

Called to Teach with Love

By Jan Wilton, Christian School Representative

There is no greater calling than to teach children and youth. God calls those who have a passion of unconditional love to be the teachers of children and youth. Why? Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14, NIV). [In this article, the word children will refer to both children and youth.]

Jesus loves children. We have been reminded through Colton Burpo's story, *Heaven is for Real*, how very much Jesus loves children. Colton repeatedly told his dad that Jesus wanted him to know that Jesus loves children.

Teachers, first and foremost, fall in love with the children who have been assigned and entrusted to them. When teachers love them, the children respond to teachers in a very different way. Recently I had the opportunity to speak to children at a family camp. One lesson focused on how much Jesus loves children. One of the best things a child said was: "You love us and like to be with us. Does Jesus love us more than you?" I told the children that Jesus loves them even more than I do.

Teachers in a Christian school have the privilege of openly sharing the gospel of Jesus with their students. However, it still takes a large dose of love to fully communicate this love. Teachers can become so entrapped by the academic setting that the spiritual setting of the classroom can take second place.

Public school teachers are held back and may often wonder how they can minister to the children in their care. For all teachers, the key is LOVE. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind...Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39). Love with the love of Jesus the seemingly unlovable child, the bright child, the creative child, and the child who tests your patience.

Remember the call to teach is a call to minister to children and youth. The following was written for children's pastors and speaks also to all who have answered the call to teach in any setting.

The Calling by Roger Fields*

I am a minister (teacher). I minister (teach) to the largest mission field in the world. I minister to (teach) children.

My calling is sure. My challenge is big. My vision is clear. My desire is strong. My influence is eternal. My impact is critical. My values are solid. My faith is tough. My mission is urgent. My purpose is unmistakable. My direction is forward. My heart is genuine. My strength is supernatural. My reward is promised. And my God is real.

In a world of cynicism, I offer hope. In a world of confusion, I offer truth. In a world of immorality, I offer values. In a world of neglect, I offer attention. In a world of abuse, I offer safety. In a world of ridicule, I offer affirmation. In a world of division, I offer reconciliation. In a world of bitterness, I offer forgiveness. In a world of sin, I offer salvation. In a world of hate, I offer God's love.

I refuse to be dismayed, disengaged, disgruntled, discouraged, or distracted. Neither will I look back, stand back, fall back, go back, or sit back. I do not need applause, flattery, adulation, prestige, stature, or veneration. I do not have time for business as usual, mediocre standards, small thinking, outdated methods, normal expectations, average results, ordinary ideas, petty disputes, or low vision. I will not give up, give in, bail out, lie down, turn over, quit, or surrender.

I will pray when things look bad. I will pray when things look good. I will move forward when others stand still. I will trust God when obstacles arise. I will work when the task is overwhelming. I will get up when I fall down.

My calling is to reach boys and girls for God. It is too serious to be taken lightly, too urgent to be postponed, too vital to be ignored, too relevant to be overlooked, too significant to be trivialized, too eternal to be fleeting, and too passionate to be quenched.

I know my mission. I know my challenge. I also know my limitations, my weaknesses, my fears, and my problems. And I know my God. Let others get the praise. Let the church (school) get the blessing. Let God get the glory.

I am a minister (teacher). I minister to (teach) children. This is who I am. This is what I do.

May this school year be a year of blessings untold as you teach children or youth with a heart of love, the love of Jesus.

*Roger Fields is the President of Kidz Blitz Ministries. This part of the article appeared on the Kidz Blitz Ministries website, www.KidzBlitz.com.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28, NIV

Back to School by Melodee Simmons, Preschool Representative

(Continued from page 1.) Children grow and develop so quickly! It's nice to take a moment and look at their progress. God really created a wonderful thing when He planned for children.

I wish that each of you will have a wonderful, blessed, and fun year with your class!



Classroom Rules... or ... God's Rules

By Becky Ramsey, Christian
School Representative

(Continued from page 1.)

Listening Ears—A teacher wants the students to be listening to his or her voice, not to other distracting voices around them. There will always be those voices that try to distract us from the true message. But God's Word clearly teaches that His sheep know His voice and will listen and follow Him (John 10:27, NIV). James 1:22 (NIV) states: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

Quiet Mouths—If there was an attribute that I was lenient on in the classroom, it was probably talking. As a student, I was always in trouble for talking. Now as a teacher, I truly understand what a blessing quiet mouths are in a classroom. That is why the scripture, "Everyone should be quick to listen...." is quickly followed by ... "and slow to speak" (James 1:19, NIV). Those qualities go together; listening requires silencing our mouths long enough to let someone else do some of the talking. Sometimes the one we need to be listening to is the Creator himself. Prayer is not always telling things to God. Many times, it is remaining quiet and listening for His voice of direction.

Helping Hands—Team work is an important quality to learn in a classroom. It is something that must be acquired before much learning can begin. Plus the more cooperation and team work that is developed, the better chance there will be for learning to take place. There is no place for super stars, solo performances, or prima donnas. A classroom where students find the unique talents of each member and put them to use for different projects will be the classroom that far outshines any other in the building. Where does our true help come from? Psalm 121 proclaims: "My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." And when we pattern our life after our Maker, we can be a helping hand to those around us whether it is a co-worker, a parent, or a child in our classroom.
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Your Eyes Affect Your Learning

By Beula Postlewait, NEW Council Member

These statistics* are eye-openers:

- Between 5 and 10% of preschoolers and 25% of school-aged children have vision problems, many of which are undetected.
- Nearly 80% of American children have not visited an eye-care provider in the past year.
- More than 80% of learning is based on vision.

If you want a child to do the very best in school and in sports, schedule a comprehensive eye exam for the child.

Common Eye Problems in Children

Amblyopia (lazy eye): The muscles surrounding a child's eye might not be working properly. Sometimes this can be caused by crossed eyes or a large difference in refractive error between the eyes. If left untreated, permanent vision loss is possible. To treat this problem, obtain early diagnosis and special exercises prescribed by an eye care professional as soon as possible.

Strabismus: This is a misalignment of the eyes and sometimes is responsible for lazy eye. It requires special glasses, or possible surgery, to correct it.

Nearsightedness (myopia): A condition in which the visual images come to a focus in front of the retina of the eye resulting especially in defective vision of distant object.

Farsightedness (hyperopia): A condition in which the visual images come to a focus behind the retina of the eye and vision is better for distant than for near objects.

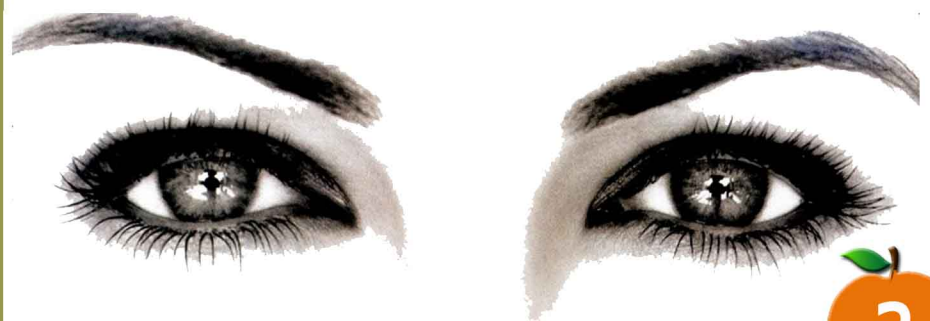
Astigmatism: This is an imperfect curvature of the cornea. It interferes with how light is focused in the eye. It results in a blurred and imperfect vision.

All of these conditions require prescription eye glasses fitted by an eye-care professional.

Undetected and untreated vision problems can interfere with a child's ability to learn in school. In some cases, what were considered learning disabilities actually was a child's inability to see and process information correctly. Vision is more than seeing clearly. A child can have difficulties with eye teaming (eyes not working together), eye tracking (eyes not following a moving object), and eye focusing, as well as visual processing problems that can impact reading and learning.

If you have a student who is experiencing difficulty in school, ask to if the child has received an eye examination.

*Statistics are from "The Eyes of a Child" an article in The Costco Connection, August 2014.



INSIGHTS FROM ABOVE

The Gift of Time

By Beula Postlewait,
NEW Council Member

A lady sat in her craft room sewing together the squares of her quilt. She was so enthralled with her quilt that she decided she would do her quilting until ten o'clock. Then she would go to bed. She glanced at the clock and it was ten minutes until nine o'clock. It seemed like the perfect night, because the pieces of the quilt seemed to fit together so well. Her husband called to her that he was going to bed. The lady thought it was odd that her husband was going to bed so early, but she continued with her project.

Eventually, she stopped her work and went to the kitchen to get some more water to drink. She glanced at the kitchen clock. It said three o'clock. How could that be? She went back to the craft room to check that clock. It said ten minutes until nine o'clock.

She realized that she had been given a gift of uninterrupted time. She had enjoyed it so much that she lost track of time. It seemed like time had stood still—only it was the hands of the clock that stood still. The batteries in her clock had failed.

Speaking of time, many of you will begin a new school year this month. There may be returning students, new students, new co-workers, and perhaps a new leadership team at your school. There will be many demands on your time and energy.

If possible, before you return to school, carve out a section of time to talk to the Master Teacher about your students and teaching assignment for this school year. Ask God to anoint you so you will be perceptive to the needs of the students. Ask God to awaken your mind to the learning strategies that will help you encourage each student to seek his or her potential. Ask God to help you be a source of encouragement to other staff members. Ask God to help you arrange your schedule so you can juggle school, home, and church responsibilities. Ask God to walk with you each day as you enter the building and be with you throughout the day.

"I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord" (Psalm 31:14-15, 24, NIV).

Time is a special gift. May God help you and bless you during this school year.

Back to the (Online) Classroom

A "NEW" opportunity to Share the Good News of Jesus Christ

By Dan Harris – Kids Reaching Kids ministry coordinator, and liaison to NEW

For the first time since 2006, I went back into the classroom this fall as a teacher again. But this time, instead of standing in front of multiple groups of junior and senior high school students as a history teacher, I found myself sitting at my computer leading a group of adult learners through a New Testament survey course.

When I entered my first classroom as a teacher in 1993, the online classroom did not exist. Within just a few short years, however, this new revolutionary and, to some, controversial way of educating people from all parts of the globe became a reality. Today, online students in the United States number over seven million. And despite what some may view as shortcomings, the possibility to reach people with the Good News of Jesus Christ through education may have never been greater.

I am teaching for a Christian university. One of the requirements for all of their online students is a class in religion. But more than just a requirement, the university views this as an amazing opportunity to reach people for Christ. One of the goals included in the syllabus states the university's desire that each student will be able to gain an understanding of the gospel in a way that will lead the person to make a commitment to follow Christ; or if the student already a believer, the person will further his or her walk with Christ.

I may never see the faces of some of the online students I will have the opportunity to teach. But I will take advantage of this "NEW" opportunity to help impact their lives for Christ with His Good News.



Classroom Rules... or ...God's Rules

By Becky Ramsey, Christian School Representative

(Continued from page 3.)

Walking Feet—While we may be tempted to run or even jog to try to get ahead or even catch up, we need to walk faithfully the path that Christ has set before us. For He will direct us clearly to the door we need to walk through. Isaiah 30: 21(NIV) promises: "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'"

Therefore, whether in our classroom or in our life, Mr. Potato Head's parts can quickly remind us of some very good classroom rules and of God's important rules.



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