

SCHOOL LIGHT LINES



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My Purpose | Lori Ann Yoder

“One-third of the way through the school year!” I whispered triumphantly to myself as I snapped shut my record book. “Only one more marking period and the year will be half over. This year seems to be crawling by: maybe it’s crawling more briskly than I thought.”¹

I grinned wryly as I stacked the report cards and stuffed them into a desk drawer to await Monday. *There was a time you wouldn’t have dreamed of speeding up a school year or of counting the days till it was over!* I chided myself. *What’s happened to you?*²

My thoughts wandered on, growing pensive along the way. *Seven years can work amazing changes*, I mused. *Remember how you used to scorn the word “burnout”?* *Remember how you dreaded summer vacation?* *Why, even during those stormy years at River Crossing, you never dreamed of giving up teaching. Your students back then were your entire life. What’s happened to you? Why isn’t teaching enough anymore?*

That night at home I flipped open a notebook, as is my habit when I feel blue. My pencil sometimes seems to take a mind of its own as it lends words to vague thoughts and exposes attitudes I haven’t recognized yet. Nor did it fail me this time.

Why doesn’t teaching satisfy me like it used to? I feel like I need a long-term goal, something to reach for beyond merely teaching from one year to the next. Seems ever since last year when my plans of going to

work in a children’s home so abruptly fell through, teaching has also fallen flat. Can it be I’m rebelling at God’s plan? In honestly searching my heart, I don’t seem to find rebellion. I know I want only His will. Nonetheless, I can’t help but think that a long-term commitment to such a great work would give me inspiration for each day. Obviously such a dream isn’t God’s plan after all, and so I’m left with no guiding beacon, no daily purpose, but just to keep teaching, day after day.

My pencil seemed shocked at the words it had just written. It hurried on:

“Just teaching”? Why, Lori! Once, not so long ago, “just teaching” was both your long-term goal and your daily inspiration. You didn’t teach for the books, nor yet for something to do; you taught for the souls of your beloved students. Have you forgotten?

Suddenly I remembered a passage I had once read in one of the Prophets. Something about becoming weary in the Lord’s work. I went on a search.

It was in Malachi 1. I settled down to read and found myself writhing in shame just like my second grader when I had confronted him about cheating. Verses 7 and 13 spoke to me the loudest.

“Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.”

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Helping Students With an Attention Deficit

Assisting students who just can’t pay attention.

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Adventures in Peru

Let’s study the ancients who inhabited Peru.

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Ball’s Pyramid and Its Eighty-Year Secret Outdoor Classroom

Could a rocky island hold a six-legged treasure?

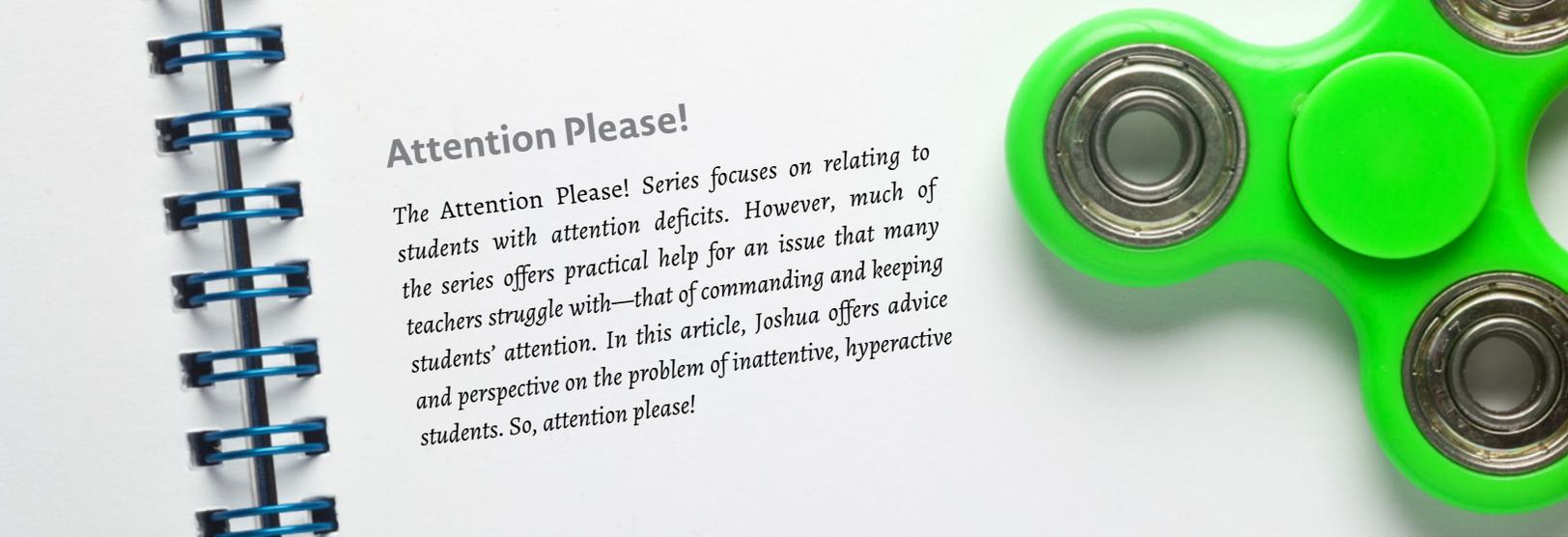
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Attention Please!

The Attention Please! Series focuses on relating to students with attention deficits. However, much of the series offers practical help for an issue that many teachers struggle with—that of commanding and keeping students' attention. In this article, Joshua offers advice and perspective on the problem of inattentive, hyperactive students. So, attention please!

Helping Students With an Attention Deficit | Part 2 | Joshua Robertson

You know how difficult it can be to accept and shepherd your hyperactive or distracted student. But where will the student turn if his shepherds respond in frustration about his weaknesses? Children depend on consistent, loving authorities who *help* them. So first, be certain you are looking to Jesus and receiving His abundant love for every child. In reality, attention-deficient children just need more of what all children need: authoritative love.

Let's look at some ways we can help inattentive, hyperactive students.

Identify the problem.

Is it your problem? Look in the mirror first. Are you clear, consistent, and in control? Responsibility for student attention lies first with you.

Is it a home problem? Does a certain home have several attention-deficient children? Does the student face pressure from frustrated parents? Before jumping into a possible home problem, consult the school board and/or ministry. You will accomplish little without unity between parents, school board, and teacher.

Is the problem immaturity? Students can appear attention-deficient when they are simply immature for their grade. This problem often begins in grade one. Immature first graders may *seem* to have a learning disability or “attention deficit”—and may end up battling insecurity and learning difficulties for years. A simple first-grade readiness test can help reveal which students would benefit from waiting another year to begin school. More on this later in the series.

Is the problem illness? If an underlying health issue is possible, consider consulting a doctor. However, some physicians quickly prescribe medication for ADHD while overlooking lifestyle issues or physical problems that could cause similar symptoms. Medications for ADHD attempt to override the symptoms, rather than addressing the causes. Be very slow to turn to medication as a “solution” to an attention deficit.

Is it a self-discipline problem or a lack of self-control ability? Strive to improve self-discipline; but when all else fails, remember that some students do have a diminished *ability* to control themselves, and need extra help.

Collaborate with parents and school staff.

Inform, educate, and plan with the parents. Remember, you are the parents' servant. Pray together. Regularly ponder the student's behavior together. Take their suggestions seriously. Does the child behave differently at home than at school? If so, why? If the parents are having success, try to align *your* plan closely to *their* approach. If necessary, educate the parents on attention deficit symptoms, causes, and solutions.

Don't drown in the Sea of Specifics. Often, an attention-deficient student causes so many little problems you can feel overwhelmed. Instead, identify the biggest problem areas and develop specific remedies for these areas first.

Devise remedies, not just punishments and incentives. Usually, these children get punished so often and rewarded so little that the punishment-reward system becomes another source of frustration. They need you to structure their lives with specific

remedies and controls. Often, it's the teacher who needs to be more disciplined. Don't look for easy solutions—there aren't any.

Simplify the child's lifestyle.

Work with parents to simplify the child's lifestyle. Parents can help by providing an orderly home life and avoiding overstimulation, including electronic technology, hectic schedules, late nights, and noisy, flashing toys. Screens contribute heavily to hyperactivity, and children benefit enormously from zero screen exposure. Teachers need to keep things calm, clear, organized, and simple, avoiding fast-paced or high-pressure situations and limiting distractions. Provide abundant fresh air and exercise and assign structured tasks. A calm, simple life with plenty of outdoor play and age-appropriate work is one of the biggest keys to combating hyperactivity in children.

Structure the child's life and schedule.

Work with parents to structure the child's life and schedule at home and school. All children benefit from structure, but attention-deficient children especially thrive on a thoughtful, consistent plan. Try these:

Schedules—With parents, develop a consistent schedule governing the *whole day*. Post it and stick to it!

Lists—Make and help *them* make detailed task lists they can check off as they go.

Reminders—Give regular reminders of their schedule, assignments, and restrictions. Pass them pre-written notes to communicate quickly and discreetly at key moments.

Notes—Teach them to take notes; it helps them pay attention.

Systems—Design, teach, and enforce systems for everything, from multiplication to sweeping floors to boarding the bus.

Routines and traditions—Establish routines and traditions. Attention-deficient children are distracted and stimulated by changes but *thrive* under good systems, routines, and traditions.

Rules—Post and enforce clear, specific rules. Focus on a few key rules for several days, then shift to others. Most importantly, design routines that make rule-keeping easier. Sheep following their shepherd down familiar paths scarcely require fences.

Timers—These children flounder in large blocks of time. Divide assignments and jobs into bite-size five- or ten-minute segments, and set a timer on their desk. Gradually increase the assignment size and time allotment.

Memorized proverbs—Use proverbs and develop set ways of saying things. Repeat these often and have the student memorize them. Memorized proverbs simplify decisions and help students stabilize and focus.

External controls—Establish definite controls that depend less on student self-control. For example, instead of “Class dismissed” (a free-for-all), dismiss students one-by-one or row-by-row. Ask, “How can I limit temptation and failure for this student?”

Explicit expectations—State expectations clearly. Instead of “Quit being so disorderly,” try, “Keep an arm's length between you and the next person. Don't make any sounds. Don't run. Act calm.” Reiterate (word for word) and reinforce your expectations regularly until they are very familiar.

Rules for unstated norms—Students with attention deficits often fail to observe social cues and manners. Provide practical rules instead. “If someone isn't really listening to you, just find someone else to talk to.” Or, “Your burps really aren't anything special. Avoid burping and say, ‘Excuse me’ when you do.”

Part 3 will continue the discussion and offer additional strategies and practical ideas for interacting with students with attention deficits. [11](#)

Joshua grew up in western Canada and was homeschooled through Grade 12. He taught at two schools for a total of seven years, including serving as principal at an inner-city mission school focused on assisting African Christian immigrant families. He has also tutored high school students and taught short-term or substituted at several parochial schools. He is currently working in curriculum development and translation projects at Christian Light. He and his wife and two children live in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Adventures in Peru Part 2: Astonished by the Ancients | Luke Martin



One of the pyramids in Caral.

©Luke Martin

“Time for our class on Peru,” Hermano Lucas announces. “Today we’ll talk about the history of Peru. Don’t you wish we could hop into a time machine and see what life was like in Peru 500 years ago? 1,000 years ago? 3,000 years ago? We don’t have that option. But we do have windows into the past—windows that give us surprising glimpses of what happened here. Are you ready? Let’s go!”

Three hours north of Lima on the desert coast is Caral. This archaeological site is considered to be the capital and worship center of the next-to-oldest civilization in the world, second only to Mesopotamia. It seems likely that Noah’s descendants arrived here soon after the Tower of Babel. The city of Caral itself covers about 150 acres and is believed to have held 2,000 to 3,000 inhabitants. The city includes six pyramids, which are believed to have been worship centers. To date, archaeologists have discovered 25 towns and cities around Caral.

Next, we come to the Incas and their accomplishments. The Inca Empire, which stretched from what today is Quito, Ecuador, down into Chile, was connected with an impressive road system—the Capac Ñañ, a royal road covering more than 4,000 kilometers (2,500 miles). Many parts of this road are still visible, and some sections are still in good repair. Travel on this road was reserved for the Inca, his armies, and his royal messengers—the chasquis. The chasquis used a very efficient relay system in which they could deliver a message from the Inca to anywhere in the empire in just a few days.¹

The quipu, another intriguing tool of the Incas, is a system of strings tied together that was used to relay messages and to keep record of inventory and events. Accounts were kept using strings of different colors and lengths, with knots tied into the strings. Cobo, a Jesuit priest who came to Peru soon after the conquest, tells how Spanish conquistadors, seeking to solve the

mystery of an explorer who had mysteriously disappeared six years before, asked a quipu-reader to find out what had happened. The quipu-reader went to the archives and found the chasqui’s record. Upon being captured by the Spanish, the chasqui confessed to having killed the explorer.²

Sacsayhuaman is a large complex built just outside of Cusco, high up on a hill overlooking the city. Its most famous feature is the three-layer set of zigzag walls.

The stones used to build these walls are gigantic. Some of the biggest ones are estimated to weigh over 300 tons. Astonishing, these rocks are each carved to fit together, without the use of mortar. They even after hundreds of years, you still can’t get a blade into most of the joints. No two rocks in the complex are alike. It is said that 25,000 men worked for ninety years to build Sacsayhuaman.



The elaborate stonework of Sacsayhuaman.

Machu Picchu, in many ways the best of Inca architecture still in existence, attracts over a million tourists every year. It is centrally located between four peaks that form a compass of the cardinal directions. Set high on a ridge hundreds of feet above the Urubamba River, it is often covered with misty clouds that add to its mystical beauty. Here the Inca’s ability to incorporate the natural landscape into their architecture is demonstrated by building on and all over the natural ridge of the mountain, right up to the edge of the sheer cliff.

The most elaborate structures in the Inca Empire were the



Machu Picchu

temples. And no other one was as magnificent as Koricancha, the sun temple in the very center of the empire. Sometimes likened to Solomon’s temple, this gold-covered sanctuary contained a garden sculptured from gold, complete with trees and animals. Here at Koricancha, the Incas housed the gods they collected from the tribes they conquered.

While the Incas are known as worshipers of the sun, they did have two temples built to the Creator God. Raqchi, just south of Cusco, is the site of a huge temple built for worship of the Creator God Viracocha.

The other temple built to the Creator God is Pachacamac, located just south of Lima. Interestingly, worship to Pachacamac far predated the Incas; the first construction at Pachacamac is dated around 200 A.D. or about 1,000 years before the Incas.

Where did the Incas acquire their knowledge of a Creator? The Incas had a practice of collecting and worshiping the gods of the tribes they conquered. So it seems likely that some of their subjects had this knowledge.

Who was this Creator God to the Incas? One Inca-Spanish writer defines Him as “He who does to the universe what the soul does to the body.” How would history be different if some kind-hearted missionaries had come and told the Incas about this Creator God in a way they could have understood?

Only God knows the answers to all these questions. But through these windows into Peru’s past, we see evidences of God, His creation, and Biblical history. [📄](#)

Sources: 1. Rostworowski, *Encyclopedia temática del Perú: Incas*, p. 165
2. Cobo/Hamilton, *History of the Inca Empire*, p. 254-255

Luke has lived in Peru since 2011. He is currently in his fourth year of teaching. Luke teaches grades 6-9 at Escuela Menonita del valle de Huaral. Thirteen of the twenty-five students in the school are Peruvians. Luke’s hobby and current interest is Peruvian history and archaeology. He and his wife Grace (a former teacher) have three children.



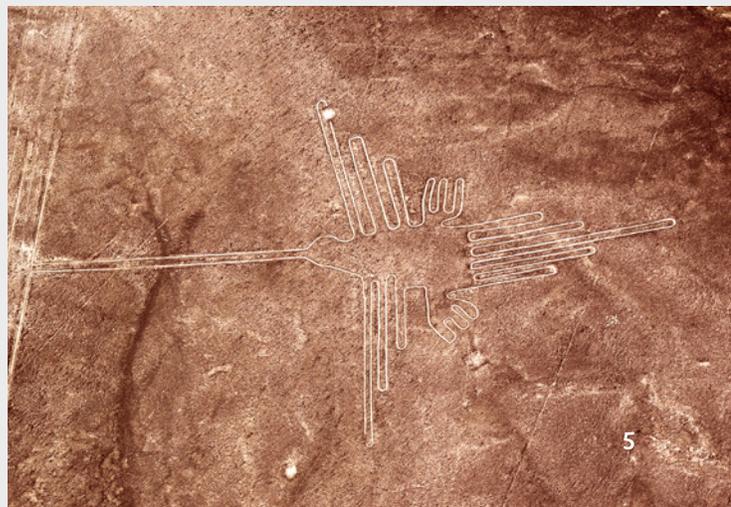
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Sal de maras, near Cusco.

These salt pits are fed by a small saltwater spring that comes out of the mountain. This spring has been flowing for at least 500 years and probably much longer.

Farther south on the desert coast, we find the Nazca lines—thousands of lines and geometric shapes and hundreds of figures of plants and animals, drawn in the desert sand. These figures are so big that many of them were not even discovered until people began flying over the area in airplanes. One of the shapes is of a spider, which includes a detail that in real life is only visible with a microscope. Who made these figures? How? Why?

Nazca lines



BALL'S PYRAMID and Its Eighty-Year Secret

Not many of us have heard of Lord Howe Island. Probably fewer still have heard of Ball's Pyramid. And, has anyone heard of *Dryococelus australias*? Mystery, secrecy, and questions coalesce in this fascinating tale of survival—an eighty-year secret.

Lord Howe Island

Lord Howe Island is a volcanic island that is described as five square miles of paradise in the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand. The island boasts sandy beaches, subtropical forests, mountains, clear coral-rich waters with fish in abundance, and birds with a few species **endemic** to the island. Only 350 people live there with fewer than 800 people on the island at any one time. Tourism is the island's main industry besides some exporting of Kentia Palm seeds and seedlings.

Black Rats

The ship *SS Makimbo* ran aground on the north end of the island in 1918. Somehow, a few black rats aboard the ship came ashore. Their population exploded because there were no natural enemies to keep them in check. Current estimates suggest there are around 350,000 rats—roughly 1,000 rats to every person—on the island. At least twelve **invertebrate** species, five bird species, and several plant species have been brought to naught by the marauding rats.

Lord Howe Island



Tree Lobsters

Lord Howe Island was the native home to *Dryococelus australis*, the Lord Howe Island stick insect or “tree lobster,” as it was commonly called. These **phasmids** were once very common on the island with local fishermen using them as fish bait. Adults were six to eight inches long with males being slightly smaller than females. They sported blackish-brown **exoskeletons**. They didn't have wings, but with six robust legs they could run fast. But they couldn't escape the rats. By 1920 there were no more tree lobsters on the island, and they were thought to be extinct. *Dryococelus australis* were officially declared extinct in 1983.

Ball's Pyramid

Ball's Pyramid lies about twelve miles southeast of Lord Howe Island. This ragged narrow rock can hardly be called an island: it juts sharply 1,844 feet out of the water almost vertically at most places. The first successful climb to the summit was in 1965. Climbing was later banned, then more recently allowed by permit only.

Under a Melaleuca Bush

In the 1960s it was rumored that climbers on Ball's Pyramid saw “recently dead” stick insects. Forty years later, in 2001, two Australian scientists, hypothesizing that the rocky crevices of Ball's Pyramid could sustain a small population of the

Ball's Pyramid



“extinct” tree lobsters, climbed up the rock to search for signs of *Dryococelus australis*. They didn’t find anything until on the way back down. Under a small scrubby melaleuca bush 500 feet above the water, they spied some fresh droppings, presumably from a large insect. But no such insect was visible in the daylight.

Since the insect was probably **nocturnal**, they decided to scale the rock again, at night. Armed with flashlights and cameras, two men climbed back up to the plant. Their flashlights revealed two enormous shiny black stick insects on the plant. Below the plant there were more—twenty-four in all! Thought to be extinct for eighty years, here were tree lobsters on a huge rock in the middle of the ocean twelve miles away from Lord Howe Island. How did they get here? How did they survive all these years? We will probably never know the answers to these questions.

“Adam and Eve”

On Valentine’s Day 2003, the Australian government gave permission to move two pairs (only four!) of the enormous insects into a protected breeding program aimed at ultimately reintroducing them to their native **habitat**. One pair died almost immediately. The other pair was taken to the Melbourne (AU) Zoo and was named Adam and Eve. Eve began laying eggs but then got very sick and almost died. Long story short, Eve recovered, and by 2016 the Melbourne Zoo had hatched 16,000 eggs and had sent many more to other locations to raise “insurance” populations.

Forty-Two Tons of Rat Poison

After fifteen years of research and planning and a 52 percent approval vote by the island’s residents, Lord Howe Island’s governing body moved ahead with an aggressive \$10.5 million rodent **eradication** project. In May 2019 over 28,000 bait stations were filled across inhabited areas, and helicopters scattered bait over forested and uninhabited areas in the months following. Forty-two tons of rat poison were dedicated to the project.

And If It’s Successful . . .

The organizers of the eradication project hope to reintroduce *Dryococelus australis* to Lord Howe Island by 2021—101 years after they were last sighted and thought extinct—if the project is successful. This six-legged giant, touted as “the world’s rarest insect,” is poised to make a triumphant comeback.

Welcome home, tree lobster. 🇺🇸

Sources: <https://www.npr.org/sections/kruhwich/2012/02/24/147367644/six-legged-giant-finds-secret-hideaway-hides-for-80-years>
<https://vimeo.com/14413689>—a fascinating video of a hatching nymph
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<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/06/mass-rodent-poisoning-remote-australian-island-could-bring-back-giant-stick-insect>



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Above: An adult Lord Howe Island stick insect clings to the branches of the *Melaleuca howeana* plant, upon which it feeds.

Below: A nymph crawling out of its egg.

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Continued from page 1

“Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.”

Again my humbled heart turned to pencil and paper to sort out my mind.

God’s message was to the priests, “for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (2:7). I, too, have been given a charge by His church, to teach His message to children. And yet like those priests, I’ve been saying,

Continued from pages 6, 7



Outdoor Classroom Applications

Share this story with your students. Have them look up the meanings of the bold words to expand their vocabularies. Read about the eradication project and report its progress. Learn about the incubation period of tree lobster eggs and the struggle of hatching nymphs. Research, collect, or raise local walking stick insects and compare/contrast them with *Dryococelus australis*. Discuss the balance of nature and how it can easily be upset. Take an imaginary trip to Lord Howe Island. For older students: Why are humans so eager to discover and revive ancient species of animals? Is that mankind’s job—perhaps part of the dominion-subduing mandate at the beginning? How might this aspect of science be a reflection of God’s character/image in mankind? How might this also be a form of idolatry?



Determined Students in Syria Form Their Own School

Since it wasn’t going to happen otherwise, a few teenage students in Raqqa, Syria, the largely destroyed “capital” of ISIS, created a school on their own initiative. Most schools and public buildings were damaged or destroyed, and most teachers had either fled or were killed during the war. Primary schools were starting back up, but secondary schools seemed to be neglected. Several teens, some of whom lost up to five years of schooling during ISIS rule and the war, were anxious about their prospects, so they located a building (sort of), started seeking for and asking teachers, and began studies. “We suffered a lot during this time,” said a nineteen-year-old. “We were displaced from our homes and cut off from learning. Children younger than us are completely illiterate.”

“What a weariness is it!” And I have snuffed at it and have brought for my offering to the Lord a complaining heart and lazy hands. Shall the Lord of heaven and earth accept such an offering?

In sorrow, I confessed my sin before my God, pleading forgiveness and cleansing through Jesus’ blood. I vowed by His grace to teach every day for Him: to give my students my best, remembering that God counts not greatness as do men, knowing that any work is only as great as the worker is small before his Master. I am teaching not for the books, nor yet for something to do, but rather for the children’s precious souls!

I wish I could say that ever since then I enter my classroom every morning with as much happy enthusiasm as I did seven years ago. But I can’t say that. Sometimes I still find myself counting days or fighting yawns as I work through yet another flash-card drill.

But I’m discovering that teaching, like everything else in life, is a commitment that dare not be despised just because it’s not particularly exciting anymore. I’m learning that, by God’s grace, I teach for Him, and He provides inspiration and joy to meet each task. And I’m finding that there’s a purpose in each day after all, a beckoning star that calls me onward in both the yawny days and the exciting ones. That purpose is God Himself. [\[1\]](#)

Lori taught school for seven years, two in the United States and five in the Philippines. She is currently “broadening her horizons” by caring for several elderly ladies and recently served as head cook in a soup kitchen in Colombia for six months. She is keeping a bit of connection to school and to the Philippines by working on Tagalog school curriculum in her spare time. She lives in Colorado with her family. She is the oldest of ten children.

This private institute now has ten teachers and several dozen students. The school building has little electricity and limited heating. The students and their families are scraping together funds to pay the teachers.

Source: npr.org

Spelling Bee Has Eight Winners

The 92nd Scripps National Spelling Bee ended at midnight, May 31, 2019, with unprecedented results. Eight spellers never missed a word and were all declared winners in an eight-way tie. The bee-masters simply ran out of words that were difficult enough to challenge this exceptional group of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds. The six boys and two girls mastered words like *callejon*, *omphalopsychite*, and *auftaktigkeit*. Each of the champions received a \$50,000 cash prize.

Source: npr.org

Why Some Children Learn Differently

Part 1: Appreciating the Differences | Peter Whitt

Welcome to the world of learning struggles. Sometimes we refer to children as “Learning Disabled” or LD, but it may be more accurate to think of these children as those who learn *differently*; for in reality, the majority of these individuals are definitely not disabled when we consider the way their brains process ideas and information. When a child does not store and retrieve information in a manner that meets our expectations, we might suspect something is unusual or that there may be some kind of handicap, which is possible.

Before we begin what could seem to be a ghost hunt, let’s consider the child. Every child is a unique creation of God. God NEVER makes mistakes but does all things perfectly and according to His will and purpose.

Let’s start at the beginning. Science tells us that an infant can hear and process sound while still in the womb. As this initial processing begins, the unborn child starts to recognize sensory input and stores it for future use. This process of gathering and storing bits of information could be likened to a computer storing megabytes of information for future use. If we think how complicated such technology appears to us, perhaps we can better appreciate the mysterious marvels of the human brain and its many functions.

A child’s ability to process and store sensory input increases dramatically after birth as he begins to employ input from all his senses. Now the business of input and processing begins in earnest! However, we should recognize that God did not create everyone with the same processing equipment. Therefore,

children may sort through input, classify it, and retrieve it in different ways. Remember—God doesn’t make mistakes; He creates variety!

All of us inherited the processing equipment we have. We weren’t given the option of picking and choosing the latest, most up-to-date or fastest processor. We received what God gave us through our DNA from our parents. We need to accept this fact just as we need to accept the color of our hair or our eyes. So, if parents have been blessed with children who process *differently*, they need not look too hard for the source, for “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

As children get busy with life and begin to develop and use their processing equipment, the variety and differences in processing can go unrecognized for a while. In children’s preschool years parents may notice their strengths, weaknesses, and tendencies and accept and appreciate them as the individuals they are. However, these learning differences often cause struggles when they come to the stage in life that we refer to as the school years. In the next issue we will look at recognizing and identifying some of these differences and learning abilities and how they manifest themselves at school. [\[1\]](#)

Peter was a teacher for more than twenty years and administrator for twenty-two years. As a dyslexic, he understands the struggles of dyslexic students and because of his teaching experience, developed a heart for struggling students. He serves as a school representative for Christian Light. He and his wife Martha live in Georgia.

“Raise your words, not your voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder.” –Rumi, Persian poet

Single-Student Schools

Ever feel isolated and out-here-by-yourself in the rural community in which you teach? Things could be worse, or better, depending on your social inclinations. Cozy Hollow School, sixty miles north of Laramie, Wyoming, is scheduled to open this fall with one kindergarten student and one teacher. Another one-student school a few miles away is already in operation, but roads between the two communities are impassable much of the winter. The school district tried live streaming classes to remote students like this, but it didn’t work well (especially with younger students), so they decided to reopen Cozy Hollow School. The school was closed in 2004, when it last operated with

one student also. The student at that time, Joe Kennedy, said of his one-on-one instruction, “It feels pretty good. There is no one to bug us.” The operating budget for the two one-student schools is \$150,000 per year.

Single-student schools also exist in Nebraska, Montana, and North Dakota. A thirteen-year-old recently graduated as the last and only student in Cuttyhunk Elementary School on Cuttyhunk Island, Massachusetts. Built in 1873, it will close permanently due to zero enrollment.

Sources: apnews.com, independent.co.uk, cbsnews.com

The mediocre teacher tells.
The good teacher explains.
The superior teacher demonstrates.
The great teacher inspires.

–William Arthur Ward

Carolyn and several co-teachers spent ten days in Ireland in the summer of 2018. The articles in this series were sparked by that visit.

Lessons From Ireland | Part 2: The Bouncy Bog | Carolyn Martin

When wood is scarce and coal and oil are unknown, how does one fuel a cooking and heating fire? In Ireland, for centuries, the answer has been turf. Turf that had been cut from the peat bogs and dried into bricks was the source of fuel from the 1600s until the mid-1900s.

Peat bogs formed as nutrients were leached from the soil, causing it to become acidic. As the soil became more acidic, plant decay was repressed, causing minerals to build up, which in turn prevented drainage, which further inhibited decomposition.

Bogs in Ireland may be very deep, containing up to seven meters of peat. The surface of a bog is covered with sphagnum moss, a plant that can hold up to twenty times its weight in water. This mossy carpet covers a thick layer of partially decomposed, wet material. That is why walking on a bog feels a little like walking on a trampoline—it puts a spring in your step.

Peat contains a low-grade carbon, making it a good source of fuel. Before it can be burned, it must first be cut from the bog. Traditionally this was done with a two-sided spade. Workers cut bricks from the bog and laid them out on the ground to dry. Later they set up the bricks in a tepee-like formation for further drying. Finally, the bricks were stored in sheds until needed for fuel. Today much of the turf harvest is done by machine.

The peat bogs of Ireland contain a rich variety of plants and animals. The bog is home to such plants as the cross-leaved heath, bog-cottons, and carnivorous plants such as sundews, butterworts, and bladderworts. Sphagnum moss is the bog's most important plant.

Dragonflies, bog spiders, and other carnivorous insects lurk among the pools of the bogs. The endangered Marsh Fritillary butterfly finds its food, the Devil's-bit Scabious plant, in the

bog. Other rare moths, butterflies, and birds call the bogs home. Small mammals such as the Irish hare live on the bog. The hen harrier, a type of hawk, nests on the bog surface and hunts the ground-dwelling birds and mammals. The curlew, once a common sight on the bog, has become endangered because of the loss of breeding habitat.

Plants, animals, and fuel are not the only treasures of the bogs. Since the cool, waterlogged bogs prevent decay, a variety of buried artifacts have been found while cutting turf. Bog butter is a common find. In times past, burying butter in the bog provided a way to keep it cool and fresh. People sometimes forgot where they buried it and left it for others to discover years later. Naturally mummified human bodies, known as bog bodies, have been found, some of them several thousand years old. Entire ancient village landscapes have been discovered beneath the bogs.

Today a large part of Ireland's bog land has disappeared. Much of what remains enjoys protected status, helping to ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to bounce on a bog. [📖](#)

Carolyn Martin has taught first graders for twenty-five years at Hickory Hollow Christian School in Dayton, Virginia. Her first twenty years of teaching were in a chicken house that was converted into a school. She has particular interest in reading and how reading works in the brain. She enjoys children's books, story time at school, and reading stories to her nieces and nephews. Carolyn lives in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

On the left, two workers cut bog bricks, using traditional harvesting methods. At right, the cut bricks are arranged to dry in the sun.



Time for Tea | Diana Kornelsen

My classroom theme last year (actually throughout my teaching career) was *respect*. Showing respect not only takes care of almost all rules, like *no whispering*, *no pushing*, *no interrupting*, *no meddling*; but it also adds purpose to following these rules. Beyond that, being respectful calls you to think of others and their feelings.

One of my efforts to endorse this theme was planning an Honor Roll party where the students could serve their moms a tea party, rather than having a party for themselves.

We sent a special invitation to each mother. The students memorized the song “Medals for Mothers,” then made personalized medals for the moms to wear at the party. We also assembled a bouquet of roses for each mother.

I set up the night before. On party day we headed to the party’s location right after lunch. There we took care of the last-minute details: pouring ice water, heating water for tea, making piggy-in-the-blankets and popcorn, and setting everything out and in order.

One student was assigned to be the door greeter. As the moms arrived, he welcomed them and directed them to the dining room. The rest of the students were waiting there, ready to hand each mother her medal and invite her to take a seat. After the moms were all settled around the daintily set table, each student handed his mother the plate of tea bags, and we passed the hot water and sugar around. While their tea was steeping, we sang “Medals for Mothers.” Then the students handed their bouquets to their mothers. They passed out our party delicacies—mini Oreo cheesecakes topped with raspberry sauce and a raspberry, heart-shaped finger Jell-O, piggy-in-the-blankets, and popcorn.



©Diana Kornelsen

The moms were tickled to see the young gentlemen serve dainties on china platters and sweetly offering their services. But more importantly, they all seemed to feel loved and blessed. I enjoyed watching the students try to make their moms feel special and hearing the moms compliment them on their gentlemanly skills and ladylike services. I felt a happy satisfaction in my own heart. The students enjoyed it too and thanked me for planning the party. [L](#)

Diana is teaching grades 1-3 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This is her eleventh year of teaching. She loves the daily interaction with children and seeing the youngsters make positive choices and changes for life. Diana finds pleasure in various forms of beauty outside of school, which for her ranges anywhere from hand-lettering to butchering.

“Ask Another” is a question-answer space for teachers. Teachers are invited to pose questions on school-related subjects, offer responses to questions, or reply to responses. (LightLines will occasionally assign questions to experienced teachers for their qualified response.) Send questions or responses by email to lightlines@clp.org or by mail to LightLines Editor, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803. (Try to limit responses to fewer than 400 words.)

Ask Another

What are some things teachers can do to minimize summer learning loss? Or is there actually such a thing?

Please send your responses to LightLines by December 15.

Portraits of the First-Year Teacher | Rhonda Martin

She shyly stands before the eager students—
The brand-new-teacher-with-a-pounding-heart—
So keenly feeling her own inexperience,
And knowing she must somehow do her part
To guide these children in the ways of wisdom.
She stands and smiles—and wonders how to start.

She sends a fervent prayer for strength and patience—
The godly-teacher-with-a-deep-desire.
She longs to share God's greatness with "her children,"
To set their eager minds and hearts afire
With zeal to seek for truth and understanding,
The facts of God's creation to acquire.

She sits and ponders in her schoolroom sanctum—
The saddened-teacher-with-a-troubled-mind.
She longs for ways to help her problem students,
With whom her heart is now so intertwined.
She prays for answers from the Master Teacher,
Who promised, "Those who seek will surely find."

She listens to the cheerful lunchtime chatter—
The happy-teacher-feeling-well-fulfilled.
And as she catches smiles from precious students,
With matchless joy her swelling heart is thrilled.
These are her children—hers to teach and cherish,
Their lives to shape, their characters to build.

She puzzles o'er the challenging new concept—
The growing-teacher-stretching-her-own-brain—
And knows she needs to understand this problem
Tomorrow, to be able to explain.
She prays for wisdom now to comprehend it,
And then for patient skill to make it plain.

She can't believe the year is almost over—
The teacher-loving-every-happy-day.
The hours fly by; the grace of God sustains her.
She wishes these sweet moments would just stay.
But since they won't, she lives them to the fullest,
Content with memories that won't fade away.

She waves as students take their last departure—
The teacher-with-a-sudden-urge-to-cry.
The year is past; she's eager for vacation.
And yet, she can't repress a quiet sigh,
Remembering bygone joys and mingled trials,
And that first morning, when she felt so shy.

"I live in Fredericksburg, Pennsylvania, and teach at a small church school in Milton, Pennsylvania. In my three years of teaching, I have had every grade except 10th. I am currently teaching the upper grades—something God called me to that I would never have dreamed of doing! This is a poem I wrote during my second year of teaching, as I looked back on my first year. In addition to teaching, I enjoy music, photography, spending time with my family and friends, and traveling."

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