

To embrace, encourage, and empower through a network of Christian educators.

TEACHERS



Submitted by Melodee Simmons
Childcare/Preschool Representative

Have you ever asked yourself this question: "Why do I want to work with young children?" Is it a job or a career? If it's a job, you do it for the money. If it's a career, you do it for the children.

You have the responsibility of helping to make children into the people they are going to be. Children spend more awake time with us than with their parents. Our job is to provide each child a secure, nurturing, educational child care experience that fosters self-discovery, a love of learning, and positive self-esteem.

Without security and nurturing, the educational part will not happen. In order to give the children what they need, you need to look at yourself first.

Are you taking care of yourself? Often we get so busy with work, family, friends, and other commitments that we tend to neglect our own needs. We wake up early and go to bed late. We eat on the run--and not always the healthiest foods. We forget how to relax, or we don't take the time to relax. We try to give to everyone else but we forget about ourselves. We need to take time to be sure we are at our best, so we can give our best to the children we teach.

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In Order to be Retired, Do You Have to be Tired First, & Then Become Tired Again? YES!!!

Submitted by Marilyn Domminick
Public School Representative

It is the time of year when educators who have spent their adult lives teaching students start announcing their plans to retire. This decision is such a monumental step in the lives of all who dedicate their love, skill, and their whole being to serving the needs of those who need their influence and their knowledge.

Let me stop and say "thank you" if this article describes your situation and is speaking to you. Second only to parenting, I truly believe teachers have chosen the most important profession in this world. No other job you could have chosen affords the opportunity to have so much influence on others. You spend forty hours each week, in most cases much more, having a direct impact on your mission field! For some children, you have been their only hope for hearing that they can have a better life and that God loves and cares for them. Hopefully, each of you has done that with all the passion that a person can possess when filled with the Holy Spirit.

For Christian educators, as the time approaches to retire, it is, of course, a time for reflection, but more importantly, for planning. Do not think of your time of influence over students as coming to an end.

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Lebanon School Rises Above, Transforms Children's Lives

Beirut, Lebanon

(This article appeared originally in NCN News, February 8, 2014.)

Abdo Khanashat was standing near the window of his first floor office when the bomb hit. The blast ripped a hole in the Sin el-Fil Church of the Nazarene sanctuary, which is attached to the Nazarene Evangelical School where Khanashat serves as director. During the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the threat of such bombings was very real, and he was forced to close the school several times. He even spent nine days living in a bomb shelter in the basement when it was too dangerous for him to navigate the bullet-riddled streets to go home to his family.

In spite of the 15 tumultuous years during which neighbors once looted the building, taking tables, chairs, and other equipment, Khanashat kept things going almost single-handedly.

Under Khanashat's direction, the Nazarene Evangelical School, founded in the 1960s is now a thriving educational center with more than 200 children enrolled, at least 50 of whom are from Syrian refugee families.

From Orphanage to Director Khanashat grew up in a Lutheran orphanage in Lebanon. His father died when he was 2 years old, and his mother was unable to care for him. From his early childhood, he was aware of God's presence in his life. (Continued on page 5.)



Discover How They Learn

Submitted by Tracy Gosnell - Homeschool Representative



When I started homeschooling, I did the most natural thing. I decided to teach my children the way I had learned as a child. I reasoned that it must work, as I did well. I quickly learned that sitting at the desk listening to me and then doing “seat work” did not work well with our children. It did not help me to have a two-year-old child running around and grabbing things. I think all of us ended up in tears more than once. During this transition, I began to realize that mimicking a class-room setting was not going to work in this homeschool. Thus began a journey of trying to find the best way to teach my children, based on the “discovery” that all children are not created equal when it comes to learning.

I discovered during this “on the job training” that I needed to determine the learning styles of each of our children. I discovered there are three basic types of learning styles which include: kinesthetic learners, visual learners, and auditory learners. Most children have some characteristics of all three of these learning styles, but, as they grow and develop, one style will generally become more prevalent. Let me explain.

Kinesthetic learners tend to be more active, moving about and enjoying hands-on learning. Most young children learn this way. Crawling and toddling children have to pick something up, feel it, taste it, and see where it will fit. This is true of children through kindergarten-age where exploring and learning through doing is how they learn and retain information. As children progress during the early elementary years, they tend to develop more characteristics of visual learning. They want to be shown how to do the task, and charts or pictures help them understand a new concept. In the later elementary years and on into the middle school years, those who are auditory learners will tend to learn by hearing what needs to be done or learned. Auditory learners do well in the traditional lecture-style setting.

Being aware of the characteristics of the different learning styles will help you understand how your children learn. Listed below are a few characteristics for each learning style and ideas to help your child learn, as documented in research from Lehigh University. (Continued on page 4.)

The Faithful Teacher

Submitted by Becky Ramsey - Christian School Representative

When it is almost the end of the second quarter, each teacher wants to do his or her best and seeks to find ways to be the “faithful teacher.” At this point in the year, teachers are not far from our students in the battle of doing our best except for a greater degree of maturity. Teachers need to sincerely seek to set the example for dependability, reliability, and constancy in their efforts. When we seek to develop these all important qualities especially when the temptation is to relax, the best place to find our mentor is in the greatest teacher, our Lord. Psalm 89:8b-9 states, “You are mighty, O Lord, and your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.”

I can easily liken this verse to my classroom. If I am to be faithful, that spirit of the Lord must surround me at all times. It is necessary to have a conscious expectation of His presence to encompass my classroom in order to properly address the “surging sea of students.” (Continued on page 3.)

As a Teacher Thinks...

Submitted by Donna Fillmore

What you believe about yourself as a teacher affects your teaching. Self-efficacy is the professional term used to describe teachers’ beliefs that they are capable and can accomplish what they set out to do. Not surprisingly, the research showed that teachers with strong self-efficacy usually reap better results in their teaching. Because they believe they can do the job, they work harder at their teaching tasks. They persevere longer when faced with challenges, and they hold a higher opinion of students. These teachers believe that all children can learn, given the right conditions. They are less likely to write off slower students as unable to learn and therefore not teachable.

The point: As a teacher, you have a strong basis for a positive self-efficacy—your partnership with Christ through the Holy Spirit. You are not alone in your teaching, and you do not have to depend solely on your own natural abilities. The Holy Spirit, working through you, can accomplish great things.

As a Christian teacher, you can also view students in a positive manner. Yes, they come to you with different personalities and abilities. Some are more naturally a “joy to teach” than others. However, all are persons of worth because they were created by God and redeemed by Jesus. And, just as God is working through you as a teacher, He is working in them as learners. Again, you are neither alone, nor unaided, as you teach.

Perhaps you have labored under the effects of a low sense of self-efficacy. Most of us are better at seeing our faults than our strengths. We compare ourselves to others and berate ourselves because we fall short of our ideals. Or, we may be working with students who don’t learn easily or even show much interest.

Action step: Search the Bible for a verse that emphasizes God’s power or His love. Memorize the verse and think of it daily. Begin today to remind yourself that you and God are a team in teaching students. Together you can change their lives. With this sense of godly self-efficacy, you will be a more effective teacher.

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Submitted by Melodee Simmons
Childcare/Preschool Representative

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“Do not neglect the gift you have ... practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:14-16, ESV).

Take a minute to think about how you are doing.

Appearance – Do you try to look professional when you arrive at work? When you are dressed appropriately, you tend to feel different than when you are dressed too casually.

Job Performance – Do you take pride in doing the best job possible? When you are doing your best, you get a feeling of satisfaction that gives you motivation to keep on going.

Professional Development – Do you take the opportunity to attend training classes whenever possible? Do you discuss ideas or concerns with other teachers? Do you take continuing education courses? It is good to see other people who are doing the same job as yours. It lets you know you are not alone. Sharing ideas helps to keep you fresh and interested in what you are doing.

Self-reflection – Do you make time for yourself? Do you get enough sleep, eat right, take a walk, read a good book, visit with friends, etc.? Your health is important. If you are tired or not feeling well, you can't give the children your best. Remember the importance of daily personal devotions. This will help you recharge and keep in mind what is important.

Assessment – Do a self-evaluation of your performance. It is always good, but not always easy, to take an honest look at yourself. What are your strengths? Where are your weaknesses? What areas are you going to work on?

Develop Professional Goals – Develop long-term and short-term goals. (Where do you want to be in your profession in 1 year, in 5 years, in 10 years?) Write down the goals. Then think about what you need to do, step by step, to reach those goals. Occasionally look at your goals, and evaluate how you are progressing. Check off the steps you have completed. You will see your progress, and you can determine if you need to make any adjustments to your steps.

It is important to take care of yourself. You are an important part of the children's lives. They need you at your best in order for them to do their best.

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well” (3 John 1:2, NIV).

learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord . . . for you are their glory and strength.”

My choosing to be the faithful teacher that I need to be can only happen when I walk in the light of His presence. I do not have enough determination for every battle that comes my way during the course of any day. I cannot muster the methodology to challenge students who are counting the days to the next holiday. I cannot creatively approach the curriculum in a way that tantalizes the imaginations of my students without His inspiration. My day is too demanding without His strength filling me moment by moment.

For me to remain faithful, I must lean hard on the One whose name means faithfulness. Verse 18 sums up the solution to seeking to be faithful. “Indeed our shield belongs to the Lord.” Without His shield and defense, we cannot become what He has called us to be....His faithful servant in our classroom. (Psalm 89:8-18 NIV)

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The Faithful Teacher

Submitted by Becky Ramsey
Christian School Representative

When “waves of woe” begin to mount, I need to face those whitecaps as Christ did and speak peace. Verse 14 of the same chapter goes on with Christ's qualities of faithfulness. “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.” Those two important qualities are as essential in the classroom as in any kingdom.

As the leader, we must have a demeanor that exhibits virtue and uprightness. Justice, or being consistent in the way we handle situations, is an element that cannot be overlooked. When a teacher responds inconsistently, students cannot be expected to perform at their best either. Many times when I have not had the best of days, I go home and evaluate the situation. I realize that the problem was in fact my own. I did not consistently draw the line in the sand. I gave too many chances. Students will often push to find out where the limit actually is. If it is not in the same place each day, they do not respond positively.

The rest of verse 14 adds more important ingredients to this study. “...Love and faithfulness go before you.” If love for our students is not evident, our “faithfulness” will not be effective. I have found that when my students know that each action comes from a heart of love, they can take even the difficult medicine of correction. They know I care enough to confront their actions, and I will do what is best for them in the long run.

Verses 15-17 give the key to our being faithful. “Blessed are those who have



Discover How They Learn

Submitted by Tracy Gosnell Homeschool Representative

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Characteristics of a Kinesthetic Learner

- Learns through moving, doing, and touching, a hands-on method, actively exploring the world around them
- Enjoys tasks that involve manipulating materials and objects
- Remembers what was done, but has difficulty recalling what was said or seen
- Often doodles while listening, thus processing information
- Often is adventurous
- May find it hard to sit still for long periods
- May become distracted by the need for activity and exploration
- Needs to be active and take frequent breaks

Ideas that might help your Kinesthetic Learner:

- Take frequent study breaks and vary your activities.
- Make studying more physical—work at a standing desk, pace or walk while memorizing, mold a piece of clay, squeeze a tennis ball or relaxation ball.
- Use bright colors to highlight reading material.
- Play music in the background while you study.

Characteristics of a Visual Learner

- Learns through seeing, reading, observing, enjoys visual stimulation
- Enjoys maps, pictures, diagrams, and color
- Often closes his/her eyes to visualize or remember something
- May think in pictures and learn best from visual displays, such as diagrams, illustrated textbooks, overhead transparencies, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and handouts
- Finds something to watch if bored
- Benefits from illustrations and presentations that use color

Ideas that might help your Visual Learner

- Use visual materials such as pictures, charts, maps, and graphs or have your child make his/her own.
- Use multi-media such as computers or videos.
- Study in a quiet place away from verbal disturbances.
- When memorizing material, write it over and over.
- Keep pencil and paper handy, so you can write down good ideas.

Characteristics of an Auditory Learner

- Learns through listening, verbal lectures, discussion, talking things through, and listening to what others have to say
- Prefers directions given orally
- Prefers lectures to reading assignments
- Often repeats what has just been said
- Often benefits from reading text aloud
- Remembers by verbalizing the lessons

Ideas that might help your Auditory Learner

- Think aloud and talk to yourself.
- Read text aloud.
- Create musical jingles and mnemonics to aid memorization.
- Discuss your ideas verbally.
- Recite information over and over to better memorize material.

When my sister first started teaching, she taught early elementary. I had the opportunity to volunteer as an aide in her classroom. I noted her ability to teach her students new things by presenting concepts using techniques from each learning style. She would first teach them the information. Then they explored the concept with learning stations that were set up for each style. During their rotation time, you could see which station helped them understand the new concept. As I endeavored to understand how my children learn, I remembered this approach. I tried different ways to help them learn. Some of our fondest memories during this journey include writing with our fingers in a smear of shaving cream on a plastic table, learning math by going grocery shopping, and making up or learning little songs to help us memorize parts of speech or the measurements that make up a mile.

Homeschooling is different for everyone. It takes some creativity at times, but homeschool parents have a wonderful opportunity to discover how their children learn. The investment is well worth the time, and it pays dividends that include a lower-stress learning environment.

If you would like to learn more about how children learn, check out the book *The Way They Learn* by Cynthia Ulrich Tobias (Tyndale House 1996)

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In Order to be Retired, Do You Have to be Tired First, & Then Become Tired Again? YES!!!

Submitted by Marilyn Domminick - Public School Representative Continued from page 1.

Instead ask God what He would have you do to continue to have that influence. You still have so much to offer, and younger educators need your help just as much as the students. What a shame to let all of your preparation, wisdom, and experience now sit idle while there is still so much to do.

I retired just about three and a half years ago, and I can't believe how fast that time has gone. As you all know, the life of an educator is a very busy one. I worried that I would not be able to fill my time with challenging ministry. Silly me!!! I am busier than I have ever been. I am writing now to share my journey with you so that you will find your own ways to minister when you have closed the door for the last time on your own classroom or office.

I have found four ways to keep my influence alive, but I am sure you could add many more to this list. Please think of my experiences in retirement as a starting point for the many possibilities you can explore.

- If you have grandchildren nearby, consider volunteering in their classrooms. If they are very young, they get a great deal of joy having a grandparent in their classrooms. I have three grandchildren, and I spend about a half day each week in each of their classrooms. Caleb is three. He decided to enter the world earlier than normal, so he has some developmental challenges. He is in a pre-school with both children with challenges and typical children. Believe me, they need all the helpful hands they can get in that program, and I love working there. David is in Kindergarten, and his teacher loves it when I come in and do centers with the children while he conducts reading groups. He even asks me for a second day a lot of weeks! Kyra is in third grade, and her teacher loves my help with math centers, since that is where my experience lies. I served as a high school math teacher for many years, and then a math curriculum coordinator for 3 elementary schools. It brings great personal satisfaction to me to be able to use my experience to benefit these classrooms. I have found that educators are really open to this type of help. Even if you don't have grandchildren, consider volunteering in the classrooms of schools near you, or even serving as a substitute teacher.
- Continue your involvement in professional organizations. You will keep your skills sharp and stay aware of new regulations and curriculum changes as well as participate in "think tank" experiences. And, it is very beneficial to others in the organization to learn from you. You will gain insight from other professionals as well.
- Adopt a beginning teacher and serve as a mentor. Some schools even have programs that are open to the service of retirees as mentors. Or, do this less formally for teachers in your church or friendship circles. If you have a college nearby with a teacher/administrator preparation program, volunteer to supervise or support young educators. Many retired administrators are able to find employment in the supervision of teacher education students. Take the opportunity to shape the next generation of educators!
- Volunteer to start, supervise, and/or help with school age and/or college students in your church. If you have no viable programs, look at churches that do have strong programs, and get busy! Your pastor may faint when you first volunteer, but, when consciousness is regained, he/she will be very thankful for your willingness to minister.

There are many advantages to spending your time in retirement as I have described. And, this list is just a starting point. For most of these, you can make your own schedule, and let those you are working with know that you need to be flexible so that you can enjoy some recreational time.

I wish God's blessing on your continued service as His minister. I pray that God will show you the ways He wants you to serve. And, if done properly, not only will you be retired, you'll be tired....again!

Lebanon School Rises Above, Transforms Children's Lives Continued from page 1.

"He accompanied me since I was 9 years old," Khanashat said. "At that time I realized I have another Father who cares for me more than a human being father. I didn't feel scared because I felt that really my Lord was with me and helping me in everything."

As he grew up, he sensed God calling him into ministry. The leaders at his orphanage suggested that he be a pastor. Missionaries offered to send him to Switzerland to study in a seminary. However, his mother did not want him to go so far away. So he obeyed and stayed in Lebanon.

Later he received a scholarship to study engineering in Germany. Again his mother begged him not to go and again Khanashat obeyed. He believes it was God's will for him to stay in Lebanon. (Continued on page 6.)



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When he graduated from school, he struck out on his own, taking his first job at a German school in Beirut as a teacher, where he worked for four years. It wasn't a good atmosphere at the school, however. The leaders belonged to another religion and were always trying to convert him. One day in 1967, Khanashat's tailor invited him to attend the Church of the Nazarene in Ashrafiyeh. On his first Sunday, Khanashat realized he'd found something special.

"I said, 'This is what I'm looking for.'"

He became familiar with the Nazarene Evangelical School and applied to work there, being named principal. At the time, there were 25 children and three teachers in a six-room school. He was shocked when he discovered the school did not have a license, so he worked hard to obtain a deed for the property and to register the school with the government, eventually receiving a license in 1973. Then, he put a big sign outside advertising the school.

By 1975, the school's attendance multiplied to 350 students. The school was well-known and well-loved.

War

That year, the Lebanese Civil War broke out. The school sat right on the line that divided the Christian neighborhood from the Muslim neighborhood, and it became too dangerous for the teachers or students to travel to the school. It was shut down from 1975 to 1979. During that time people from both neighborhoods broke into the school and stole everything. The walls on the east side of the school were destroyed so that fighters could carry their wounded through the school property to safety within their neighborhoods.

The bomb that hit the school's rooftop destroyed all the records for the school and the church.

In the early war years, the Nazarenes were unable to communicate with the greater church outside the country.

"The war was very terrible," Khanashat said. "We had no gasoline and sometimes no bread. How did God support us, I don't know. We couldn't contact anybody. No telephones, no cell phones, no means of connection, no post. I felt alone."

As time went by, conditions around the school improved. Khanashat decided to reopen the school on days without bombing. The teachers went on a day-to-day contract, meaning they were paid for each day they taught. Khanashat braved the dangerous streets and crossed blockades to deliver the teachers' salaries to their respective homes so they would have money to buy food.

The school also provided a shelter below the school for up to 150 neighbors during bombings.

Turnaround

In 1985, the situation again improved and school resumed regularly. Marlene Mshantaf was appointed principal.

Khanashat was finally able to get a message through to the Church of the Nazarene's Eurasia Region director, Franklin Cook, and the education coordinator, John Haines. They were eager to hear news from the Nazarenes in Lebanon. It was still too dangerous to go to the airport, so Khanashat took a boat to Cyprus and flew to the regional office in Büsingen, Switzerland, where he met them to discuss the situation. They were ready to help. They organized several shipping containers with food, clothes, and other needed items.

In 1986, Khanashat decided to expand the school, which at that time served grades 1 to 6. He added grades 7 to 9. With donated funds, he built another floor on the school, rebuilt the church — fixing the bombed hole in the ceiling — and renovated the bathrooms. In 1990, they opened a library, a laboratory, and a room for computer training.

Recently, the school added a rooftop playground for young children. After years of enduring daily outages from public electricity and buying electricity from a private generator for US\$900 per month to keep lights on and computers running, a donor gave US\$7,000 through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries so the school could purchase its own generator.

Today the school has 210 students ages 3 to 15. The children come from numerous religious backgrounds, but the parents understand that they will learn Christian principles at school. Every day the children attend chapel, where they hear Bible stories and the gospel, and once a week they attend Bible classes.

The school is now a safe place for the flood of Syrian children who are fleeing from a civil war in their own country to find safety and continue their education in Beirut — a city that understands civil war. This year the school is serving 50 Syrian children. Twenty-five of the children are supported through a US\$50,000 grant from Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

[Editor's Note: Please pray for the children and staff at the Nazarene Evangelical School in Beirut, Lebanon.]

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