

Lutheran Education Foundations

by Thomas Roelke

Our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod really gets it. Christian Education, from the cradle to the grave, has been a prime focus for us as long as we have been a church body. We have consistently looked for ways to provide a solid educational foundation for each individual student. But what really makes our formal educational institutions, specifically our Lutheran Elementary Schools and Lutheran High Schools, different from other schools?

As a “Recruiter Guy” at Valley Lutheran High School in Saginaw for the past seven years, I have had the pleasure of seeing over 20 of our Lutheran Elementary Schools in action, first-hand. What I’ve seen is exciting! I see technology being integrated into the classroom. I see kids being challenged to reach their full potential on an individual basis. I see smiles on faces and sense electric atmospheres. While all of these concepts are fantastic, they aren’t what separate us from non-Christian schools.

As critical as a solid education is in this 21st Century Society, as necessary as it is to be technologically literate, as important as it is to have happy children ... nothing is as important as sharing the love of Christ with kids and showing them how fulfilling a life can be dedicated to serving Him. I see our Lutheran Educators first and foremost as models of servanthood. I see teachers treat students as Children of God, loving them, guiding them

and even disciplining them when required to do so. Lutheran Schools were formed to educate, to train, and to model – all within an Eternal Perspective.

Lutheran Schools are an extension of the family and family members were created to serve one another. If the only concepts dedicated Lutheran educators were concerned with were the ideas of educating the mind and making sure that each child was challenged academically, we’d be missing the point. Relationships, most notably the relationship we continue to foster with our Lord Jesus, are the keys to success in Lutheran Schools.

Lutheran Schools *are* different! But they also are going through some of the same stresses as other schools. I see problems such as financial difficulty and decreased enrollment hanging over many of our church schools. As the stress builds, there needs to be a renewed sense of purpose. That purpose, of course, is the fact that our Lutheran Schools’ primary function is to bring kids into service for Christ! The challenge to you, the one who believes

in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and in the importance of a Christ-centered education from the cradle to the grave, will be to find pro-active ways which will allow our schools not only to survive, but to thrive, until Jesus’ second coming!

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