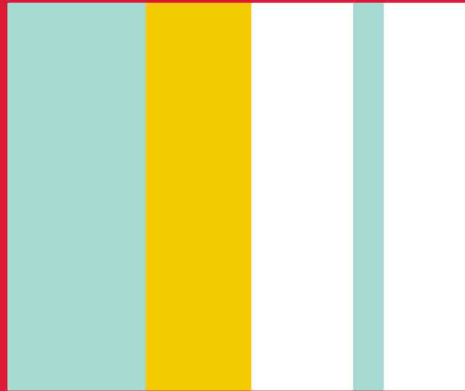
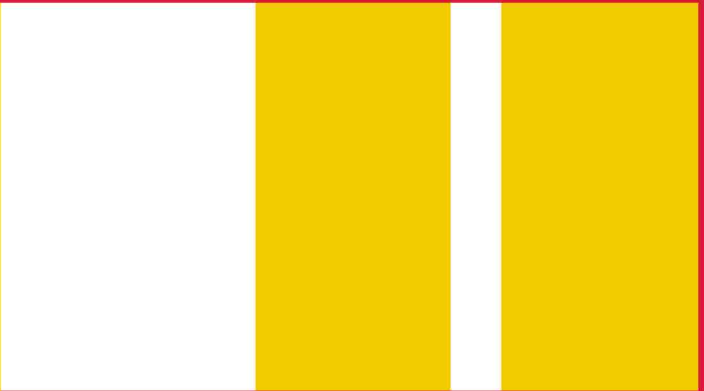


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To embrace, encourage, and empower through a network of Christian educators.

Is It State Testing Time Again? - By Lance Howard - NEW Vice Chair & Public School Representative

Regardless of your familiarity with, position in, or educational program you are a part of, you have likely heard of the high stakes testing that is likely taking place in your local educational system. While the tests, content, standards, and delivery makes headlines, it is important to have a good understanding of what is involved in testing and how it impacts our students.

The national parent group, PTA, has collected a helpful reference site for navigating your way through the testing (<http://www.pta.org/assessments>). They share information about the varied state assessments (with individual links for each state) that includes print and video information about testing and the two main consortiums (PARCC and Smarter Balance) that are driving the assessment(s) of the Common Core State Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org>).

In another recently-updated article on edutopia, the author(s) shared information for parents (or any interested educators not already immersed in testing) on how students are assessed, the fundamentals of current assessments, and how you can help prepare students when taking high stakes tests (<http://www.edutopia.org/assessment-testing-parent-resources>).

While some educators or parents are in favor of standardized educational expectations, there is also movement against the common core and standardized testing that has been gaining momentum in some regions of the country as well (<http://fairtest.org/>). If you are also interested in further research on this topic, more information regarding standards and assessments as related to the NCLB Act (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Child_Left_Behind_Act) can be found at the federal government level with the Department of Education's blog posts (<http://www.ed.gov/blog/topic/standards-and-assessments>).



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Using the Internet to Complete Schoolwork at Home - By Beula Postlewait - NEW Council Member

The children in schools today experience a totally different environment than their parents did when they were in school. Technology has invaded the classroom and has changed how children and youth complete their assignments at school and at home. There are advantages and disadvantages for relying on the Internet to complete schoolwork at home.

On Thursday, February 19, 2015, the Kansas City Star published an article entitled, "The Pros and Cons of Using the Internet to Complete Schoolwork." No author was given. The following is a summary of that article.

The Advantages

1. The accessibility of the Internet can be a significant benefit to students who have computers at home. The library has limited hours, and students can access the Internet at any time day or night. Students can do research from the comforts of home.

2. The Internet can be an extension of the classroom beyond the school walls. There are educational websites on the Internet, and many of them are written and monitored by professional educators. These sites may be helpful to students who struggle with a certain lesson or concept.

Rather than waiting until the next day to ask the teacher a question, the student can obtain information immediately from a good website.

3. The Internet may offer a forum for discussion. This has the possibility of engaging the students and encouraging them to do further research on a topic. Students who are hesitant to speak out in class may express themselves through a forum and receive feedback on their ideas.

The Disadvantages

1. Although the Internet does provide lots of information, the information may not always be reliable. Some students, especially younger students, may not be able to discern fact from fiction.

2. Students may be tempted to cheat. Students may copy and paste information from websites and claim it is their own work. Some students may not understand that such actions are wrong. In addition to its being wrong, this relying on the Internet to work problems or provide quick information may make it more difficult to process and grasp key concepts on their own in the future.

3. The Internet itself is full of distractions to students. Social networking sites can quickly distract students from their schoolwork. This takes time away from their studies.

The Internet has proven to be a valuable resource to students. However, the students must recognize there are both advantages and disadvantages to relying too much on the Internet.

The accessibility of the Internet can be a significant benefit to students who have computers at home.

What Does It Mean To Serve?

By Debbie Hallman - Early Childhood Rep.

It is very important that we as leaders are teaching the children and their parents the act of serving. Mark 10: 43b-45, (NIV) says: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Galatians 5:13 (NIV) says "Serve one another in love." We serve others in love because Jesus was the ultimate servant, laying down his life as a ransom so that we could experience freedom from sin and eternal life.

Serving becomes a blessing for everyone. As you bring families together, the projects will be accomplished, and the families will be able to make new friends in the community. These service projects can be intergenerational. Jesus will be so happy to see everyone serving with people of all ages.

Here are a few suggestions to help the children in your school learn to serve others.

- † Make a thank-you card for the church custodian.
- † Deliver flowers or "goodie bags" (cards made by the children, small pieces of fruit, seasonal craft project, or wrapped cookies) to the residents of a care center.
- † Collect coats and blankets to give to a local shelter.
- † Clean the yard or plant flowers for an elderly neighbor.
- † Write a thank-you letter to mail to military personnel serving overseas.
- † Collect personal items and baby necessities for a local women's shelter.
- † Hand out homeless blessing bags* to an area shelter.
- † Volunteer at a local food bank.
- † Look around your school and see what work needs to be done. Plan a workday for children and parents.
- † Sing for the residents at a care center. They will love it!

Keep in mind all the service projects you do will be appreciated so much by the people or organization receiving it. God is pleased to see families working together to serve others.

*Blessing Bags are a gallon-size zip-lock bag that contains: a bottle of water, toothpaste, toothbrush, Handi-wipes, a snack bar, small pack of tissues, a bar of soap, a washcloth, and a small comb. Also include a note that says: Blessing Bag--This bag was lovingly assembled by someone from _____. You are made in the image of God and are loved by Him.

What Will Be Your Legacy?

By Beula Postlewait - NEW Council Member

It was a cold, snowy day. There were twelve inches of snow on the ground. Jim and I made our way to Lexington, KY in a four-seat, single-engine airplane to attend the funeral of a great lady, my aunt, Nellie Smith.

She had lived a long and godly life. She loved the Lord and served Him faithfully for so many years. Born in 1913, she would have been 102 years old in July. Think of the changes she had experienced in her lifetime! She lived through numerous wars, world-wide financial crises, unbelievable changes in technology, transportation, and communication. A Proverbs 31 woman, she cared for her household, but she also went to the women's prison to pray with and give encouragement to the women there. She helped with the distribution of many Gideon Bibles. She was always active in her local church. She memorized passages and chapters of the Bible. When I visited her last year, we quoted together the 23rd Psalm.

What will your legacy be? As educators, we hope our students will remember us as teachers who cared for our students and worked creatively to help the students learn. I pray that teaching will never be just a job, a paycheck, a source of insurance, or a way to keep busy. I pray that we will be remembered for going the extra mile, enduring cold recess duty, monitoring the lunch room, monitoring after-school tutoring or study hall, and helping with school fund-raisers.

Who is watching us? The students, their parents, the other staff members—all are watching the way we teach, the way we interact with students and parents, and the way we interact with co-workers. Our attitudes and actions are our witness to those who watch. May we represent the words, the actions, and the attitudes of Jesus to everyone around us.

Chapter 11 of Hebrews begins by telling of people of faith who comprise a "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) that surrounds us. It is our invisible cheering squad. All of us know some present-day saints who have died and joined that "cloud of witnesses." So, do not be discouraged, but rejoice in the Lord. In all aspects of your life, live so that your legacy will encourage others to love God and live as Jesus taught.

Easter Is More Than a Chocolate Bunny...

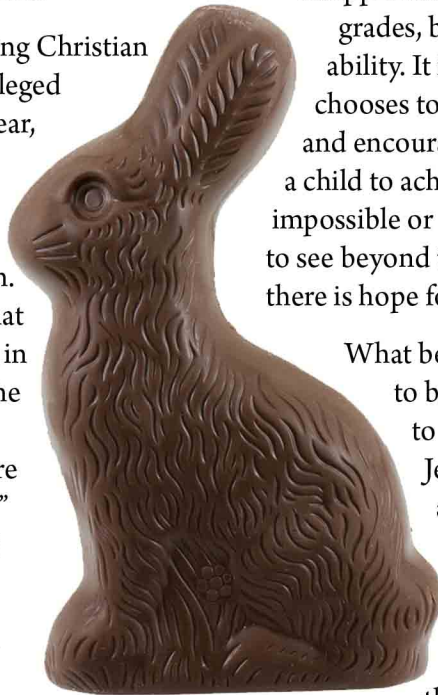
By Jan Wilton - Christian School Representative

Children all over the country, of various races, religions and creeds, are looking forward to Easter. Many children may think Easter means only egg hunts, candy, and parties. Their Easter events occur without the mention of Jesus. Talking about Jesus is not always "politically correct," acceptable, or encouraged in many places in our communities.

Children attending Christian schools are privileged and blessed to hear, perform, and experience the true meaning of the Easter season. Or are they? What are you teaching in your class? Do the children in your class receive more than "the bunny" aspect of Easter?

As a Christian school teacher, I quickly realized that not all of my students were followers of Christ. Some did not claim to be Christians nor did their families. What I lived and taught each day in my class was a reflection of Jesus to them. How I disciplined, spoke, acted and reacted made a difference in a child's or parents' understanding of Jesus. Truthfully, all teachers in public and private schools have these opportunities. They have opportunities to be an example of what it means to be a true follower of Christ.

A Christian teacher's example of Easter is more than what a teacher places on the bulletin board or the decorations in the classroom. It is seen in the life of teachers who live Easter daily. It is the teachers' knowing and accepting the responsibility of presenting themselves as Jesus. It includes the attitude of teachers who practice not adding to a family's feelings of hopelessness and disappointment due to a child's grades, behavior, or lack of ability. It is a teacher who chooses to use words of hope and encouragement to empower a child to achieve the seemingly impossible or encouraging a parent to see beyond today and realize there is hope for the future.



What better time than Easter to bring a picture of hope to a child and the family. Jesus conquered death and shows us we can have hope in seemingly hopeless situations. Easter is a time to realize anew the hope Jesus brought to the world. It is a time to renew hope in the children and families of your classroom as you lead in celebration of our risen Lord!

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV).

As you share the story of Easter with your class, may all of the children hear that Easter is more than just a chocolate bunny!

... It's All About Hope!



Bathroom Classroom for Homeschoolers - Janine Wilkins - Homeschool Representative

When I started homeschooling 22 years ago, one of the things I lamented was that my daughter would miss out on was all the beautiful bulletin boards and rich learning centers in classrooms I'd seen. We lived in a two-bedroom apartment, and I had just given birth to twins. But we plowed through; and that first graduate is now a nurse practitioner, and the twins are in graduate school. We do have a giant bulletin board, but it turns out that I've never gotten around to decorating it!

Over the years I have discovered an excellent passive teaching method. I've decided to break the silence and tell the world. *Cheaper by the Dozen* (the book) made a huge impression on me when I read it as a child. Mr. Gilbreth taught his kids a foreign language in the bathroom! He set up an actual record player! I've not gotten that far. (Although we do have a wireless blue tooth speaker so my son can listen to the Bible and recorded "school work" while he showers.*)

It is amazing how much my children have learned in the bathroom.



Our bathroom is our bulletin board (in the loosest sense of the word). It is amazing how much my children have learned in the bathroom. I slip pages in page protectors and tape or thumb-tack them to the wall. Sometimes they are posted for the short term and sometimes for the long term. The Morse code, prime numbers, and perfect squares have been up in our last three houses (at least 12 years).

Last week I put up a Constitution cheat sheet, and a month ago I put up a picture of the Supreme Court justices with captions. It takes a couple of minutes for me to Google, print and post. It tickled me to hear my son jump into a conversation about the judiciary with an astute comment about the justices and his opinion on how they would vote based on the president who nominated them. Sometimes it is information that my son HAS to know, and sometimes it is just interesting tidbits.

Our walls always include our Bible memory work. The twins did full memory of 1 and 2 Corinthians using the walls inside the shower stall! My students have memorized the presidents, logical fallacies, planets, capitals, maps, quotes, poems, helping verbs, and lately philosophy--all while on the throne or washing up. The bathroom wall is a great spot for those learning placemats or laminated binder page cheat sheets.

It's a great conversation starter too! I can't tell you how many guests have come out of the bathroom sharing something new they learned or relearned! I remember one of the twins standing up in a class and reporting with all confidence a fact that "the bathroom said." It also cracked me up to hear my daughter repeat word-for-word a poem I posted for her little brother. Someday, I'm sure the Morse code will come in handy, and everybody knows that aliens will communicate with humans using prime numbers!

Most of the time I don't even mention the posting, I just put it up and presto--it's learned!! I've even put up things I needed to learn. Someday I'm going to invest in Plexiglas sleeves in which to slip the pages. About the time I'm done homeschooling, I'll probably have to post things I'll need to work on for myself--like my address and phone number or where I keep my passport. But for now, our bathroom is the only classroom bulletin board we need.

(*To record school work, download a free recording software and export as mp3. Save in "one drive" and listen on a phone or other device. We use audacity.sourceforge.net/download/)

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Madagascar School Aims to Empower Students

Antananarivo, Madagascar

[Note from Editor: This article from the Nazarene News tells of a school that is helping youth and adults learn English, study the Bible, and learn computer skills. Nazarene Educators Worldwide salutes these schools that see a need and find ways to help students learn about God and find ways to earn a living.]

At the Nazarene district center in Antananarivo, rooms that used to sit vacant are now alive with activity as students learn English, study the Bible, and gain computer skills. The new learning center, the Living Hope School, opened January 13, 2015, through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

Madagascar missionaries Ronald and Shelly Miller saw the school as a way to support the district financially — students pay a monthly fee equal to about \$5 to \$10 — while also equipping community members with job skills. "It's all about empowerment," Ronald said. "We're trying to help them get jobs and be competitive."

The Millers expected an inaugural class of about five students. Instead, 18 students enrolled, ranging in age from about 15 to 40 years old. "Some of the students are school-aged but not attending a regular school," Shelly said. That's not uncommon in Madagascar, where UNICEF reports schools are crowded, and there aren't enough funds to pay teachers. UNICEF also reports only about 60 percent of children in Madagascar who enter the first grade finish primary school.

"Here in Madagascar, education in general is very, very low," Shelly said. "There are not enough schools in the country to accompany all the children, so there are a lot of kids who never get to finish high school. The Living Hope School is a place where anyone, with a high school diploma or not, can come and learn."

The Millers expect enrollment to double next semester. Their goal is to get the school accredited and ex-



pand class offerings. Currently, there are five teachers, including Ronald, who teaches Bible; Shelly, who teaches English; NCM's Pastor Patrice Georges and Vola Harisoa, who both teach English, and a professional web designer who teaches computer basics.

Many people worked together over the past year to make Living Hope a reality, including Madagascar District Superintendent Richard Ravelomanantsoa and his wife, Therese Ravelomanantsoa (director of a local Nazarene compassionate ministry center), along with Pastor Georges and Harisoa. Two Work & Witness teams helped to get the building ready, and one team donated 20 computers. "Because of the volunteer work and donations, the school's start-up cost for NCM was less than \$500," Ronald said.

Another vision for Living Hope is that it will provide a place for youth who graduate from Antananarivo's compassionate ministry center, the AMI-4 Street Kids Center. The center provides 420 children under the age of 18 with meals, education, and support.

"We find that many kids after they finish, they just go back onto the streets," Ronald said. "So we're trying to create a continuation."

The school will also provide local pastors with computer training and is raising money to sponsor college students.

The Living Hope School is just one aspect of the new Living Hope Project in Madagascar. Another branch of the project is the Living Hope Evangelism Team that is organizing a Work & Witness trip from Madagascar to South Africa later this year.

Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world, and Ronald said he's been asked, "Shouldn't we be sending Work & Witness teams to you?" One of the trip's goals is to inspire other Africans to get involved in missions also.

"We want to impact Madagascar, but we want to really awaken more districts to also become mission-minded," he said.

--Church of the Nazarene Africa Region via Out of Africa

(This article appeared in the March 6, 2015 Nazarene News. For more information and photos, go to www.ncnnews.com.)