

- Featured Articles**
- Christian Education - Why Is It Important?**
By Lance Howard
 - Summer Is Here!**
By Debbie Hallman
 - A Job Well Done**
By Tracy Gosnel
 - Friendship Factor**
By Jan Wilson



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Christian Education – Why Is It Important? - By Lance Howard Vice Chair NEW

Let's have a brief conversation about the importance of having Christian Education. I believe in following Christ's model of servant leadership with practical application of biblical principles in working with others. I strive to lead by example and strive to be a good role model in all aspects of my life both professionally and personally.

In Christian Education, the importance of being rooted in Christ is of critical importance. Our relationship with Christ should be reflected in the work we do as educators. We are able to reflect Christ when we do what He did--love others and teach them.

One concept revolving around Relational Leadership is maintaining a strong connection between teacher and student, or school and community, or staff and administrator. As a result of everyone knowing and being known, one element of a philosophy of educational administration and the role of the school principal is concentrated on the student. It must be the focus and driving factor with the understanding that all students can learn and grow academically, spiritually, physically, and emotionally. The positive and principled leader's faith, high standards, solid work beliefs, and ethical conduct revolve around working together to use the biblical world view and the school's strategic plan to implement solid Christian education based on their vision, mission and effective goal setting.

In the area of instruction, the focus is on high quality, Christ-centered, effective life-long learning as evidenced by the cycle of effective instruction. Within an educational institution, the school's Christian community and cultural emphasis has a proper child focus with an emphasis on equitable instruction, customer service, and continuous improvement. The measures of student growth and learning are an integral process in the determination of the effectiveness of this education through quality indicators. Our responsibility results in data-driven decision-making in accordance with established parameters. The direction of this process involves effective communication, flexibility, and collaboration to best lead others in the process of continuous improvement to better serve our students and make an impact for eternity.

Furthermore, within the area of good stewardship comes the area of fiscal and human resource management that requires effective communication of expectations with concrete follow through that involves supervision, support, empowerment, and conflict resolution. The partnership, as an outcome of Christian faith and relationship, between stakeholders of the educational process and Christian community results in being informed, engaged, and advocating for high quality in all areas of the student's Christian education.

So, within Christian Education all truth is God's truth. So God, as the creator of all, has positioned himself as the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). We are to know Him and the truth He has established (Psalm 25:5), so we should strive to know Him and His creation as a result of our desire to be like Him (Ephesians 1:17). As fallen people, we are in need of a Savior and are able to be renewed (Romans 12:2). He enables us to learn (Proverbs 2:6) and grow in His likeness as we display His attributes in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). The teacher is called to be a skilled guide to lead the student into all truth, unity, and maturity which is obtained through instruction that is focused, personal, and evaluated with Jesus as our model (Ephesians 4). The final outcome is to do and be like Christ (Matthew 22:37-39).

Why is Christian Education important? It is our opportunity to implement Christlikeness, represent God's saving grace in a sinful world, and live out God's call to grow the kingdom of heaven here on earth.



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Summer Is Here! Ideas to Give to Parents of Preschool Children

by Debbie Hallman



CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL

Summer is here! What can you do with young children in the summer? Books, water, sand, and outside play are always the best. Depending on where you live, outside play may not always work. Listed below are some easy and fun ideas for the whole family.

Chalk. Have some fun with chalk and water. Have the children dip the chalk into the water. When they use the chalk to color on paper, the water makes the colors brighter. Another idea is to add salt to warm water, and let it dissolve. Let the children dip the chalk into the salty water and use the chalk to color on paper. Like magic, the chalk dries with a crystal effect.

Ice. Provide a source of music. Let the children pass ice cubes between them until the music stops. Then, start over again until the ice cube melts. Everyone gets wet and cold hands, and it is a lot of fun on a warm or hot day.

Outside Painting. Give each child a bucket of water, and a paint brush. Let the children paint the walls, fences, and doors. The children enjoy helping out like the big kids.

Bubbles. Blowing bubbles is always fun. Let the children count them, try to catch them, and watch the wind carry them away.

All of these and many more activities can be used for all age groups. Take time as a parent to enjoy the precious time with your children in the car, at the playground, at meals, and at bedtime story time.

God has given each of us very special children. These children are little for a short time. Before you know it, they are grown; and you wonder where all the time has gone.



Summer House Cleaning

By Beula Postlewait

We normally think of a thorough cleaning of the house in spring or fall. Well, I missed the time for spring cleaning, so I guess it will be a summer cleaning this year. It isn't difficult to keep the main part of the house clean and straightened. My goal is to have it clean enough that I can get ready for unexpected company within 15 minutes. That is the main part of the house!

Then there is the storage part of the basement. Ugh! It is so easy to put stuff down there and say, "I'll straighten it up later!" It is so easy to say, "This is too big a task for one day. I'll do it when I have more time."

Well, the time has come. The most difficult part is to know what to throw away and what to keep. "I might need some of it someday!" (I remember throwing away a fish net. Two months later, I needed that for a bulletin board.) However, I need to muster all of my organizational skills, build up my compassion for charities that can use my items, and tackle the task. What a good feeling there is when everything is organized and clean. How happy you feel when you give to others (who need it) the items that cluttered your house.

How about the spiritual part of your body? Does it need some summer cleaning? Have the demands of school, grading, testing, and student evaluations left you with some clutter within? Do you need a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit, a time of renewal in your heart, and a peace that all is well between you and God? Do you need to de-clutter anything that keeps you from being at your best for God?

Take time to refresh your spirit. Spend some extra quiet time with God. Get rid of the clutter and anxiety that can depress and annoy.

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).



A Job Well Done - By Tracy Gosnell

The end of the school year is near and the tension is rising. Teachers are working to get everything completed, and our students are eagerly anticipating summer. The students might not know it, but so are the teachers. It is at this time we often feel as though we can't do this again next year. We ask ourselves, "Why am I doing this?" The answer--we are making a difference in the lives of the families and the children we serve.

All of us can remember a teacher who made a positive impact in our lives. These teachers took the time to help us learn something we thought we would never grasp. They helped us realize our talents and strengths, and they equipped us with the skills to get to where we are today. In other words, they made a difference in our life. Isn't that what teaching is really all about?

God has placed us where we are so we can make a difference in our students' lives. Though we may not see it now, the relationships we have built will impact them for the rest of their lives. That truth is summarized in a single statement found in Proverbs 22:6 (NLT). "Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it." This is the bottom line of what God has called us to do. This is accomplished only through the seed we are planting in their lives.

Therefore "in everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity" (Titus 2:7 NIV) and "set an example ... in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12b, NIV)." This is the ministry to which God has called us; and when God calls us, He will equip us. Jeremiah 29:11 encourages us with the following words, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" We must remember God will give us the wisdom and strength we need to continue shaping and growing the next generation. We can do all this through him who gives us strength. (Philippians 4:13, adapted).

Stay strong and be encouraged. What you are doing is a noble thing. In the end you will hear, "Well done, my good and faithful servant ... Let's celebrate together!" (Matthew 25:2, NLT).

Friendship Factor - By Jan Wilton

Remember the Amy Grant/Michael W. Smith song, "A Friend's a Friend Forever"? Some may remember the many emotions it brought when it was sung at junior high or high school graduations. I remember how the girls in my eighth-grade class wept on each other's shoulders, pledging to be friends to be counted on forever. To my knowledge, few, if any, of those Christian school friends still know or care about each other. Were they friends or only classmates? Are there opportunities for children in your class to develop strong friendships?

As I look back on the days and years of teaching Christian school, I wonder if I could have done more to help my students bond with each other and their families to bond with other school families. Many students and families in Christian schools do not live close to each other. They come to school and go to other activities. School days are filled with classroom activity, and little time is left for free time to make friends. After school activities are often so organized there is still no time given to friendship. The children spend time at school together, but that may be the extent of the friendship. The students are simply classmates seen in the class picture in the school annual. Children and adults are building acquaintances instead of friendships. What is missing? It is the Friendship Factor!

Are the teachers and staff creating bonds of friendship with each other and their families? Are they just working together or truly caring for each other? Teachers tend to come to school and stay in the classroom and leave with only brief conversations shared with each other. Could it be true friendship is not happening? Is friendship important in the lives of everyone at the Christian school?

Karen Stephens states in her book, "Does Your Team Work?"

"True friendship provides the cushion of acceptance that is so often needed when a work environment is people-filled... after all, where there are intelligent, impassioned people, there are bound to be divergent opinions and issues of disagreement. How tolerant people are of differences of opinion, and how committed they are to work out those differences through negotiation and compromise is related directly to how important maintaining the personal as well as work relationship is to them."

Does your classroom work at making friendships? Are true, caring, lasting friendships being developed? Do the children see adults showing acts of friendship with one another?

Perhaps you are reflecting on this past school year and wondering what it was that seemed to contribute to an overall negative feeling. This summer, explore the nuances of friendship. Develop a plan to make a difference in your classroom by creating an atmosphere where true friendship can develop. It could be as simple as classroom arrangement, placing friendship messages on the wall, or a class-room friendship theme to change the atmosphere to one of caring and sharing.

Is the staff at your school disconnected from each other? What can you do to make the difference? Be the one to make the change and include a Friendship Factor. We are reminded in Proverbs about real friendship,

Proverbs 17:17-- "A friend loves at all times."

Proverbs 18:24-- "A friend sticks closer than a brother."

May our children learn to love a friend by watching caring adults who are modeling friendship in and out of the classroom. Friendship requires love, acceptance, and forgiveness for those with whom we work--children and adults. Friendship must be intentional and real. It starts with one. Be a friend who is a friend forever!