

SCHOOL LIGHT LINES



CHRISTIAN LIGHT
EDUCATION



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There Were Twelve Students | Dwayne Erb

There was once a group of twelve students who struggled to get along with each other. They argued. Bragged. Deserted their teacher. Forgot their lunches. Struggled to forgive. Asked for rewards. Reacted to challenges. They were lazy at times. They rebuked their teacher and plotted against him. They intruded on their teacher's private time with their problems and didn't want to speak when they knew they were caught in the wrong. Yet some of their parents thought they were exceptional. They didn't all turn out so well.

This was a very normal group of students. Flesh and blood whose egos fought for dominance. A group of twelve men who acted like most any other group of students today. It was their teacher, Jesus, who responded so magnificently to the problems they produced. He sets the standard for classrooms today. Consider Jesus' reactions to the problems His students presented. How did He respond?

Jesus responded with questions.

Had He only responded with answers, it would have robbed them of the exercise of critical thinking. By asking questions, He guided their thinking in specific directions and forced them to work for answers. They also listened to Him question His critics, leaving them without easy answers—silent. Surely this increased their respect for their Master and caused them to consider the quality of their own questions. Other times, He used a

question to gauge their understanding of His teachings. "Have ye understood all these things?" (Matthew 13:51).

Jesus responded with stories.

Stories captured their attention, gave them a fresh perspective, and taught them indirectly how to respond to life's conflicts. Listening to other people's problems allowed them to analyze the situation with candor without feeling personally threatened or challenged. It allowed them to learn from their peers' mistakes and gave them the opportunity to avoid painful consequences in their own lives. In addition, stories brought lofty lessons down to a relatable level—it framed truth into pictures they understood and cemented the lessons into their minds for future retrieval. Surely the stories Jesus told were carried on to their friends and families, spreading the pearls they contained far and wide.

Jesus responded with empathy.

He understood their pain and responded accordingly. He acknowledged their limits and didn't force them to perform beyond their capabilities. When Peter's mother-in-law was sick, He noticed—and healed her. When Lazarus died, He cried with them, feeling their pain even as He saw the long-term good of the sad occasion. When they were tired, He acknowledged their need to rest. When they were hungry, He looked for food. Seeing their sacrifices and knowing their desire for rewards, He taught



Beating the Blahs

Strategies to boost student morale during the long winter school days.
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Hands-on history projects

Making History Come Alive, Part III
History is more than marks on a page—how do we teach it that way?
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them the value of eternal investments—so much more valuable than the comforts they had to forego daily. All these things He understood, because He was a man too, and took time to consider their feelings.

Jesus responded with truth.

The truth broke cultural norms and was not politically correct. It jarred them from their comfort zones, but Jesus wasn't one to provide a false sense of security. The truth was authoritative and gave definite direction to the challenges of the day. It forced them to evaluate their priorities and decide where they stood. It did not allow them to remain neutral on relevant issues of the day. Truth simultaneously called for courageous action and gave them the confidence to make the next move forward.

Jesus responded by giving His time.

He ate, sang, and prayed with His students. He listened to their questions, squabbles, and stories. He knew they liked to fish, manage money, and care for their families. He saw their fears, doubts, confusions, and tears. He saw their blundering passions. And still He accepted them and included them in His family! "Whoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:50). Patiently He answered their questions, made sure they understood His answers, and listened to their difficulties. They felt valued in His presence, and this freed them to initiate difficult discussions: "Knowest thou that the Pharisees

were offended, after they heard [your teaching]?" (Matthew 15:12). They didn't fear a reaction from Jesus because He had told them clearly, out on the dark sea, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Matthew 14:27). Jesus had their confidence because He had invested time into their lives, and they respected Him for it.

Jesus could have responded to His students' problems in frustration. He could have belittled them into staying quiet. He could have stared them down and stalked away, shaking His head. He could have expelled all twelve from His classroom and went looking for a finer set of pupils. Instead, He looked past their flaws and saw their potential—men who would carry on His work, eventually "turning the world upside down."

One student did choose to betray Jesus and eventually took his own life. The other eleven went on to do great things in the kingdom of God. Courageously they faced the world with the Gospel message, taking the traits of their Teacher with them. [\[1\]](#)

Dwayne is teaching Grades 7-12 and serving as principal at Ridgeview Mennonite School in Barnett, Missouri. He and his wife Teresa have one son. Diversions from school activities include athletics, playing piano, and doing small electrical jobs.

Book Review | John Swartz



From Wealth to Faith

by Mollie B. Zook, Christian Light Publications,
216 pages, paper \$7.95.

Meet Hans at 12 as he rides with his father looking over the multiplied acres and abundant herds on their prosperous Mennonite farm in Russia around 1920. Meet Selana, his godly mother, who dies shortly afterward but whose prayers and teaching cannot die.

Meet Hans, the fugitive, at 25, all earthly property and prospects confiscated. His sweetheart is in his heart, but he is unable to visit her.

Meet Hans in his 40s, just returned from concentration camp. Suddenly he is taken from his weakened, suffering wife.

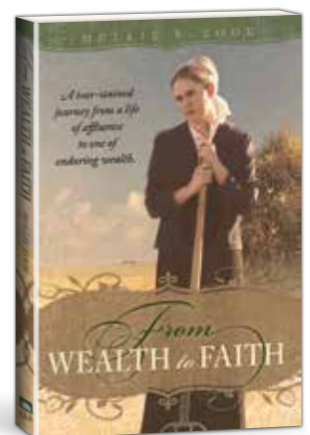
Meet Hans in his 50s, almost overwhelmed with the luxury of

a cup of milk, wishing he could share it with his former companions in the concentration camp.

Follow the growth of Hans' seed of faith as he was thrown from the lap of luxury into the crucible of suffering. What did he learn? What would Hans say to us in America today? What did he say? (Yes, Hans visited America.)

Why did Hans not die when thousands did who suffered in Stalin's concentration camps? Was it because God wanted his story preserved for us 21st-century North American believers?

Action, suspense, and dialogue make this a compelling book for intermediates through adults. May it give direction to flourishing lives and redirection to drooping ones. [\[1\]](#)





Beating the Blahs

Dorcas Peight

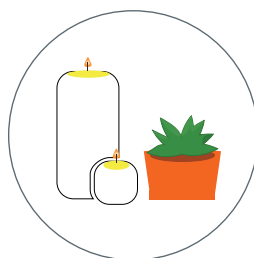
Late winter school days are their own kind of special. The holiday excitement is past, the days are still short and chill, and the school term is barely halfway done, with the second half stretching into the dim future. I discovered early that classroom morale tends to drop to its lowest point this time of year, and it is imperative to find some good coping mechanisms. While I was tempted to sink into apathy, I couldn't indulge myself or I risked having my entire classroom slide into the doldrums with me.

Here are some ideas I have tried, with varying degrees of success. Some I did while teaching in a brick-and-mortar school, others in a homeschool setting. We did not do them all in one month!



Pay attention to your clothes.

Wear cheerful colors. There was a reason Soviet prisoners wore gray uniforms in gray prison buildings. Special-dress days are lots of fun. You can earn all the mothers' gratitude by keeping this low-key. Simply invite students to wear several layers of the brightest colors they already have.



Decorate your space.

It should be a place where students like to be. A string of lights hung on command hooks creates instant ambience when the weather outside is gray. Light a scented candle or diffuse some fresh-smelling oils. When my husband taught junior high, he bought some wing chairs and end tables at a thrift store and set up a free-time reading corner.



Switch up the routine.

One day I wrote each subject of the day on a slip of paper and inserted them all into balloons. The children got to pop a balloon at the beginning of each period to see what they would do next. This was more fun for the students than for the teacher, but it did keep me on my toes! You can also vary the ways you teach a subject. Instead of traditional spelling tests on paper, try a spelling bee, or learn states and capitals to a familiar tune. A day of novelty can be just what everybody needs to get back on track with ordinary days.



Invest in plants.

Winter is a great time to force bulbs in a vase of water on the windowsill. Or sow a handful of grass seed in a shallow pan of potting soil for a tiny inside lawn. Children will work hard to earn the privilege of "mowing the grass" with a scissors, and the whole thing becomes a wonderful fairy garden base. Sprouting trays of alfalfa seeds is another way to almost instant gratification if you want to not only grow greens but eat them too.

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Making History Come Alive

Part 3



Library of Congress/Prints & Photographs Division/Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives/Sheldon Dick/Public Domain. Coloration by Christian Light Publications, Inc.

Churn Butter; Build an Igloo; Make a Quipus: Giving Students the Opportunity to Experience History | Deana Swanson

We are discussing three effective ways to get students involved and paying attention in history class. We discussed the first two—putting students into specific situations and telling interesting and true stories—in the last *LightLines*. The third way is to create hands-on history projects in class. This is my favorite.

I specifically remember two history classes from my school days. In third grade we were studying the native Inuits of northern Canada. We read the textbook and looked at pictures, but then, my teacher did something amazing. She passed out cardboard squares, foil, and sugar cubes. We covered the cardboard with foil to look like ice, and then we stacked and glued the sugar cubes together to make an igloo. I was completely intrigued. I almost felt like an Inuit, building my little igloo. I wondered if the real Inuits had as much trouble getting the top cubes to stay on as I did. I remember crouching down and peering inside my group's igloo. The light shining through the crevices cast a whitish-blue glow on the sides of the igloo. I tried to imagine what it was

like to live in one. I was ready to go heat up tea over a fire and munch on seal meat.

My second vivid memory is from a fifth-grade study of the Incas who lived in the Andes Mountains in what is now Peru and Chile. We learned that the Great Inca (their king) got messages to all the people in his long stretched-out country by sending runners with messages on quipus. Our teacher told us all to bring a stick to class the next day. She provided yarn, and we made our own quipus. Again, I loved it and have remembered it for almost fifty years.

These two wonderful teachers gave me the opportunity to become involved in history—to make, touch, and hold something that related directly to what we were studying. When I became a teacher, I determined to give my students similar experiences.

I began gathering ideas for projects that would be doable for the ages I taught; usually this was Grades 3-12. Often ideas came from things mentioned in the book; other times I needed to research before I found something that would work. It takes a little



effort, but it is so very worth it. Your students will learn more, remember more, and have a deeper appreciation for history.

My goal is to do one project at the end of every chapter—about every two weeks. But even if you only do one, your students will remember and enjoy it.

Here are a few simple procedures to make this work in the classroom.

1. Gather all the supplies yourself; don't expect the students to bring anything unless it's optional. This keeps parents happy, and the students often forget. I find most of my supplies at thrift stores or buy them inexpensively somewhere.

2. Do the project yourself ahead of time and show it to the students. (Time yourself so you'll know how long it will take.) Explain what it is and **how it relates to what you've been studying in history.**

3. To avoid chaos, keep procedures clear and simple. Have students pick up supplies as they enter the room or have them come up and get them one row at a time. Keep order.

4. Give slow step-by-step directions, modeling exactly what the students are supposed to do. Don't go to the next step until they are with you. Assign a "buddy" to students who may need help so that you can focus on the class.

Here is a list of North American history project suggestions. World history projects will be presented in the next issue of *LightLines*.

Indigenous Peoples/Ancient Times

Igloos Stack and glue sugar cubes on top of foil-covered pieces of cardboard.

Sandpaper cave drawings Tear the straight edges off sandpaper. Use crayons to draw animals similar to indigenous peoples' cave drawings. (Provide examples.)

Incan quipus Tie lengths of different colors of yarn onto a stick. Tie and braid some of them together at different heights.

Corn husk dolls Fold corn husks in half. Tie with string at

the neck and waist. Draw a face, and add fabric clothes or yarn hair, if desired.

Colonial Period



© Deana Swanson

Quilling Roll narrow strips of colored paper into coils and make a design. For younger students use $\frac{1}{2}$ " strips of paper and use a pencil to roll them. For older students use $\frac{1}{4}$ " strips and a toothpick.

Butter making Combine heavy cream and a few dashes of salt in a plastic jar with a lid. Pass the jar around the class, allowing each student to shake it for a while.

Indigo fabric dyeing Provide squares of white cotton fabric. Have each student write his name in permanent marker on the corner. Then use rubber bands to wrap around the fabric. Follow directions on a package or bottle of Rit fabric dye.

Book binding Fold three pieces of construction paper in half. Use a ballpoint pen (or the end of scissors if they are old enough and can handle it) to poke holes through the layers near the fold or "binding" of the book. Use a pen or pencil to poke the yarn through the holes to "bind" the book. Write and/or draw in them during the next history class.

Fraktur calligraphy Give each student a copy of the Fraktur alphabet. Have students make at least one large letter using that

Continued on page 9.

© Deana Swanson



In Praise of Purple Martins



Call me a purple martin **enthusiast**.

I look out the window of my office and think fond thoughts about purple martins when I see our lowered martin house (it's wintertime). I sadly recall our misfortune last summer. My mind rolls back forty-plus years to Preacher Simon and his beloved purple martins. He often used the activities of purple martins as analogies or sermon illustrations. I recall visiting on his sunporch and being **mesmerized** by the antics of dozens of noisy, chirping purple martins.

Grandpa also maintained several martin houses. I found the birds fascinating. Grandpa was especially diligent in watching for **marauding** sparrows. I remember helping Grandpa dispense with the sparrows he trapped.

When I was eighteen and recuperating from an accident, Preacher Simon gave me a book, *What You Should Know About the Purple Martin*, by J.L. Wade. I read it and became even more intrigued with this bird.

I still retain a sense of wonder at their graceful gliding and cheerful chirping, and am cheered by their arrival each spring.

In the book I learned about Griggsville, Illinois, the **purported** purple martin capital of the world and how the purple martins help to rid the town of its insect problem. The town sprouted an aluminum martin house production facility and still boasts a forty-foot martin house condominium tower and many other martin dwellings throughout the town. One year the town advertised in Louisiana for mosquitoes to feed the early arriving martins!

Interesting Facts About Purple Martins

- 🐦 Purple martins are not purple although the males' **iridescent** dark blue sheen almost glimmers purple (and sometimes other colors).
- 🐦 They are the largest species in the swallow family. They may be from 7 to 8 inches and have wingspans of 15 inches.
- 🐦 Martins feed between 150 and 500 feet in the air, higher than most swallows.
- 🐦 Purple martins are **insectivores**. They eat flying insects such as beetles, flies, mosquitoes, dragonflies, damselflies, leafhoppers, grasshoppers, crickets, butterflies, moths, wasps, bees, caddisflies, spiders, cicadas, termites, and mayflies.
- 🐦 A common idea in bygone days was that a purple martin ate 2,000 mosquitoes per day. Now we know that although they probably could eat that many, mosquitoes make up only a small portion of their daily diet.
- 🐦 Purple martins can fly faster than 40 mph. They're agile in-flight hunters, often engaging in complex aerial acrobatics, especially while chasing prey.
- 🐦 Martins feed their young ones sand, small gravel, and even small pieces of glass to help digest the insect **exoskeletons** they bring them.
- 🐦 Most martins migrate to South America yearly. The trip south may take several months, with plenty of time to eat and rest. The return trip north is completed in several weeks.
- 🐦 Native Americans first provided housing for martins. Some tribes hung hollow gourds at the tops of poles for them to live in.



Humans and martins form a unique **symbiosis**. Martins are almost 100 percent dependent on human-made housing in Eastern North America.

Martins prefer to be around people and often cluster near or in cities.

In eastern areas of North America purple martins are social, **colonial** birds. Nesting colonies in early summer may include hundreds of pairs, and roosting colonies later in the season may have tens of thousands of birds. The largest roosting colony ever found was estimated to contain over 700,000 birds.

Martins often return to the same nesting site year after year. Adding new houses can help accommodate growing purple martin families and increase the local bird population.

The longest recorded lifespan of a purple martin was over thirteen years.

Griggsville still claims to be the purple martin capital of the world. However, a number of eastern states have towns that claim to be the Purple Martin Capital for their states. For example, Glen Mills claims the title for Pennsylvania.

European starlings and house sparrows will attack purple martins in competing for prime nesting sites. Other enemies include snakes, raccoons, hawks, owls, squirrels, and feral cats. Parasites can also disrupt nesting and kill birds.

Our misfortune last summer? Mites overwhelmed our whole colony. Too late we discovered that the entire house was crawling with mites. The twelve to fifteen pairs of martins left

abruptly, abandoning their nests. We sadly discarded forty-two eggs from the nests.

This observer says it well: “Without us, they would be gone. And they’re a **charismatic** species. They’re fun to watch and fun to study. They’re tolerant of human interaction and intervention and they’re just a wonderful, joy-bringing species. There’s no other species like them here.”

- Courtney Rousseau, North Carolina Purple Martin Society

Sources: *What You Should Know About the Purple Martin*, by J.L. Wade
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Purple_Martin_purplemartin.org
<https://appvoices.org/2021/07/14/purple-martins>
<https://www.thespruce.com/fun-facts-about-purple-martins-387110>

- Ken Kauffman, editor

Learning Box

1. Ask students to look up the words in bold and explain them in context.
2. Study *Peterson’s Bird Field Guide* or some other encyclopedic resource to learn more about purple martins.
3. Find out how many of your students’ families have and maintain martin houses.
4. Encourage families to erect and maintain martin houses at home. Would the school grounds be a suitable place for a martin colony? Study what makes ideal locations for martin houses.
5. Find out if your state has a purple martin capital.
6. Find and study a purple martin arrival date map. Be on the lookout for their arrival in your zone.

Purple martin condominium in Griggsville, Illinois.

© Wikimedia Commons:Kemper66, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>. Color, lighting, and image boundaries adjusted.



A female and male purple martin.





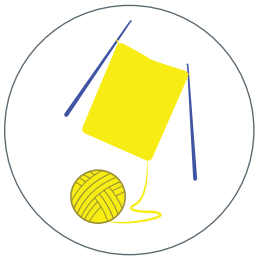
Tea and poetry is a perfect combination for dreary days.

This homeschooling classic can be adapted for the classroom if each child brings a mug and you have the facilities to boil a large pot of water. Brew and sweeten a whole pot to avoid sticky spoons and soggy tea bags everywhere. Poetry read in this atmosphere is for simple pleasure. Read limericks, a rhyming children's storybook, or an epic poem. The wonder of words in cadence will lift even the droopiest spirits.



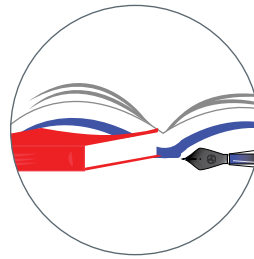
Don't forget to smile.

I remember one grim midwinter when I had heavy things on my mind, and I simply wasn't feeling it in the classroom. To remind myself, I put smiley stickers all over my planner and made a point to look into each student's face and smile genuinely every day. The atmosphere became lighter immediately, and I recognized a universal truth: if the teacher's not happy, nobody's happy.



Learn something new together.

In my seventh-grade year, a lady with the patience of a saint came to teach all the girls to crochet, and someone else taught the boys simple woodburning techniques. Learn some fresh games or a catchy song, or do a version of "Word of the Day" by picking a new word from the dictionary and exploring its meaning. Bonus points go to students who use it properly in ordinary conversation at school.



Do simple free-writing exercises in tiny non-notebooks.

We have found cute little journals at dollar stores; they should not look like regular notebooks. Give your students five minutes to write about any subject they wish, such as "The Most Important Thing in My Treehouse," or "If I Had a Hundred Dollars." After five minutes they can quit writing. Nothing is checked or graded. Generally, all it takes is one spontaneous writer sharing his paragraph for the contagion to hit the less enthusiastic writers.



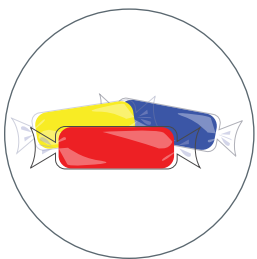
Try new books.

Read-aloud time after recess is a favorite part of the day for students and teacher. When energy is flagging, that is a great time to read a funny book or one with suspense that makes everyone beg for another chapter.

They say, "Variety is the spice of life," and they are right.

There is no need to have a clumpy porridge classroom when cinnamon and cream are available! Sometimes we object to spicing things up for lack of funds, but imagination costs nothing. Given that most of us remember best what we learned when it didn't seem like a lesson, keeping up the spirits in the classroom pays off richly in the long run. [L](#)

Source: First published as a blog post on thedockforlearning.org, February 11, 2021. Reprinted with permission from the author. Revised and adapted for *LightLines*.



Incentives are every teacher's strategic resource to combat the blahs.

I once bought a stash of tiny stuffed animals from a party supply store, propped them all around my classroom, and gave the students a list of challenges diverse enough that everybody had a chance, even if they weren't academic stars. By the end of February, all of them had achieved at least one prize.

Dorcas Peight is a recent transplant from the mountains of south-central Pennsylvania to the northwestern village of Conneaut Lake. She has been teaching for fifteen years, two in traditional school settings and the rest as a homeschooling mother of five. Her philosophy of education tends toward teaching a love of reading as an easy way to introduce a love of learning for a lifetime. She enjoys working as a potter for a creative outlet in her spare time, and writing as a way to process life.

Continued from page 5.

font. Encourage students to sketch their initials or names. (Note: the colonial Mennonite teacher Christopher Dock made Fraktur certificates for his students.)



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Westward Expansion

Lewis and Clark journal entries Have students sketch a large animal on a piece of paper. Have students write facts about the animal all around the drawing.

The Industrial Revolution

2 x 4 weaving looms Have someone make simple looms by attaching two 6-inch lengths of a 2 x 4 board to form an L. Wrap yarn around the L to make the warp, making a triangle shape when viewed sideways. Use another color to weave over and under the first pieces of yarn.

© Deana Swanson



The Civil War



© Deana Swanson

Construction paper Underground Railroad quilt Put students into groups or have each student make a different square from the quilt pattern using different colors of construction paper and scissors. Assemble the finished squares and discuss what each square meant for the escaping slaves.

Buildings and Architecture

Popsicle stick buildings (log cabins, the Washington Monument, etc.) – Give each group of students about 200 popsicle sticks, a glue gun (discuss safety issues), and a picture of the building they are to make. Encourage them to use rulers and ratios to get the correct proportions, writing the numbers on the photos.

Involving students in hands-on projects takes them beyond the history textbooks and directly involves them in what they are studying. They will understand and remember history much better if given the opportunity to experience it for themselves. Try it!

Note: I have compiled a list of over fifty hands-on history projects grouped into American history by time periods and world history by countries. I'd be glad to share it with you. Contact me at littleflock7@gmail.com or use the contact form at www.theplainprofessors.blogspot.com. [U](#)

Deana lives with her husband Jeff (a teacher) and four of her children (two of whom are teachers also) in Terre Hill, Pennsylvania. She has taught in the classroom for twelve years and homeschooled her children for eleven years. Her favorite leisure activities are going on walks and playing board games with her family.

What 1 Corinthians 13 Means for Me as a Teacher | Angela Yoder

- 1 Though I speak with the clarity of a great teacher and wise person, and have not charity, I am become as a rattling mouth or an annoying buzzer.
- 2 And though I have the gift of teaching, and understand all problems and all academics, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains out of others' classrooms, and have not charity, I am nothing.
- 3 And though I bestow all my energies to feed my students' developing minds, and though I burn out physically, mentally, and emotionally, and have not charity, it doesn't profit me anything.
- 4 Charity suffereth long—even when it seems like my students should have gotten it; and is kind—even when it doesn't seem like other people are; charity doesn't envy the teacher with straight A students; charity does not boast about itself, and doesn't try to put on a facade for the classroom.
- 5 Does not behave itself indecently, seeketh not her own profit; it's not easily perturbed, thinking no evil of students, parents, co-teachers, and school board;
- 6 Doesn't rejoice when wrong has been done, but rejoices when it is made right;
- 7 Beareth all things—even the student who wiggles or fiddles; believeth all things—even when it doesn't see the fulfillment of a promise from God; hopeth all things—even in a situation that doesn't seem to improve; endureth all things—even reprimands and pressures by some who don't fully understand the situation.
- 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be predictions, they shall fail; whether there be great teachers, they shall cease; whether there is great knowledge, it shall vanish away.
- 9 For we know in part, and we teach in part.
- 10 But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.
- 11 When I was a student, I spoke as a student, I understood as a student, I thought as a student: but when I became a teacher, I put away student-ish things.
- 12 For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.
- 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. [u](#)

Angela is a teacher from Minerva, Ohio. She added, "As a first-year teacher, I felt inspired to write out 1 Corinthians 13 as what it meant for me in the situations I found in teaching. If it can inspire and encourage teachers, I want to share it."



Bird Day, May 4

Bird Day was begun by Charles Babcock, the Oil City, Pennsylvania, superintendent of schools, in 1894. Babcock promoted Bird Day especially for children, with the goal of telling about the importance of conserva-

tion of various bird species and improving their environment with birdhouses. It is observed in many countries but is not as popular in the United States as National Bird Day on January 5.



Birding (bird-watching) is a great way to engage children with God's creation the fifth day—"every winged fowl after his kind." Teachers can encourage students to record dates of species observed and report back periodically. Peterson field guides (available from Christian Light) and binoculars are big helps to the budding birder.

Jumping Ship

Enrollment in public charter schools increased by 7.1 percent in the United States between the 2019-20 school year and the 2020-21 school year. That's a jump of about 240,000 students. During the same period, regular public school enrollment dropped 3.3 percent—a whopping 1.5 million students. Some of this drop was due to parents' delay in enrolling their children in kindergarten. Enrollment in private schools, church schools, and homeschools also increased substantially.

Source: [axios.com](https://www.axios.com), [cato.org](https://www.cato.org)

Christopher Dock, 1698-1771, on stopping chattering and restoring silence

This is for children the hardest lesson . . . But it is impossible among the children in school to teach anything proper or implant anything for improvement unless speech has its time, and silence also has its time . . . First, when the lesson is assigned they learn it . . . by repeating it aloud. To keep them all learning I walk about in the room until I think they have had enough time to learn their lesson then I strike the blackboard with my rod and everyone suddenly becomes quiet. The first one then begins to recite. During this time one of the monitors [student

assistants] who has been thus appointed must stand on a bench or other elevated place in the room so that he has a view of all and report by first and last names all who talk or study aloud or do anything else that is forbidden and then write the names down . . . When the recitation is finished, if one wishes to take no further steps, the matter is forgotten. But if it happens several times and one feels they regard it lightly, then those reported by the monitor must step forward and take their places one after the other on the punishment bench. Then they are given their choice, whether they prefer to wear the yoke or receive a rap on the hand. They seldom choose a yoke but usually hold out their hands to the rod.

Source: Pages 291, 292, *Christopher Dock, Colonial Schoolmaster*, Gerald Studer, Herald Press

Write for LightLines

Something inspirational on your mind? Maybe you experienced an *Aha!* moment. Perhaps you want to share about a certain teacher's influence on your life—or about a student who changed your outlook. Write a book review or recommendation. You could send in answers (or questions) for "Ask Another." Did a certain project turn out well (or not so well)? Have a story that teaches a lesson? Whatever you have, submit it to *LightLines*. We'll be glad to consider it for publication. Mailing information is on the back page.

Conservative Anabaptist School Board Institute (CASBI)

School board members, principals, ministers, and anyone involved with the overall planning and operation of our Christian day schools is invited to attend CASBI 2022. The event is sponsored by Horizon Mennonite School, 14215 Cearfoss Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740. The dates are Friday, March 4 and Saturday, March 5.

Direct any questions or comments to someone on the planning committee:

- Victor Ebersole 540-532-0127
- Linford Horst 301-491-0435
- Anthony Hurst 484-512-0780
- Jonas Sauder 717-285-3495
- Randall Yoder 540-309-6901

You may also email questions, suggestions, or requests to be put onto the mailing list to casbinstitute@gmail.com. Also look for information at <https://casbi.info>.



“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@christianlight.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



Question: How can teachers assure that students learn math facts, excel at speed drills, memorize weights and measures, etc.? Do you encourage or discourage counting on fingers? Why? Is requiring students to complete mastery drills ever a waste of time? What has worked for you?



For most people it takes practice, practice, and more practice until facts, formulas, etc., are available for quick recall. It is vital that teachers take the time to thoroughly drill the facts when they are taught and continue to review and drill.

Keep drill and review fun and lively. Play flash-card games. Set a timer for several minutes and see how many cards can be answered in the set time, either as individuals trying to better their record or as a group with students taking turns answering the card and keeping track of how many they said for a group total. Spice it up by splitting the students into two fairly evenly matched groups and have the groups compete. Answering flash cards chorally is a good way to get every student involved. Don't let students “plod” through the cards.

Another type of drill is recitation. First grade has “triangle” facts where the three numbers of a set of coordinating facts are given, which produce two addition and two subtraction facts. These four facts can be chanted quickly and rhythmically, and motions can be added. For addition and subtraction facts in the teens, recite the triplets (11, 9, 2; 11, 8, 3; 11, 7, 4; 11, 6, 5) and clap for the teen number and snap for the other two.

Show students how adding/subtracting 1 or 2 are the same as counting forward or backward. Sing songs for the multiplication tables. Make up stories for the harder facts.

Do extra written fact-practice work. Most students in the first four or five grades can use more basic fact practice than they get in their LightUnits. Use the speed drills. Adjust the given times to match the abilities of the students if necessary.

Using fingers to do math facts? I allow it and sometimes encourage it for students who have difficulty visualizing amounts. However, my goal is to do enough practice and drill that using their fingers becomes obsolete. Watch out for the child who uses his fingers without thinking (such as using fingers to add one) and work to break him of that habit.

- Carolyn Martin, first grade teacher

Next question: *What is the rationale for your students' restroom use policy? When? how often? penalties? differences with age? (School reps observe significant differences from school to school.)*

Please send your responses to LightLines by May 15, 2022.  Answers will appear in the Fall 2022 issue of LightLines.

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