

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

Summertime, Summertime, Sum- Sum- Summertime!

By Cinday Alsip, Public School Representative

“When God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil – this is a gift of God. They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart” (Ecclesiastes 5:19-20).

I am so glad summer is here! Our teachers were released last week, and the students were released a week before that. Everyone is posting how much they are enjoying a little time to rest and experience something fun. Administrators who work through the summer also enjoy the change of pace. The school is so quiet; we have time to catch up a little and do some dreaming about instructional leadership for next year. After a little rest, teachers will also spend some time this summer attending workshops and planning for next year. It is such a blessing to have some quiet time (without students) to do some clear thinking!

If you have a job and live in America, chances are you have some possessions to enjoy, and summer is a great time to enjoy them. You may have access to a pool, a lake, or beach to cool off. You may have access to a vehicle you can use to get out of the house for awhile. You may have an apartment or a house you can work on and make improvements. You may enjoy air conditioning while it is so hot outside! But while you are enjoying the possessions that God has given to you, do not remain completely occupied with your God-given “gladness of heart.” Remember to take time to prayerfully reflect.

I want to encourage you to do some prayerful searching while you are away from your students. Ask God what He has in mind for you for the next year. Ask Him what He has in mind for your students. Good teachers tend to be very reflective creatures, often re-evaluating lessons and considering how effective they were. Take some time this summer to let God speak to you about that and about how you are doing as His teacher and what He thinks you should adjust.

It's exciting to think about what could happen next year when the direction you choose is God-driven and chosen during a quiet time of reflection spent with Him! The ideas we have are limited by our human creativity, but God's ideas are boundless. Think about what He could do through you!

But you won't know unless you ask! So, make time this summer to seek Him out and seek His will for you and your classroom. He will bless the time you spend and the requests you make!



Leave a Book, Take a Book Article by Lisa Allen*

Thousands of Little Free Libraries can be found throughout the United States as well as in places across the globe like Lithuania and Lebanon, Rome and Winnipeg and Sao Paulo and Dublin. As of this writing, there are more than 15,000 Little Free Libraries scattered across the world.

The original Little Free Library was built to resemble a one room schoolhouse. Todd Bol built it as a tribute to his mother, a former school teacher with a passion for reading. He adorned it with a sign that said “free books,” and he mounted it on a post in his Hudson, Wisconsin yard. He filled it with books.

He built more and gave them away. Then he joined forces with Rick Brooks of Madison, Wisconsin. Together, they saw the potential to effect good through the giving and receiving of books. The non-profit organization Little Free Library's goals are twofold: to promote literacy and the love of reading for both children and adults through free book exchanges worldwide and to promote a sense of community.
(Continued on page 3.)



Where Are They Now?

By Melodee Simmons - Childcare/Preschool Representative

Have you ever thought about all those little kids you have taught?

Where are they now? What are they doing? What kind of people are they becoming? Once in a while I hear about a child I taught years ago, and I enjoy hearing about his or her life. The children are reaching the age where they are graduating college, getting married, and having their own children. Most of the time, as preschool teachers, we don't get to see the results of the time and effort we put into the children.

Recently I was asked to speak at the "Rights of Passage" night at my church. We were turning the graduating sixth graders over from the Children's Department to the Youth. Now these young people were never in my preschool class, and I actually knew only one of the girls when she was that age. I was asked to talk about them over the last four years, about memories and how I've seen them grow.

While I was thinking about what I would say, I thought that these young people had preschool teachers who may not get to see the wonderful people for whom they provided the foundation for their education. These children have made commitments for Christ, and they are involved in sports, music, swimming, and drama. They have taken the training to work as assistants in the church nursery. They have assisted in Vacation Bible School. They are finding places to serve in their church.

Many people would not think that the way these children are developing has anything to do with their preschool years. However, I know that the preschool years set the base for the rest of their lives. They learn about sharing, helping others, getting along with people who may be different than they are. They learn the basic academic skills on which they will build throughout school times. They receive the opportunity to experience art, music, imagination and many more things that they will use over the years. You helped them see the world as a secure place where they can try new things,

I wish everyone could keep up with the children they teach over the years. It would be great to see the people they turn out to be. Since that is not always possible, except in a few situations, I would like to thank all the preschool teachers for all you do for these little children.

Be assured that you are making a difference in the lives of future adults, and therefore in our world. The work you do is essential.



One Waters and Another Plants

By Becky Ramsey, Christian School Representative

The last day of school.....I do not know who looks forward to it more, the students or the teachers.

While it is hard to believe that this long-awaited day has arrived, this coveted day brings with it many questions. Sometimes it is a more difficult job to sit, to watch, and to see if what we as teachers tried to accomplish really worked with our students. Throughout the past year, parents and teachers have worked together to attempt to educate the children and mold their character not just for one school year, but for life. But as that last day of school comes, we as teachers and parents alike must ask ourselves that all important question, "Were we successful in what we attempted to get across to our students this year?"

There are many factors that must be accomplished for a successful education to be achieved. One necessary ingredient is for each child to obtain the truth. It does not matter what a child has learned if it is not based on truth. Would we consider ourselves to be an effective teacher if we asked our students to memorize mathematical facts that were not correct? 2+2 will never be 5. If we taught that fact combination to our eager students, we would be considered a failure.

To be an accomplished teacher, it is always good to follow the best teacher, Jesus Christ. In John 17:17 (NIV), Christ prays to the Father for his disciples, His earthly classroom, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." Christ was training these few men given to Him to go out into the world just as we must train our students for their eventual stepping out into the real world. (Continued on page 4.)



INSIGHTS FROM ABOVE

His Strength and My Weakness

By Roxie Wessels

“My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness”
(2 Corinthians 12:9, NIV).

God’s Holy Spirit begins His work in believers when they receive Christ’s forgiveness for their sins. When we give our lives fully to Him, He comes to cleanse and fill us with His presence. This begins a life-long walk with Christ—a life of growth and adventure! How wonderful the times of refreshing and renewal as He teaches us new truths. What blessed times of encouragement, guidance, and blessing as we learn from His Word. To me, this is what our personal journey with God is all about.

Paul saw his “thorn in the flesh” as God’s way to keep him humble. God reminded Paul that His strength “is made perfect in weakness.” As we live close to God, we see our weaknesses. We ask for and receive God’s strength.

Years ago, as a young pastor’s wife, God showed me a weakness—a fear of people. I lived in bondage to what people would think or say. God told me, “Remember, people are who they are. You are who you are. Keep your eyes on Me. Seek my approval. Accept, love, and forgive people. As I said to Peter long ago, ‘What is that to you? You follow Me.’”

Slowly my fears were absorbed in His strength. My limitations were given to Him. Jesus brought a sense of wholeness and peace and joy to my heart.

This devotional appeared originally in Life on the Line, Volume 2, printed and distributed by Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene. Roxie Wessels lives in the Kansas City area. She has been a pastor’s wife, retreat speaker, and dedicated lay person and church member. She is best known as a woman of prayer.



Leave a Book, Take a Book

(Continued from page 1)

What started in 2009 as a tribute to one mother has grown into an international movement that not only promotes the love of reading, but it is also beginning to evolve into walking and biking tours and is, in some places, influencing school curriculum as well as service and social media projects.

The Little Free Library concept is not unlike that of a traditional library, though the differences are significant. There is no need for a card, and there are no due dates or fines. The selection of books is ever changing. Everyone is encouraged to leave a book or to take a book and can return it or not, at his or her discretion.



Even more fun is that each Little Free Library can reflect its owner through its design. Many look like exaggerated bird houses, but others vary in shape, size, and decoration. Some, like one on Aberdeen Street in Overland Park, Kansas is painted red to blend in with the brick houses along the block. Others in the Metro area are built to stand out; one in particular is an un-cycled mailbox, painted periwinkle blue and decorated with yellow flowers.

Official Little Free Libraries are chartered with the non-profit Little Free Library and are included on a comprehensive online map. While there is a fee to obtain a charter, the planning and construction of each unit is left up to the discretion of the owner. Kits are available for purchase, but many opt to use recycled or repurposed items to build a distinctive container that mirrors their reasons behind joining the movement. Several are part of landscape vignettes that include gardens and benches.



Olathe, Kansas is currently home to one Little Free Library, at Rolling Ridge Elementary School. It will soon have two, as the five girls of Girl Scout Troop 413 are building a Little Free Library at Ravenwood Elementary School as a means of earning the coveted Bronze Award. The troop will mount the Little Free Library near the outdoor classroom, with the hope that it will encourage students and neighbors to nurture a love of reading through the summer months.

The Little Free Library at Rolling Ridge Elementary is a lasting reminder of the love for Marilyn Peterson. Peterson was a librarian at Rolling Ridge for more than 20 years, and her daughter, Kate Thompson, is a librarian at Olathe Northwest High School. When Peterson passed away, her family donated \$500 to the Rolling Ridge Elementary library.

Lesley Sheldon, also a librarian at Rolling Ridge, found an article about Little Free Libraries while contemplating how to memorialize Peterson in a meaningful and lasting way.

“The rest is history,” says Sheldon. “We have been blessed with many donations and several of our families watch over the library on weekends and over extended breaks. It is such a special project.”

*This article, written by Lisa Allen, appeared in the April 2014 edition of Leawood Lifestyle Magazine. To learn more and to browse the official Little Free Library website, go to <www.LittleFreeLibrary.org>. The photos are courtesy of Jim Postlewait.



One Waters and Another Plants

By Becky Ramsey, Christian School Representative

(Continued from page 2.)

We should not be satisfied with just a “good” education. We must be sure that everything we teach is based on the ultimate source of truth, God’s Word. Even if we teach in a public school classroom, our lessons of character building and relationships can illustrate the truth Christ sought to model to His disciples.

Secondly, we must recognize that each child has been given gifts, spiritual gifts—some innate, some to develop. However, an unopened gift is worthless. And an undeveloped gift, according to the parable of the talents, is taken away. A productive teacher must be able to teach each student what his gifts are, both those that are evident and those that need growth or refinement. The teacher must also take those qualities that frustrate a teacher in the classroom and turn them into the gift God intended.

Every gift God intended for our good, Satan tries to counterfeit and use against us. A godly teacher will recognize Satan’s shams and help that student to find the gift God intended for them to receive. When a teacher sees stubbornness in a student, he or she must ask God to help turn that negative quality into persistence. The aspect of extravagance often just needs guidance to become an attitude of generosity. A child who is judgmental can become discerning. The world will often suggest vain ambition, but a godly teacher can direct that egotistic goal to proper aspiration. I could continue to go through an entire list of character traits that plague a classroom and make it difficult; but for each one of those problems, God has a matching quality that He desires for his children to have, qualities that model His Son. Satan has sought to counterfeit God’s intent. It is the job of an effective teacher to recognize Satan’s imitations and to direct our students to the real gifts God intended them to develop.

As an effective teacher, we must also remember each of our students is an individual created uniquely. We will not accomplish the same goals in each student. Each student has a different area in which to bloom. We as teachers must remember that as we presented different types of information to all students, each individual has grasped and acquired different aspects of each lesson. We must evaluate the classroom as a whole. Christ, the perfect teacher, did not turn out twelve students that were equal in their accomplishments. He even saw failure, but He never gave up or stopped loving. We as teachers must do the same.

So at the end of the year I ask that all important question. Was I successful with this year’s students? I must realize that I am not done, and I am not alone. As a Christ-led teacher, I must realize that, as I pass those students on to the next teacher or out in the world after graduation, the education process is not complete. And as I prayed for guidance to mold that child as he or she was in my classroom, I must continue to pray for them as they leave. I am only successful if I gave my best while I had them.

Sometimes God even gives me the ability to see down the road that a student that I thought I had failed has actually bloomed beautifully. The beauty of teaching is that we cannot fully take the credit for any success or sorrow in any perceived failure. As teachers, some plant, some water, but God gives the increase.

I Corinthians 3:7, NIV reminds us: “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.” We as teachers are a part of a process, a part of God’s plan of development. And the joy of teaching is to realize that God has only assigned me one small part of the process. I am only responsible for one short year that has now ended. I can rejoice that I have used the abilities God has given me to refine skills of the next generation. Whether I have planted or watered in a child’s life, I can trust God to use it and continue to bless my efforts in the years to come.

When I feel that I might not have accomplished all that I intended with a child, I can entrust that process to Him and realize that the progression of “education” is not complete even though my year with that child is finished. I can pray that all that I have invested in each child would be multiplied and refined by God himself.

I can rejoice as I see my students from past classes succeed and fulfill God’s purpose in their lives. I realize that many teachers have been chosen to invest in those precious lives.

And, I can begin to plan and pray for the next class that will be entrusted to me by God himself. But most of all, I can truly say with John about all of my past students, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 1:4, NIV).

Nazarene Educators Worldwide wishes you
a happy and restfull summer!

