

DIRECTOR CONNECTOR

Linking...Texas ECE Directors to
Information and Resources

Provided by the ECE Council and Texas District – LCMS
Office of School Ministry

Winter 2016

Building Forts

I recently attended a worship service where the topic was building forts. Interesting because we work in preschool and who doesn't have a boy, or girl for that matter, in their class that builds forts with anything they can get their hands on. But I digress. The Bible verse read was Romans 8:5-6 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." The main focus was what we place our minds on. The question was what are we protecting? Who are we protecting? If we are being protective, then we are not trusting. Who should we trust – ourselves or the only one who will never fail us, Jesus Christ, our Savior? I was floored by this very real analogy.

I listened intently and realized that I try to protect my job, the preschool and everything surrounding my work. I have built a "fort" around my work and if I have built up these walls then how can God get in and do His work? Shortly after I heard this, we were at the Directors Retreat where Greg Finke said "You are not working for Jesus you are working with Him". Since then, I have asked Him to take the school into His hands. I have prayed to ask God to tear down the walls that I have built around my work and around those at work that I want to protect. This brings up another question. What am I protecting my work/people from? The hand of the Almighty God? This makes no sense! How twisted is this and yet how real this is for me.

I thank God for the mercy and grace that He gives me. My favorite song right now is "Mercy" by Amanda Cook. The verse that pierces my heart every time is "Cause you delight in showing mercy...and mercy triumphs over judgment..." I thank God that mercy triumphs over judgment. I pray that God will continue to tear down the walls I have built around things that aren't mine...which is everything. ~ submitted by Cora Nash, The Family of Faith Preschool ~ Houston.

Top 10 Leadership Tips for First-time Managers

Whether you are new to being a Director or have been doing this type of work for quite some time, it is important to stay fresh and interested in what you do. Set aside the baggage of any negative experiences from the past and step into a fresh start with these 10 reminders from Profiles International. (These are good tips for new teachers too.)

1. **Accept that you still have much to learn...** Be prepared to learn from others – including your new (or experienced) team.
2. **Communicate clearly...** Always keep your team informed. Effective communication will be essential in both establishing your credibility and gaining the support of your team.
3. **Set a good example...** Demand from yourself the same level of professionalism and dedication that you expect from others. If you expect the team to be upbeat and friendly, then make sure you are!
4. **Encourage feedback...** Be willing to listen to concerns and ideas as well as help provide solutions.
5. **Offer recognition...** Publicly recognize the efforts and achievements of your team.
6. **Be decisive...** A quality leader needs to make decisions and stick to them. People do not feel comfortable with someone who changes his or her mind.
7. **Help your team see the "big picture"...** Take time out to explain to your team how their assignments and projects fit into the company's larger goals and overall objectives.
8. **Create an environment of constant learning and development – and include yourself in this process...** Encourage your team to explore new methods. Allow them to make – and learn from – mistakes while being sure to reward new ideas.
9. **Provide professional guidance...** Make yourself available to staff members and show interest in their career development – your staff will appreciate your commitment to their progress.
10. **Be patient with yourself...** Developing strong managerial skills takes time – seek guidance from colleagues when you need it.

Profilesinternational.com

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Ideas, Suggestions or Questions?

Since this newsletter is for you, please let us know what you need. Submit your ideas, suggestions or questions to Kathy Entzenberger, Editor at: kathye@concordia-satx.com

A Website I Think You Will Love!

A few years ago I came across a website that has been so helpful to me in ministry as an Early Childhood Director. You may also find it helpful in your ministry and, as a woman, in your life. It could also be very helpful for male directors who work closely with women in the Early Childhood field.

The website I am talking about was set up by a woman named Julia Bettencourt. Julia is a stay at home mom from California. Her first love is Women's Ministry.

This website has devotionals, articles, and women's ministry pages, too. Her site also includes ice breakers, ministry printables and much, much more!

Sometimes I print off a game to use at a staff meeting. Sometimes I pop a devotion into the teacher's boxes so they can sit down with a cup of coffee at home and enjoy some quiet time.

Need help planning a great staff retreat? Julia is only one click away.

Need help writing a devotional on your own? Julia will guide you through the process.

So when you sit down to plan a meeting or a special event or activity for your staff or you just need time to read a devotion at the end of a busy day, you may want to think of Julia Bettencourt @ JuliaBettencourt.com. ~submitted by Diane Dillow, Crown of Life Lutheran Preschool – San Antonio

Lent...the Journey to Easter

Lent is a special time of year where we consider the walk Jesus took to rid us of the consequences of sin and wash us clean. Consider how you will help your staff and the children at your preschool walk through this season in an engaging and life-changing way.

Here are a few ideas if you aren't already working on something...and if you haven't started anything yet...it is never too late to intentionally celebrate the redemptive power of Jesus.

40 Days of Prayer – Cut 40 strips of paper (or however many you want to use) and list a prayer topic on each strip. Each day, pick out one strip and pray on that topic. You may want children to take strips home as well to extend this activity into the home.

40 Days of Kindness – Challenge children and staff to perform one random act of kindness each day. You can plan ahead using more strips of paper so they are not so random, or put a colored egg in a basket when you see children being kind. Hopefully the basket will be overflowing by Easter.

Paper Chain Countdown to Easter – Talk about what makes Jesus so special to us each day as you remove one link from the chain. This too could be something children make and take home with them to share with their family.

Stained Glass – Use tape to create a design on a window. Each day, paint a section of the design so it is finished by Easter. On Easter, remove the tape and shine a light through the design and enjoy the light that Jesus brings to our life.

Come up with your own ideas to share Jesus during Lent, but please seize the opportunity to focus on Jesus. Make Him central to the season, the source of our energy, and the most important introduction we make to those we serve.

Cooking With Kids

Resurrection Rolls

These treats are not only delicious but also a good way of emphasizing the point that the tomb where Jesus was laid was empty on Easter morning.

Ingredients:

*can of refrigerated crescent rolls

*8 marshmallows

*1/4 cup melted butter

*2 Tbs. ground cinnamon

*2 Tbs. sugar

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet.
2. Separate crescent rolls into individual triangles.
3. Mix the cinnamon and sugar together in a small bowl.
4. Give each child a marshmallow and tell them it stands for Jesus who was without sin.
5. Have the children dip their marshmallow into the melted butter and cinnamon/sugar mixture. The butter and cinnamon/sugar are like the oil and spices that were rubbed on Jesus' body.
6. Give each child a crescent roll triangle and explain that this represents the cloth that Jesus' body was wrapped in. Have the child completely wrap the triangle over the marshmallow and seal the edges together.
7. Place in the oven for 10-12 minutes until golden brown. Explain that the oven is like the tomb Jesus was placed in.
8. When the rolls have been removed and cooled, have the children open their "tombs" to see that they are empty inside. Jesus has risen! (The marshmallow melts but the roll remains puffed up—empty.)

Licensing Tidbits

*The playground fill requirement changed in December 2015. Reps are measuring. Refer to the updated standards and address this matter if you haven't already.

*Since the fingerprinting payment process changed, refunds have been processed for centers that had money on account with MorphoTrust. Be on the lookout if you fall into this category. Additionally, a 6-digit service code will replace ORI numbers on April 2, 2016. Watch for news regarding a new service code for DFPS so you can make online appointments as needed to staff for summer.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

Second Wednesday, Special Professional Development Day - 9:00 - 3:00 to be held at Concordia High School in Austin. Last year over 70 were registered for this event from across the State of Texas.

All administrators and leaders are invited to gather on the second Wednesday each June from 9:00 to 3:00. This year's special keynote speaker is back by popular demand - Ryan Bredow, now from the Milwaukee High School Association.

All **Administrators and Admission Directors** are invited to attend. We will be sending out registration forms later in the Spring. There is no registration fee for this learning opportunity.