



Sowers & Seeds

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Another Degree of Servant Leadership

by Dr. Sharon Burow — Wisconsin Lutheran College



Within the last ten years it has been quite in vogue for mission statements and institutional goals to define their organizational and philosophical bend with the buzz words “servant leadership.” The concept, however, is scriptural and timeless. The Bible provides endless encouragements and accounts of how Christians should live and lead with passionate service to others. Sadly, each of us can look in the mirror and reflect on personal compromises and concessions to our sinful human nature that have negatively impacted our servant leadership. These lapses also caused us to lose valuable opportunities.

When I think about servant leadership, I also think of Parker and Anderson’s (2006) motivational booklet, *212°- The Extra Degree*, which utilizes the simple metaphor of water to urge one to put forth an extra “degree” of effort personally and/or professionally:

At 211 degrees, water is hot.

At 212 degrees, it boils.

And with boiling water; comes steam.

And steam can power a locomotive (pgs. 8-10).

I believe that the thrust of the “extra degree” metaphor has application to you as an early childhood minister. It can cause you to go beyond thinking, to real action. It can help you to see the value of making a little bit more effort—beyond your assigned duties—to truly be a servant leader in and through your early childhood ministry.

What will you do to push yourself in your commitment to “small things” so you can make a powerful difference for each family that ever walks through your center or classroom door? Be a standout, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, be a servant leader who powerfully reflects Jesus. You may not receive the accolades of colleagues, get awards, or financial gain, but you will someday hear from Jesus himself, “Well done good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:23).



Wisdom from Wong

One of the keynote speakers at last summer’s WELS Leadership Conference was Dr. Harry K. Wong. Dr. Wong is one of the most motivating, exciting and dynamic speakers on teaching today. He has given some 3,000 presentations to nearly a half million people in every American state and Canadian province and in South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. He has authored numerous books on teaching. His work leaves teachers with practical, useful techniques for how to succeed in the classroom. What follows are some words of wisdom from Dr. Wong that can be helpful for early childhood ministers.

- There is only one way to improve student learning. It is with an effective teacher.
- Here is the biggest secret to being effective: beg, borrow, and steal—and work collaboratively.
- An ineffective teacher can affect student learning for years, but two successive ineffective teachers can damage a student for a lifetime.
- There is only one way to produce good schools and that is with effective teachers.
- An effective teacher has 1) good classroom management skills, 2) teaches for mastery, and 3) has positive expectations for student success.
- Your expectations for your students will greatly influence their achievement in your class and in their lives.
- What you do on the first day of school will determine your success for the rest of the year.



- The most important factor that must be established the very first week of school is CONSISTENCY.
- The number one problem in education is not discipline. It is lack of procedures, routines, planning, and organization.

Next issue, a few more thoughts from Dr. Wong.



From the Mouths of Babes

Submitted by Elaine Rixe — Salt Lake City, Utah

Father’s Day - a girl asked her mom, “Do you think Jesus woke up today and wished God a Happy Father’s Day?”

A line in a book, *Julius, Baby of the World*, refers to that new baby as the king of the world. A very wise five-year old said, “He is not the baby of the world, Jesus is.” I believe “out of the mouth of babes” is appropriate here!

Submitted by Cheryl Loomis and the Martin Luther College Early Childhood Center

A teacher said to her young students, “We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But, there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?” One child blurted out, “Three Aces!”

Me, the Boss?!

by Beth Marquardt, Director, School of Early Learning — St. Paul's, Muskego, WI

Shortly after I began my call as director and teacher at the School of Early Learning, a fairly new childcare facility on the outskirts of Milwaukee, one of my two staff members and I were at a restaurant on a Saturday having lunch. As we ate and chatted, enjoying our time away from the center, my friend's cell phone rang. She answered it, and as she began to talk she explained to the caller that she was having lunch with her boss.

Her BOSS?! I couldn't believe what I had just heard. I was no one's BOSS. That word had never entered my vocabulary or even my thoughts as I went about my daily routine of running our center. And that one of my two staff people even thought about me that way shocked me. I considered us a team, a group of professionals, an equally-balanced well-run machine! Never employees and a boss! After her phone call, I discussed with her my discomfort and surprise. It soon became a joke between the two of us, and then with others at the center to lovingly refer to me as the 'Boss'. And now that my staff numbers 15, I guess I have to concede that I may have to be considered in that light. However, I still view the relationship between myself and my staff as much more than that. I never want our center to become just a place to work. It is my desire that we all work together as a team in service to our Lord to nurture the little ones entrusted to our care. It is not always easy, it is not always pretty, but I think if we keep some key points in mind, it is always possible.

Since our whole staff shares the same faith base, our philosophy of who we are and why we are here is a very strong foundation for our program. Commitment on the part of the staff as to why we are doing what we are doing is strong in a program like ours. Our faith is central to our organization and our center is much stronger for it. Parents also see this strong faith-commitment on the part of the staff and appreciate the atmosphere this creates for their children.

We also have a very strong commitment to teamwork, both among staff members and in our parent-to-staff relationships. By making conscious efforts to create a positive, team-like atmosphere, we create camaraderie with both parents and staff alike.

Communicating with parents helps us to develop not only the team-like atmosphere, but also more of a family-like setting through which relationships of trust and respect can grow. Communicating with each other, team meetings, and

encouraging staff to share in the decision-making of the center can also build those same relationships among the staff.

Professional development on the part of the staff is, of course, required. But beyond the requirements, it is strongly encouraged and valued as a way to learn to do our jobs better and to develop a feeling of accomplishment. Staff members that are always learning and seeking ways to do their job well can't help but create a more positive environment for the children in their care.

A more optimum environment for children can also be developed when the members of the staff share an enthusiasm for their jobs, and for jobs well done. Besides helping each other through the struggles of our everyday routines, we also try to encourage and celebrate the victories and successes that each day brings. In this way we try to keep everyone upbeat and enthusiastic about the important task we share. Knowing that we are caring for little ones dearly loved by their Creator, and that we have the awesome task of leading them each day closer and closer to their Savior, we can't help but share the love and joy that only Jesus can give.

Me, the boss? I would much rather be called a facilitator, mentor, leader, or coach, but whatever the label, I pray that I can help to create an atmosphere of caring, trust, respect, and enthusiasm so we can all work together to develop a loving, nurturing environment for the children in our care.



Here's Alph-2

by Lynn Groth —
VBS Curriculum Developer,
Northwestern Publishing House



In the last issue of *Sowers and Seeds*, we supplied you with ideas to expose your students to the first half of the alphabet. Now comes the rest of the alphabet. Again, the suggestions have been provided by Susan Saatkamp, Deb Kolbow, Peggy Janke, and Lynn Groth.

N

1. Place papers with the letter N on easels. Have volunteers dip their noses in washable paint and dab paint inside the letters. Note: Some children might not want to do this. Perhaps they could use their “k-nuckles” instead!
2. Have each child use yarn tied to the curve of a bobbie pin (or a safe plastic needle and yarn) to string noodles to make a necklace.

O

1. Place O's as tentacles on a large paper octopus. Use circles for reinforcing holes in paper, circular stickers, or O-shaped cereal or pasta pieces.
2. Spread the eight arms of an octopus into the eight corners of an octagon.
3. If you teach the long O sound, have the children trace ovals on white paper and make them into oval fish in an ocean. Color the fish with bright crayon colors (other than blue), pressing firmly. Then wash over the entire picture with blue watercolor paint. The colors will show through the paint.

P

1. Paint a purple picture or create a packing peanut picture.
2. Produce pretty pennies (clean dirty pennies by soaking them in a mixture of salt and vinegar).
3. Use a permanent marker to write a P on each bubble of a sheet of bubble wrap. Children take turns popping the P's.
4. Give penguins, pigs, pandas, puppies, and puppets rides on a parachute.

Q

1. Make a classroom quilt. Give each child a square of paper on which to paint (using a Q-tip) his or her name and draw a favorite thing to do. Mount the squares on a large sheet of paper, leaving ¼" between squares. Attach yarn bows where corners almost meet.

2. Have quiet play day. Use boxes or mats on end to make separate play areas for the children. Each child takes a few toys to his or her area and plays without talking. (The teacher who supplied this idea says the kids love it and that it's her favorite day of the year!)
3. Question quilt: place a cloth quilt on the floor and have volunteers quickly go to the quilt to ask the class a question about the day's Bible story.

R

1. Partners sit together side-by-side and pretend to row while singing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Then they sit feet-to-feet, hold hands, and rock to “Rock, Rock, Rock Your Boat.”
2. Use a rain tube while saying, “Rain, Rain, Go Away.”
3. Red Ribbon on a Ring Rumba: Have each child wear a ring with a red ribbon tied to it and make the ribbon fly through the air while dancing.

S

1. Have a Sniff and Smell Day. Place any or all of the following items in opaque boxes or sacks: sausage, strawberry, spices, sugar. Have the children sniff, smell, and say what they think each item is. Then show and identify the item.
2. Make snakes out of stuffed, old socks.
3. Sort socks.
4. Sprout seed in soil in socks. Put some grass seed and then soil in the toe of a nylon sock. Knot the end and place it into a disposable cup with a little water in it. Glue eyes, a nose, and a mouth to the filled sock to make a face. Sprinkle water on the area where the seed is. Set the sock in a sunny location.
5. Use a washable marker to print an S near the end of a playground slide. Have the children touch the S and say “ess” as they slide by.
6. Cover a wall with blue paper. Dip a Koosh ball into white paint and throw it at the paper to make snowballs or snowflakes.

T

1. Make a tent. Have children take turns finding toys (trucks, trains, Tic-tac-toe) that begin with T and put them into the tent.
2. Bake tasty tortilla treats. Cut flour tortillas into wedges, spray with butter substitute, and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Bake at 325 degrees until golden. Cool and eat.
3. Tape Tigger's Tail to a Target. Draw a target. Put a tail-less Tigger at the center. Children take turns trying to tape a tail to Tigger while blindfolded.

U

1. Find an old umbrella for making an ugly umbrella. Allow the children to paint and decorate ugly designs in the individual panels.
2. If you teach the long U sound, dress a toy unicorn in various uniforms (baseball cap, soldier's hat, stethoscope for a nurse).

V

1. Make a veggie V from two long strips of vegetables (raw celery, carrots, or beans). Eat with ranch dip. Vote for favorite veggies and chart the results.
2. Tape a V to a vacuum cleaner so a child can see it. The child vacuums a carpet while saying "Vvvv."
3. Paint a violet vase and fill it with violets.
4. Using a toy syringe, the children pretend to be veterinarians vaccinating stuffed pets.

W

1. Fill a wading pool with water. Wade in the water or wash a whistle.
2. Give each child a whistle. Make a stack of various letter cards with quite a few W's mixed in. Page through the stack and have the children blow their whistles as soon as they see a W.

X

1. Now this is a tough one. Sounds for this letter can be "ex" as in x-ray, "z" as in "xylophone" or "exit" and "ks" as in "extra." Most of the time it's pronounced "ks." You could make silly pictures of people with extra eyes or mouths or animals with extra tails.
2. Exercise. Make an X with your body, and then stand straight with arms at your sides. Do this over and over (jumping jacks).

Y

1. Make a yellow yarn yo-yo. Glue a dark yellow circle to light yellow paper. Glue a length of yellow yarn to the circle and paper to make a yo-yo.

2. Give each child a yellow sack with a Y on it. Give the children a certain amount of time to collect yellow items.
3. Walk on a yellow brick road marked with Ys.
4. Play BINGO, but the winner must yell BINGO.

Z

1. Play "Zap the Zeros." Write many numbers, including many zeros, on the board. Children take turns hitting the zeros with a flyswatter.
2. Zip zippers.
3. Make a copy master of simple zigzag lines, duplicate one for each child, and have the children cut along the lines while saying "Zzz."
4. Cut pretend bars of a cage from a large sheet of card board. Teach the children to say, "Zookeeper, zookeeper, what do I see?" while a child walks behind the bars pretending to be a specific animal. The class tries to guess what that animal is.

Next issue: Even More Ideas for Teaching Letters!





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How Children Understand Sexuality

by Larry Miller, *Children and Sexuality* (1994)
downloaded from <http://www.childrensministry.com/article.asp?ID=1869>

AGE Birth to 3 years

Young preschoolers have a whole new world to discover. Discovering their bodies is part of that process. Genital discovery is a normal part of a young child's curiosity. Expect questions such as "What is that?" "Is that a part of me?" and "Why am I different from her?"

Ways To Respond

Children need to know their bodies are okay. Use correct terminology for all body parts. Help children accept their God-given bodies. Don't react squeamishly or negatively when changing diapers or during potty training. This attitude teaches children that certain parts of their body are shameful or dirty.

AGE 4 to 5 years

Children this age recognize and become curious about anatomical differences. They're more aware that some people are boys and some are girls. They desire more detail to questions such as "Where do babies come from?" "Why am I me?" and "Why are you, you?"

Ways To Respond

Read books about babies and baby animals. Help children understand a family's love and care for them. Teach children the biblical aspect of sexuality. Explain why God designed them differently-so they can grow up to be mothers and fathers. Explain good and bad touches of others. Reinforce correct body terminology.

Go to the Web link listed above to find additional information on ages 6-8 and 9-11.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, New International Version © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. **Sowers & Seeds** is published four times a year by the WELS Commissions on Youth Discipleship & Parish Schools. Comments about this **Sowers & Seeds** and ideas for future issues can be directed to Dr. Joel A. Nelson, Administrator, WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship.

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