestions, but never ignore the policy.

Libraries Familiarize yourself with the libraries in your classroom, school, and community. Introduce yourself to the appropriate librarians, as they can be generally an enormous help. Find out which services (videos, special collections, films, storyhours, etc.) are available through the libraries. Get available catalogs from community libraries. Also get a library card.

Equipment Find out what A-V equipment is available. This is an important planning guide. Practice working with the equipment before you use it in class.

Baptismal Birthdays If your school doesn't already do so, consider recognizing students on their baptismal birthdays. Check the availability of cards with Lutheran Education Association and Christian publishers like Concordia Publishing House.

Absentees Prepare and duplicate assignment sheets for absent students. This will save you time throughout the year.

Helpers Milk helpers, devotion leaders, board cleaners, and so forth, can all be placed on a helper chart displayed prominently in your room.

Supplies Determine if classroom supplies (crayons, scissors, glue, and so forth) are going to be held individually or in a central location. If the latter, create a practical distribution and clean-up procedure.

<p>Class list</p>	<p>Run off multiple copies of your class list. You will discover a wealth of uses for them. Wait a few weeks into the school year before doing this; your enrollment is likely to change.</p>
<p>Substitute Teacher Folder</p>	<p>Prepare a folder for those who will substitute when you are absent. Include a class list, updated seating chart, classroom procedures, class schedule, and extra seatwork activities. Though evacuation signals and routes should be posted in classrooms, provide a copy in the folder. Provide information about other emergency response procedures too.</p>
<p>Attendance</p>	<p>Don't underestimate the necessity of maintaining good attendance records. In many states, they are legal documents. Attendance records provide important information about students whose poor performance may, in part, be due to frequent absence. Parents sometimes underestimate the number of times their children are absent. Don't assume the office is keeping track.</p>
<p>Room Appearance</p>	<p>Cover your bulletin boards with burlap or non-fading paper to reduce the work needed every time they need changing. Your room's appearance is vital in setting a good tone for learning, impressing visitors, and raising the initial level of confidence in your abilities as a teacher.</p>
<p>Rubber Stamps</p>	<p>Have two stamps made: one with your signature and the other with a line that reads "Parents signature" underneath the line.</p>
<p>Lists</p>	<p>Develop the habit of making lists—and then referring to them.</p>
<p>Mail Call</p>	<p>You will be amazed at the amount of mail you receive. An important rule for life is handle mail only once! Dump it or deal with it as soon as you touch it—or it will return to haunt you.</p>
<p>Priorities</p>	<p>Purchase two trays. Label one DO NOW and the other DO LATER.</p>
<p>Pull-out Programs</p>	<p>Find out if any of your students are involved in pull-out programs (band, choir, special education resource room, tutoring) and plan for how you will accommodate those students' instructional needs.</p>

Professionalism

Certificate

Your teaching certificate should be a source of pride. It says you are a qualified, recognized professional. Apply for yours and display it prominently in your classroom, along with your diploma. Find out state requirements to maintain certification.

Technology

The computer is changing everyone's life, including yours and your students. Find out what applications are available at your school. They can save time and help you become a more productive teacher. Join Lutheran Education Association and participate in its electronic network.

Style

Look for "styles" within the teaching field. Some are walkers and talkers; some are project oriented; some like groups; some like individualization; and some question like Socrates. Teaching is as much art as science. Learn from all, and be conscious of the development of your own approach to teaching and learning.

Identification

Order business cards for yourself, or make your own using computer software. Business cards are part of a professional's paraphernalia. Identify yourself as certified, list your affiliation with professional organizations, including LEA, and include your ministry statement on the back of the card.

Read

Read, read, read. Teachers need to be abreast of current affairs, both at the national level and the local level. The teaching profession is in the midst of a long reform cycle. Familiarize yourself with the latest trends and research. Read newspapers, magazines, and professional journals—anything that can improve your teaching ministry. An excellent book for all teachers in Lutheran schools is Jane Fryar's *Go and Make Disciples*, published by Concordia Publishing House. Identify yourself as a teacher in a Lutheran school if you buy direct from CPH—a discount may apply.

Join

Identify two professional organizations and join them. One, of course should be LEA, the only professional organization for educators in Lutheran ministries. Find another within your discipline or your grade level. These organizations offer information that can help your professional and spiritual development.

Assessment

Do some self-assessment periodically. How are you doing in the following areas:

- A) the modeling role of the Christian teacher
- B) knowledge of subject matter
- C) planning skills
- D) use of resources
- E) classroom management
- F) human relations
- G) instructional skills

Grow

Participate in staff development opportunities. Most states require ongoing education as a certification requirement. Eagerly attend seminars and conferences. Seek out institutions of higher education to take graduate courses, perhaps leading to an advanced degree. Consistently show yourself as a learner as well as a teacher.

You And Your Principal

Ten Suggestions to Help You Establish a Great Professional Relationship with Your Principal

- 1.** Pray for your principal and his/her role in the school.
- 2.** Plan thoroughly; teach well.
- 3.** Avoid the “minimum requirement” mentality. Don’t fulfill just what is expected of you – do more.
- 4.** If you go to your principal with a problem, bring some possible solutions with you.
- 5.** Don’t expect reminders. Being told something once should be sufficient.
- 6.** Deal with reality. Complaining about your class, your salary, the lack of resources, or old books does not remove your obligation to be the best teacher you can be.
- 7.** Make requests of your principal in writing and do not apply suggestion #5 above to her/him. Friendly reminders to your principal—a person with many responsibilities—can avoid some anger on your part and enhance communication.
- 8.** Your principal likes to hear good news too. Do not come with problems only—share joys as well.
- 9.** Be interested in the work your principal is doing. That person has the responsibility of creating the conditions necessary for you to do your job well. Show some concern for the welfare of your principal and her/his family.
- 10.** Volunteer. Be helpful in whatever ways you can within the time frame you have available.



Planning For Instruction

Three Levels of Planning

Level 1

Plans for the first or next week are nailed down. Materials are duplicated and all necessary resources located.

Level 2

Projections for the first six weeks have been made: films have been ordered, speakers contacted, and field trip contacts have been made.

Level 3

An outline of my classes exists so that I have a general idea of what's coming up in November, January, and May. I've begun making a list of items necessary for future teaching.

Arnold E. Schmidt

You spent much of your student teaching coming up with clever ideas and projects. Don't force all the ideas into the first two weeks of the year. Pace yourself. June is a long way away.

If you do not have one, borrow the school's copy of *Integrating the Faith*, published by Concordia Publishing House. When you plan, be conscious of how you are going to include faith and Scripture—especially the Gospel—in all of your lessons.

Familiarize yourself with the school's grading policy. Note how report cards are done, and identify how interim reports are made to parents.

Develop a plan for sending paper home on a regular basis with parents having opportunity to acknowledge they have been received.

Plan ahead for managing your grades. Can you do them on the computer? Are you going to use percents or points? Will you allow extra credit? Will late work be allowed or penalized or neither? Will older students have access to their grades on a regular basis?

Will all grades be weighed equally or will tests have greater weight? How will you account for the different efforts displayed by your children? How will you account for the different starting points of your students?

Prepare a plan for classroom devotions that will lead to the appropriate level of student involvement. Think about setting up an altar in the classroom that can be used to set the appropriate tone for worship.

Make every assignment meaningful. If it's not worth your time to prepare and evaluate, it may not be worth doing.

Not every lesson you plan is going to win a nomination for Teacher of the Year. One approach is to make sure that **one** of those lessons will knock their socks off each day. Keep track of the really good ones and build on it each year.

Consider adopting a class project for the year that can draw your students to some service or learning project.

Teacher's guides are useful sources of information and ideas. While few teachers are happy with textbooks all the time, the current crop of texts is significantly better than those ten years ago. Use the ideas judiciously. Be especially aware of suggestions and ideas that conflict with the Lutheran Christian faith.

Parent Communication

A

Home visits continue to be an excellent way of getting to know families to whom you minister. Make appointments; limit your visit to 20 minutes; visit with a purpose, not just to chat; use this opportunity to communicate any school-wide emphasis for the year; and preview for the parents and students any special plans.

B

Many schools send a mailing in the summer with supply lists, school policies, and so forth. You may wish to augment that with a letter sent directly to your students, introducing yourself and giving them some of the special events or new ideas that you have planned for the upcoming year.

C

Be proactive. Don't wait for a problem to become a crisis before you intervene with parents. Parents rarely complain about too much information about their child's progress in school.

D

Parents do not like surprises, especially if the surprise involves poor grades. Communicate regularly with parents whose students are struggling; offer suggestions rather than simply reporting poor progress.

E

Don't be afraid to ask parents for suggestions about how to effectively deal with a student problem. They've been dealing with it a lot longer than you will.

F

Proofread thoroughly all of your correspondence. If your communication is replete with spelling and grammatical errors, it hardly instills confidence in your abilities as a teacher.

G

Avoid talking to parents about other people's children. In general, be guarded in the comments you make to parents. Don't complain about your job or your principal or your colleagues or your class. Assume anything you say will be repeated as juicy gossip.

H

Other ideas to enhance parent communication:

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Classroom Management

Room Arrangement

Establish your room arrangement in a way that makes movement easy for you and practical for students in case of emergency evacuation. Be flexible too; when one arrangement fails to work well, switch to another. Observe the following:

Congestion

Areas frequently congested are near the pencil sharpener, your desk, small group areas, and the area where students store coats. Adjust the area by providing more space or create a procedure for using these areas. As you identify students who frequently need personal attention, place them where you can approach them quickly and easily.

Oh, Say, Can You See?

Are desks or seats arranged so that you and your students can make eye contact? You'll want to arrange all instructional areas so you can easily watch your students, even if you are dealing with a small group.

Students also need to see presentation areas clearly. Be sure to check for students who have special needs in vision and hearing.

And Finally . . .

Provide variety over the school year. Many students will appreciate a change in room arrangements. A good time to change seating and room arrangements is when students return from an extended holiday or at the end of a grading period.

Standards, Procedures, and Rules

Standards

Standards are broad guidelines that reflect the school's values. Your classroom standards should complement the school's standards. Be aware that schools express and publish their standards in different ways. Therefore, as you establish standards, check them with the principal or administrator. Examples of standards are *Respect people* and *Respect property*.

Procedures

Procedures are intended to help you and your students accomplish tasks. You will need to create many procedures, though some procedures will be defined for the whole school. You can find these in the your school's Faculty Handbook and Student Handbook. Classroom procedures should be in harmony with general school procedures, and it would be good to include procedures for the following:

Movement into and out of the classroom

Movement in the classroom

Storage space

Washroom use

Desk maintenance

Classroom library

Interest centers

Computers and other equipment

Giving assignments

Turning in assignments

Seeking the teacher's attention

Daily routines (arrival, dismissal, daily tasks, lunch, devotions, etc.)

Emergency drills

Chapel

Playground

Gymnasium

The list above is not exhaustive. You will need to develop procedures unique to your style and environment.

Do not allow the need for procedures to overwhelm you. Talk with other teachers who have reputations as good classroom managers. If you are an LEA member, you have access to a listserv, which you can use to ask questions and expect to receive a variety of answers—some of which you may adopt or adapt.

Rules

Rules are specific expectations for behavior. Rules define the behavior necessary to carry out procedures. Rules may be stated positively or negatively. For example, you can say “Always walk in the building” or “Never run in the building.” Procedures and rules are often inseparable.

Some of your procedures and rules may not work well. Depending on the age of your students, you might find it useful to include your students’ ideas to formulate a new procedure and rule. Do not keep a rule or procedure that does not work, even if you fear the appearance of being indecisive. Students will respect you for your honesty and for your willingness to allow their assistance in solving management problems.

Rules are effective only when consequences apply to breaking the rules. Together with a list of rules, include a list of consequences—and apply them consistently. Students need to know what will happen if they disobey a rule. Listing consequences will also protect you from making impulsive judgments. When consequences seem ineffective, consider involving the class in creating better consequences. Talk to experienced teachers about effective consequences too.

Remember that, theologically, rules correspond to the Law, which no one has ever kept perfectly. Forgiveness is always necessary and is not contrary to consequences.

Use the space below to write five broad rules for classroom behavior:

1

2

3

4

5

Perhaps it’s too late to ask, but did you write in pencil or ink? What does your choice say about you? Why is it good to know this about yourself?

Personal Wellness

- ✦ Remember there is life outside of teaching. Find a hobby you enjoy and set aside time to do it.
- ✦ Keep a diary or journal to periodically record your feelings. It's a kick to see how you change your perceptions over the course of time.
- ✦ Maintain a healthy diet; get appropriate rest and exercise.
- ✦ Take time to pray for your students and colleagues by name.
- ✦ If your DO NOW pile seems to grow and grow, keep a log of your time. Analyze it to see if your time is spent on your priorities or on the equivalent of busy work.
- ✦ Avoid internalizing the failure of your students. Their performance is not necessarily a good indicator of your own. At the same time, do not discount poor performance. Maybe something needs to be retaught.
- ✦ Find a support group. You need someone with whom you can relax and with whom you can honestly share the joys and frustrations of teaching. If you are new to an area, this may be difficult. Using the telephone or e-mail with friends is an alternative. Conversations may easily concentrate on frustrations. Be sure to share your joys too.
- ✦ Don't minimize the intensity of the demands of teaching. It is hard work emotionally and physically when well done.
- ✦ As you plan each day, try to include some fun for you and your students.
- ✦ Set goals. Be realistic. Periodically evaluate your progress toward meeting those goals, but don't be afraid to reset your goals as necessary.
- ✦ Provide some "space" between the time you end your school duties and the time you begin your chores at home. This is especially true if your spouse works the same job.
- ✦ Take time to enjoy the children you teach. God has created them to be special. Look for miracles of God at work in your classroom.
- ✦ Respect the existing staff dynamics. People who work together closely for long periods develop patterns of interaction. Take time to integrate yourself into that pattern. Your openness and friendliness will hasten that process. Offering to help in whatever ways you can will help to integrate you into the team ministry.

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- ✚ A commonly heard refrain from older children will be “Mr. or Ms. _____ didn’t do it that way.” You will develop a teaching style that is uniquely your own, and, if it is done well, it will quickly make students respect your method of operation. Yet, if your predecessor was a highly regarded instructor, he or she might have much to offer. Do not think that asking makes you less of your own person.
 - ✚ Avoid measuring your success by the yardstick of your students’ achievement. Classes and students vary from year to year and strategies that were not successful with this year’s group may work with another. Spending hours in preparation of a particular lesson that “falls flat” will happen. But the same lesson given at a different time to a different group may get the results you expected.
 - ✚ Nourish your spirit with time for Bible study and personal devotions. Identify what you will do for your personal spiritual development. This needs to be a priority if you want to be a good spiritual leader for your students. A good change-of-pace, which also contributes to your spiritual growth, may be conducting an adult Bible class. This activity will help you meet people and earn respect for the school and for you.
 - ✚ Remember that you are not an employee. You are a servant of God working in a teaching capacity within the ministry of your school and congregation. God has placed you there for a Godly reason.
 - ✚ Develop the skill of selective listening. From time to time students, parents, and colleagues will say things about you that are less than flattering. Don’t let an overheard remark color your perception of that person as a child of God. Be ready to forgive and forget.
 - ✚ Remember that as a minister, your life is an open book. You are a witness to the faith twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year. Conduct not above reproach brings harm to yourself and the church ministry.
 - ✚ Find medical professionals and facilities that will accept your insurance plan and meet your needs. Ask staff and students’ parents for their recommendations.

Personal Finance

Common Monthly Budget Expenditures

The following partial list may help you predict how you will spend or save your money. Add to the list as necessary. Once you have predicted expenditures, compare the amount to your take-home pay.

Church offering
Savings/investments
Rent/house payment
Car payment
Other credit/loan payments
Food & household supplies
Monthly health supplies
Telephone
Electric
Gas
Water
Garbage removal
Internet subscription
Cable TV subscription
Other monthly subscriptions
IRS/Social Security
Car insurance
Home insurance
Life insurance
Entertainment
Other regular expenditures:

Part of your contractual documents outline what the employer provides as health care, disability, and retirement. Become familiar with the documents provided by whatever plans apply. Familiarize yourself with the claims procedure. Concordia Plans send a yearly update on your status within the Plan. That is a document worth reviewing and should be kept with your other important documents. Check the accuracy of personal information included on the annual report.

Female commissioned ministers of Synod have the same tax status as male commissioned ministers. That status means: (a) You are eligible for a tax-exempt housing allowance. (b) Social Security tax must be paid through the SECA system (Self-Employment Contribution Tax Act) (c) You are no longer subject to automatic tax withholding.

Federal income and self-employment taxes must be paid by making quarterly estimated tax payments (due by the 15th of January, April, June, and September), unless you elect voluntary withholding. Discipline yourself to set aside money to pay the quarterly payments. You will also need appropriate forms to accompany quarterly payments. Confer with other teachers who share your status about the procedures for making quarterly payments. Check the Internal Revenue Service's website to download instructions and forms. States have similar procedures; be sure to check your state's website too.

At the time of this writing, having a housing allowance means you do not pay income tax on the portion of your income spent on housing. **This allowance is regularly challenged, so you need to remain informed.** Check with your employer regarding its resolution and practice regarding church worker's housing allowance. You also need to keep records that document the housing expenses you claim. **Finally, note that the self-employment tax is paid on all income and is not subtraction to the housing allowance exemption.**

Commissioned ministers of religion are not subject to federal, FICA, state, or local tax withholding. **You may elect voluntary withholding** by filing with your congregation a W-4 form authorizing payroll deductions that account for federal income and social security taxes. This eliminates the burden of quarterly estimated payments, but it also denies you the use of the money. (For example, placing money set aside for estimated tax payments into the bank allows you to earn the interest on the money.)

If you do not request voluntary withholding, you are required to make quarterly estimated tax payments.

State and local taxes also may be voluntarily withheld by filing the appropriate form with your employer. If you do not request voluntary withholding, you are required to make quarterly estimated tax payments. Penalties are assessed by the IRS for late filing and if payments do not meet minimum requirements. Please note that this information is not intended as tax or financial advice. For specific information about how this affects you, consult the IRS, a tax consultant, or financial planner.

As hard as it is to believe, the best years for saving are now. Develop a savings plan from your first paycheck. Force yourself to do so. After setting aside your thank offering, place into savings some of the remaining money and learn to live with the rest.

A TSA, or tax sheltered annuity, is a method of saving for retirement that enables you to defer all taxes on money paid into the fund. Such plans may be offered through Thrivent (formerly AAL and Lutheran Brotherhood), among others. While it's early now to think about retirement, the savings rule applies here as well: the sooner, the better.

Approach your finances with a plan. Check your local library for books or periodicals such as "Money" and "Changing Times." Your commitment to Lutheran education means some financial sacrifice on your part, but it does not release you from the obligation of being a good steward.

Know Your Students

As a teacher, you'll make better decisions about planning your learners' instructional program and communicating with their families if you know as much about each child as possible.

A form to be filled out by your students (and you too) appears on the next page. Children love to tell about themselves. This simple form will get you started gathering information about them. Here are some suggestions to consider if you use it:

All about Me

One good way to fill a bulletin board is with an "All About Me" display. Students can bring pictures, scrapbook items, writing examples, hobby displays, and other information to describe themselves for their classmates. A good example can be the teacher, who participates along with the students!

- Duplicate this questionnaire to give to your students.
- Make a few extra copies so that you'll have them on hand to "break the ice" with new students who enter your room during the year.
- Use it on the first days students are in your classroom.
- Don't push children to answer all questions. Give them permission to leave some blank.
- Be available to help them spell words or assure them that spelling is not important on the sheet.
- This is not a test. Allow time for your class to enjoy telling stories about themselves.
- If your children are too young to easily write the answers, consider teaming up with a class of older students who can serve as scribes while the young ones tell them their answers. The experience will be good for them both.
- Once the learners have completed "All About Me," use the information to help you treat each child with dignity and respect and to probe for issues that enhance or detract from their learning.
- Read all responses right away. There may be some vital information for you to know right now.
- Consider telephoning each child at home or having a personal conference with each child to go over his or her responses. Dialog will give you a chance to know students more personally and perhaps, better understand what's important in their lives. They will value the personal attention.

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- Do not share this personal information with others in such a way that the child will be embarrassed or angered. Always show respect to students by treating each with dignity.
 - Your voluntary participation and sharing in this exercise will help students get to know you.

The original version of this exercise and form was a resource from David G. Ebeling, Blooming Christian Education Resources, Bloomington, Indiana, © 1992.

Getting to Know You

Getting to know _____ (your name here)

I am _____ years old. I was born on _____, _____

I am now in grade _____

My full name is _____

The name I like to be called is _____

My address is _____

I've lived at this address since I was _____ years old

My telephone number is _____

Others who live at my home are _____

Other family members I plan to spend time with are _____

Two of my best friends are _____

and _____

I like to spend my free time _____

My favorite TV program is _____

During this past summer, the thing I did that was the most fun was _____

Something I've heard about being in this grade is that _____

On school nights, I'll probably go to bed at this time: _____

On school mornings I'll probably get up at this time: _____

For breakfast I usually will eat _____

I'll usually get to and from school by _____

The subject I usually like best in school is _____

The subject I usually like least in school is _____

I think I'll have a good school year if _____

Acknowledgements

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- Horensky, George and Bucheck, Brad, Timely Tax Thoughts. Accounting Department. Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. March 1992.
- "Not For Rookies Only," Instructor. September, 1987.
- "On Your Mark, Get Set," LET Publication.
- Project Serve: a Board of Parish Education publication.
- Quinn, Jane Bryant. Making the Most of Your Money. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1991.
- Swetfager, Brooke. "Nobody Told Me...", Lutheran Education. November/December 1984.

Recommended Reading

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- Distinctively Lutheran: The Tradition and Future of Ministry in Lutheran School Classrooms* edited by Edward Grube, 2000. Available from Lutheran Education Association, 708.209.3343 or lea@curf.edu.
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Lutheran Education Association

Mission Statement

Lutheran Education Association (LEA) is a professional organization linking, equipping, and affirming educators in Lutheran ministries.

Executive Summary

LEA links, equips, and affirms educators in Lutheran ministries, helping them become excellent educators.

Educators in Lutheran ministries face many challenges. Effective ministry requires participation by individuals and organizations that care about people and understand how Lutheran educational ministries are distinctive. LEA is an organization composed of individuals who are ready to help others address challenges and make a difference in the lives of those they serve.

Many obstacles confront educators in Lutheran ministries. Among those barriers may be unreasonable demands on time, lack of professional identity, misperceptions of ministry, unstable family environment, unsatisfying professional and personal relationships, feelings of isolation, and inadequate professional growth and spiritual nurture.

LEA helps its members confront their problems, predicaments, and pains. Members benefit from the experience and care of colleagues through print publications, Internet resources, conferences, academies, and forum-style listservs.

Since 1942, Lutheran Education Association has provided practical resources and visionary leadership to educators in Lutheran ministries. Today, LEA serves more than 4,000 professionals involved in education ministries. LEA is a Christian education movement that:

- Interprets and promotes the importance of Lutheran Christian education.
- Articulates issues confronting Christian education and the educator in Lutheran ministries.
- Advances the professional growth of educators in Lutheran ministries.
- Enables Lutheran education professionals to understand their unique role and utilize that role to positively affect the church and the world.
- Promotes the interests of educators in Lutheran ministries as they minister to children, youth, and adults in the church and the world.

LEA Networks Lutheran Education Association operates ten networks:

Curriculum & Resources for Educators Network (CUREnet)

Purpose: To promote integration of faith in the sharing of resources, ideas, and techniques to equip educators in Lutheran ministries

Directors of Christian Education Network (DCEnet)

Purpose: To advocate, link, and equip Directors of Christian Education to serve more effectively in God's Kingdom

Early Childhood Educators Network (ECEnet)

Purpose: To link early childhood professionals in Lutheran schools to resources and to equip and affirm them as they minister to the diverse needs of young children and their families (preschool through grade 2)

Elementary Teachers Network (ETnet)

Purpose: To support, resource, and represent elementary teachers in their Lutheran school ministries (grades 3 through 8)

Integrating Technology Network (ITnet)

Purpose: To promote educators' effective integration of technology into Lutheran education ministries

Leadership Network (LEADnet)

Purpose: To gather school administrators, early childhood directors, and other leaders in Lutheran education to exchange ideas, grow in professionalism, and be affirmed through resources and publications

Mission Minded Educators Network (MMEnet)

Purpose: To link educators in international and cross-cultural ministry settings with mission minded educators by providing resources, experiences, and support

Outreach Network (REACHnet)

Purpose: To discuss and encourage the development and use of Christian outreach resources and expertise

Secondary Educators Network (SECnet)

Purpose: To promote interaction and resource-sharing among educators in Lutheran secondary schools

Stewardship, Development, and Advancement Network (SDAnet)

Purpose: To encourage, equip, and empower leaders to create and promote an effective stewardship-based ministry of financial development and advancement

NOTES

