

SCHOOL LIGHT LINES



CHRISTIAN LIGHT
EDUCATION



Fall 2023 | Volume 44 | Number 1

Inspiration for Teachers From Bible Characters

Ezra | Deana Swanson

I get inspired every time I read Nehemiah 8:5-8, for several reasons. First, Ezra worshipped God, which teachers should do every morning before entering their classrooms.

“Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: and Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and **they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground**” (verses 5, 6).

Verse 7 gives us our duty in a nutshell:

Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, **caused the people to understand the law:** and the people stood in their place.

“Cause the people [students] to understand.” That’s our main job—to present the material well and to explain it so that

students can understand it. This is one reason we should care passionately about teaching the subject matter well.

Notice that there are thirteen teachers named, plus all the Levites. We are not in this alone. We have many other teachers working either alongside us or working toward the same goal, wherever God has placed them.

Here’s another bonus nugget: “The people [students] stood in their place.” They were behaving well and not being distracting. There is some classroom management in that verse.

Verse 8 is gold:

“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

They (the teachers and Levites) read distinctly. The word *distinctly* means “marking as separate or different: serving to distinguish,” or “having or giving an uncommon and appealing quality: having or giving style or distinction.” They were teaching in a different way, with uncommon or appealing qualities. That’s something teachers should try to do—teach in an appealing way



Challenges and Changes at Christian Light

A peek behind the curtain at the day-to-day of Christian Light.
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The Equilateral Teacher


Let’s explore a balanced approach to teaching.
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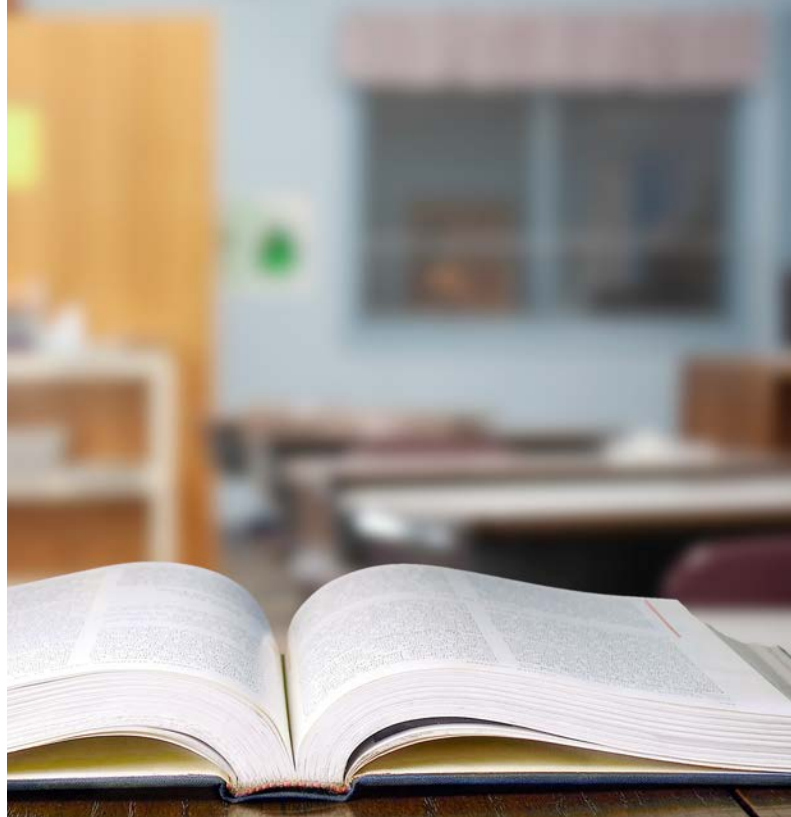
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so that students will be intrigued and will discover that learning is enjoyable and interesting.

The last part of the verse explains that the teachers caused the people to understand what they were hearing from the book of God's law. They explained it so well that the people repented of their sin of not following God's law and vowed to follow it from that time on. The teaching and understanding of God's Word had a direct effect on their behavior.

With God's help, may our teaching do this as well. 

Deana lives in Terre Hill, Pennsylvania, with her husband Jeff (a teacher) and three of her five children (one of whom is a teacher also). She taught in classrooms for fourteen years and homeschooled her children for eleven years. She is currently teaching at Maple Grove Mennonite School. Her favorite leisure activities are reading, writing, and playing board games with her family.



Absent Albatross

In April 2017 we wrote about “Wisdom,” a beloved Layson Albatross, who at sixty-six years old was the oldest known bird in the world. At seventy-one years of age this remarkable bird was spotted at Midway Atoll, the annual nesting site, on Thanksgiving Day 2022 but without her mate, Akeakamai (“seeker of wisdom”). By December 9 she was nowhere to be seen. Is she still alive?

Interesting fact—Layson Albatrosses usually spend July through October skimming food off the surface of the ocean. They don't usually touch land until November when they migrate to Midway Atoll to mate and lay eggs.

Source: <https://www.fws.gov/story/2022-12/wisdom-worlds-oldest-known-wild-bird-returns-midway-atoll>

John Klavitt/U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Public Domain



The End of Corporal Punishment?

President Biden's secretary of education, Miguel Cardona, released a letter calling for the end of corporal punishment in U.S. schools. The “dear colleague” letter was sent to governors, chief state school officers, and other school leaders nationwide on March 24 and called for the end of all corporal punishment. “It's unacceptable that corporal punishment remains legally permissible in at least 23 states. Our children urgently need their schools to raise the bar for supporting their mental health and well-being,” Cardona wrote.

Source: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/schools-must-stop-paddling-spanking-students-biden-education-secretary-says>

Curriculum Updates

Associated with this issue of LightLines is the annual Christian Light curriculum update. See what's new and what's coming. Also included is the notice of annual Christian Light fall workshops. Make plans now to attend one.

“I-ness”

I'm me and my I-ness is special to me,
Minus my I-ness I'd be just like you,
And you'd be like me and that's nothing new.
You-ness looks good but only on you.
Cause you-ness won't fit where I-ness should be.
My I-ness looks great, but only on me.

—Calvin Miller

Teacher, be your best yourself. Learn from—but don't try to be—another teacher.

Challenges and Changes at Christian Light | Christian Light Staff

Students sometimes sigh as they face a new lesson in their LightUnits. Without question, completing a lesson can be hard work, but students aren't the only people who sweat over schoolbooks. Students don't know about the amount of work that went into creating, printing, and shipping those lessons.

Penciling in answers is the end of a long process in which many people contribute their energy and skills (and sometimes sighs) to bring quality Christian curriculum to your school. Think about the process this way:

- A team of people write and edit and illustrate the material to be printed in the books.
- Several times a month truckloads of paper from Quebec arrive at Christian Light's facility and are unloaded.

- Someone operates the equipment that turns that paper into LightUnits and Teacher's Guides. Someone then needs to sort and stack the books in the warehouse.
- Someone takes your school's order and enters it into the system.
- Employees pull those books off the shelf and pack them for shipment to your school.
- Other people maintain the equipment and facilities, purchase supplies, pay the employees, and handle the other logistics associated with running an organization.

Though their day-to-day responsibilities are different, Christian Light employees are coworkers with teachers in the task of educating the next generation.





Following are some logistical changes and challenges Christian Light employees have faced in recent years.

Paper Challenges

Unlike most publishers, Christian Light operates its own printing operation. Each year we purchase about six hundred tons of paper, truckloads of hefty rolls that weigh one thousand pounds each. In the last few years, paper has been both less available and more expensive.

New Software

In February 2023 we switched to a new business management software. While the purpose of the change was to increase efficiency and capabilities, the transition has consumed thousands of hours and has been more painful than expected.

New Building

In September our warehouse and shipping operations moved into a new 24,000 square-foot fulfillment center. Our Order Department moved into an upstairs office area in the new building, and its previous home will be converted into space for curriculum development use.

New Presses

In 2022 we installed a digital press for more flexibility and cost savings on lower quantities. The digital press requires minimal operator time and can run outside regular work hours with no operator present.

This year we replaced a worn-out offset press with a larger and more efficient one. The newer press can output over 100,000 sheets per day, printing mostly LightUnit workbooks.



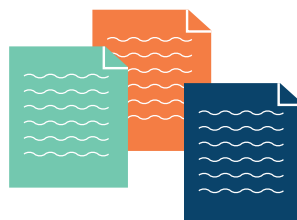


“This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes”
(Psalm 118:23). From developing curriculum to producing
curriculum to processing orders to teaching the curriculum

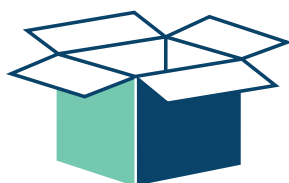
in hundreds of classrooms to thousands of students, we
are all coworkers in God’s marvelous work. This is an
amazing thought. [u](#)



1,192
SCHOOLS
SERVED



26,800,000
PRESS SHEETS PRINTED

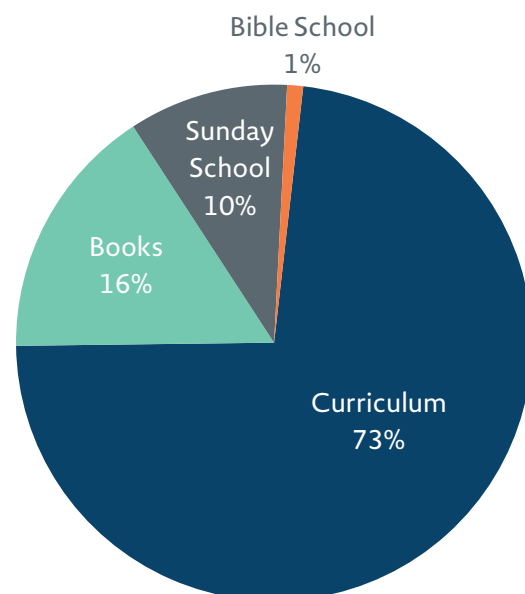


701
MOST ORDERS
PROCESSED IN ONE DAY



28
CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR
WORKSHOPS

held in 15 states and 5 provinces,
with around 3,000 attendees



SALES BY CATEGORY

2022 miscellaneous STATISTICS

Summer of the Spiders | Evalina Overholt

What are they doing? I had just stepped out the back door and saw my husband and two children hunched over in the garden, peering into a tangle of tomato branches. Then they moved forward and stared at another spot.

My curiosity got the best of me. “What are you all doing?” I hollered.

My husband looked up. “Watching spiders,” he called back.

Watching spiders? I knew we had lots of garden spiders, but I didn’t pay much attention to them. If I ran into one of their webs, I merely brushed the sticky strands from my face and kept going. Sometimes I even felt frustrated at the large webs fastened to our house and littering my flower beds.

But if this was as fascinating as they made it appear, I wanted to be in on the action. I hurried across the yard. “Watch, Mama!” my five-year-old squealed as I neared them. He pointed excitedly to an immense circular web, where a grasshopper thrashed against the sticky strands restraining it. The spider, frightened by all the commotion, was hastily retreating to the top of its web.

“Too much noise,” my husband said. His hand lunged forward and grabbed another grasshopper feasting on a tomato plant. “Quiet now,” he instructed the children as he tossed it

into the middle of a different web. Immediately, a black and yellow spider raced to the grasshopper and made several darts at it. Was it injecting venom? Next, the spider began circling the grasshopper, wrapping it securely with silken threads until it resembled a pointy, twitching cocoon. After the grasshopper was well-wrapped, the spider scurried to another part of its web, and waited quietly.

“Amazing!” I whispered. Grasshoppers riddled our garden and chewed on my precious tomatoes; any creature that helped to deplete their population was a hero in my opinion.

For the rest of the summer, I tried to treat those spider webs with respect. I didn’t enjoy running into the sticky strands when I picked tomatoes, but I tried to give the spiders plenty of space and leave their webs as undisturbed as possible. They had important work to do!

My fascination for these spiders grew. I did some reading about them and discovered some more interesting things.

For one, our garden spiders were probably eating the inside portion of their webs at night, and then spinning new sections. Why? It is probable that those threads the spider consumes may contain tiny, nutritious bits of insects and organic matter.

An egg sac



Hundreds of tiny eggs inside their sac



So many spiderlings!



And what about the heavy, silk zigzag “sewed” onto their webs? I learned that this zigzag is called a stabilimentum. Scientists aren’t certain about its function, but it could be that it attracts insects, helps camouflage the spider, or warns birds who may otherwise not see the web and fly into it. This zigzag explains why the garden spider is sometimes called the writing spider or the zigzag spider.

Toward the end of the summer, we started finding silk egg sacs here and there on the tomato plants. The children and I wanted to know what spider eggs looked like, so we pulled one sac off and tore through the tough fibers. Inside we found hundreds of tiny yellow eggs.

After autumn’s chill touched the air, I hunted down another egg sac, curious to know if our spider friends’ eggs were hatching. Sure enough! This time when I tore open the sac, an army of tiny spiders swarmed out. Next year’s grasshoppers would have a brand-new generation of spiders to contend with.

I had discovered in my research, that while the spiderlings often hatch in late summer or fall, in colder climates they stay inside the sac in a dormant stage until the warmth of spring signals them out. A few of the spiderlings stay close to where they hatched, but many of them let out a strand of silk that catches in the breeze and carries them away to new homes, just like Charlotte’s children in *Charlotte’s Web*. I hope I get to witness that, next spring.

A garden spider with its signature zig zag design on the center of the web



Do you think you could find garden spiders in your backyard? If you live anywhere from Canada to Costa Rica, chances are that, yes, you probably could during the summer—unless you live in the Canadian Great Basin or in the Rocky Mountains, where the garden spider is not commonly seen.

If you do find one, I hope you can watch it wrap up an insect, observe the creativity of its web, and be amazed. [📺](#)

Sources: https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Argiope_aurantia/
<https://www.nwf.org/Home/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Invertebrates/Yellow-Garden-Spider>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argiope_aurantia

Evalina and her husband Derek are both former teachers. These days they try to teach their young children proper grammar, point out constellations, and observe birds and bugs from their home in northeast Texas.

Waiting to consume its prey



Wrapping up a grasshopper



I had a remarkably successful first quarter to my worst year of teaching. For several years, I had watched “that grade of boys.” These energetic and competitive boys created history at church and school. Their lower grades went reasonably well; in fact, some years they thrived. Sixth and seventh grade didn’t go the best for them, but I was reasonably confident that with my experience, I could duplicate their successful years.

The surface calm during the first quarter hid a growing turbulence. Then the waves started rising, and we went into full emergency mode. What went wrong? In that calm first quarter, I had violated a principle of teaching. Effective teachers balance three aspects of teaching: students, content, and presentation.

A perfect teacher would equally balance the three aspects. Jesus did; He said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” The Truth corresponds to *content*, the Life to *students*, and the Way to *presentation*. Jesus’ pupils heard Him gladly as He taught with authority the scribes did not have.

As a human, Jesus had the perfect trinity of Way, Truth, and Life. Adam’s fall had skewed that trinity in mankind. We all, including teachers, are scalene triangles. A slightly skewed triangle can still be solid, but if one side is skewed too long, it topples. In my worst year of teaching, I made a conscious effort to be student-focused, partly to correct a perceived deficiency in my teaching that some parents had pointed out. But I overcorrected.

Let’s consider these focuses and how we could grow in any weaknesses. I call them *focuses* because they aren’t

necessarily strengths or weaknesses. A teacher can focus on one, and it still be his weakness.

Presentation

Presentation-focused teachers enrapture the class with stories, dramatic readings, experiments, PowerPoint presentations, and interactive classes. They rarely remind students to pay attention. Their students enjoy a class on cellular respiration as much as one on the sinking of the *Titanic*.

Students enjoy presentation-focused teachers, but eventually the theatrics wear thin. Students notice that sometimes facts don’t line up. When corrected, their teacher may say, “Don’t let facts get in the way of a good story.” Sometimes students get frustrated when teachers throw in irrelevant jokes and stories. Occasionally a board member or principal raises an eyebrow at the stories that come home; other times they prod the teacher to “keep classes a little more focused.”

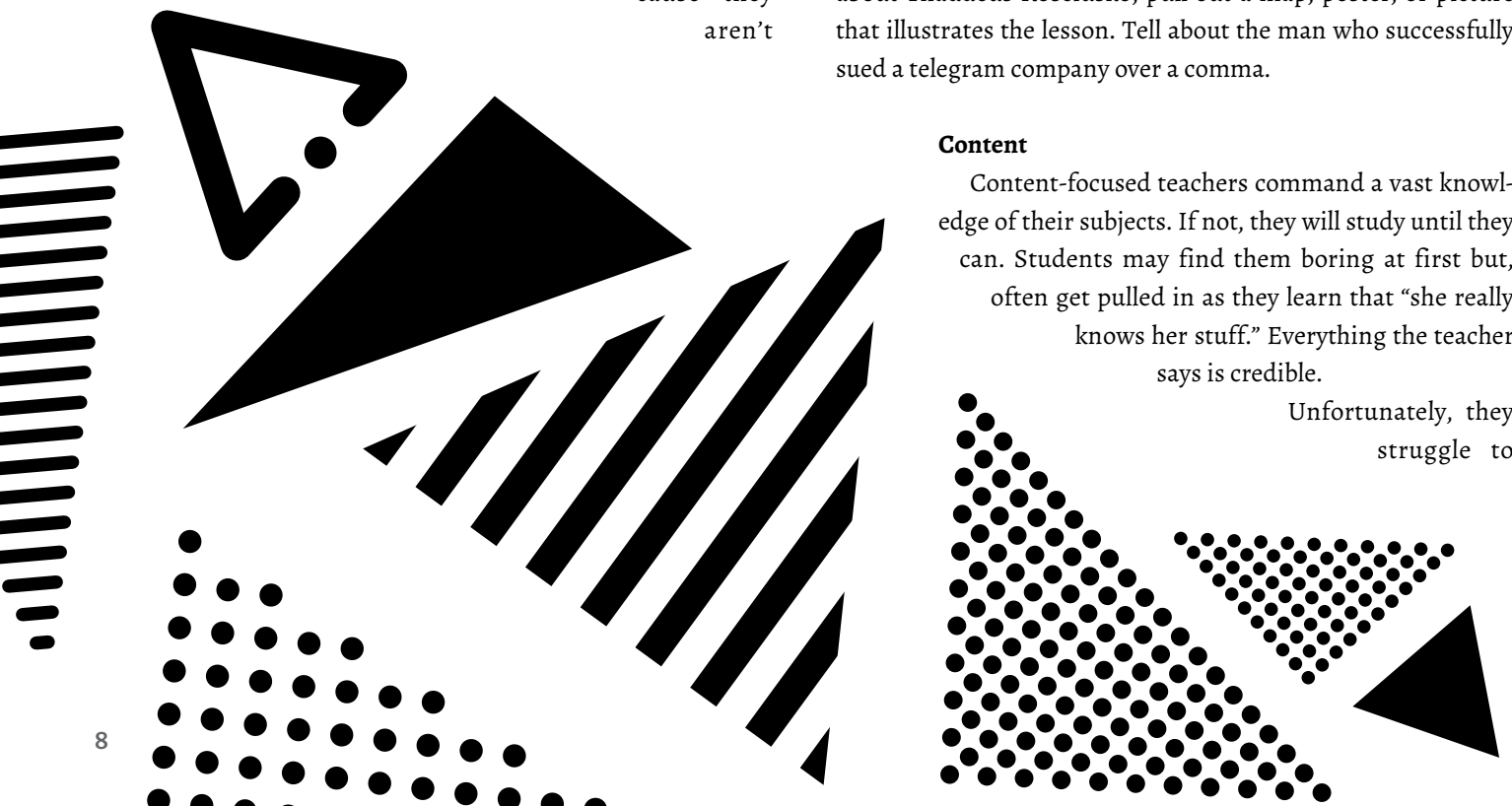
If you are presentation-focused, focus on the lesson objectives. An occasional bunnytrail is like a well-deserved piece of candy, but don’t serve a meal of candy. Students lose respect for an over-the-top or long-winded, full-of-himself teacher whom they call Mr. Windbag behind his back. Ask what are the lesson objectives and how can I best reach them? Use humor like salt—add a dash for flavor.

If your presentation is weak, identify at least one thing you can do to increase student engagement. Discover why nine-banded armadillos always have quadruplets, find a good story about Thaddeus Kosciusko, pull out a map, poster, or picture that illustrates the lesson. Tell about the man who successfully sued a telegram company over a comma.

Content

Content-focused teachers command a vast knowledge of their subjects. If not, they will study until they can. Students may find them boring at first but, often get pulled in as they learn that “she really knows her stuff.” Everything the teacher says is credible.

Unfortunately, they struggle to



understand that some students are not enthralled to know that “Wadis are the North African Arabic equivalent of the Latin American *arroyo*.” Because they think *I’ve been called to teach, not tell stories*, they can squelch students’ natural interest in a subject. When a bored student is unable to complete their lesson, the teacher can become frustrated. “Weren’t you listening in class?” This teacher may be so enthralled by the physics of rocket launchers that she misses Ben’s real-time application of those laws as he launches spitballs. Content-heavy teachers forget the children need child-sized bites of information.

If you are content-heavy, tone back the outside information you bring to class. Focus on what the students need to know; minimize the rest. Break down big processes into simple steps. Watch for signs of confusion, boredom, or apathy. Don’t blame students for lack of interest; gain helpful feedback from them.

If content is your weak point, read broadly and study more. Keep your classes factual rather than speculative. If you don’t know it, research it.

Student

Student-focused teachers are often high-impact. Years later, students will remember the way “Miss Edris made me *feel*.” This teacher loves to think about what students will become. Class discussion flows. Students freely share their weekend plans with this teacher. This teacher’s motto is “They don’t care how much you know till they know how much you care.”

However, students soon learn to manipulate these teachers. They reward or punish by giving and withholding emotional carrots that these teachers sometimes crave. Some learn that homework can be reduced by beginning a distracting class discussion.

If you are a student-focused teacher, consider your motives. Are they unselfish? Teachers can develop unhealthy attachments to students to compensate for unmet emotional needs. Write a list of ways students use emotions to manipulate you and prepare a response. Save unnecessary class discussion for lunchtime.

If you have a hard time relating to students, try visualizing yourself at their age. Create opportunities to engage with them. I shake every boy’s hand each day, usually first thing in the morning. If he’s looking glum, I squeeze a little harder and wink at him. Prepare questions to ask students. Ask the girls about their macrame project. Smile at the students.

The Core

If you aren’t sure what your focus is, think back to a recent presentation you really enjoyed. What was it that you liked? We tend to enjoy speakers who share our focus. Ask the principal, a

God designed the body of Christ so that members’ strengths and weaknesses compensate and complement each other.


board member, or people who know you well, “Which of these is my focus? Am I off-balance? How does that show up?” My mother had an instant answer when I asked her the question!

But if we stop here, we are missing something. The triangle is empty. Its core is missing and therefore is a weak, hollow triangle. What is the core?

The core is a teacher’s character. One of the most effective teachers in my life was my seventh-grade teacher. It was his first year of teaching, his presentation wasn’t that good, he didn’t know the content well, and didn’t excel in relating to students. But I completely respected and admired him. I knew I wanted to be like him.

We’ve discussed technique a lot. Is tackling an unbalanced triangle with improved techniques the best we can do? No, by growing in the Way, Truth, and Life—by growing in the image of Christ—we become a more whole person, and the triangle begins to balance itself.

We will always skew a little scalene. God designed the body of Christ so that members’ strengths and weaknesses compensate and complement each other. Don’t be jealous of another teacher’s strengths. Grow from where you are. God has a place for you and them.

And about my worst year of teaching—despite my mistakes and the difficulties, God redeemed that year. I learned important lessons about teaching, humility, and persevering in difficulty. Several students have called that year a formative year in their lives. We work in weakness. Despite our weaknesses and imbalance, God works. Press on. 

In addition to his full-time job as a father to five sons, Davin runs a small farm to support his teaching habit that he has engaged in over the last fourteen years. He and his wife Katelyn live in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, on a farm that was first bought by his ancestors in 1866. When he doesn’t know what else to do, he writes. He recently authored a personal finance course for Christian Light.

Names have been changed to respect privacy.

Along a dusty village street, nestled among Mennonite homes and farmland, sits Reinland School in Cuauhtémoc, Mexico.

In the 2012-2013 term, Abram was a timid first grader with big brown eyes and a sober countenance. The scribbles on his page bore little resemblance to the letters he was supposed to copy. The teacher understood that this was not carelessness, but the symptoms of a child who needed help.

The local community still teetered on the edge of its deeply embedded belief that children who learned well are smart, while those who do not are dumb (*Dummkopf*) or lazy (*fauler esel*). When Teacher Greta spoke with the principal, he did not believe Abram had a learning problem. He said the boy was smart and could do it if he tried harder.

Thankfully, after the principal witnessed the lad's effort to do things beyond his ability, he agreed that Abram needed tutoring. I spent one-on-one time teaching the main subjects, although the first-grade room was still his homeroom.

His arithmetic required much drawing. Lines and angles can do funny things for people with dyslexia, but their thoughts and ideas are interesting. Some of Abram's pictures were creative, such as a triangular car, while others were unusual to the point of needing interpretation.

A visitor watched him write *mama* on the board, but the word kept turning out backward. "You have to try very hard," she chided.

"He is trying," I assured her. This visitor—the dear supportive wife of the board chairman—was being initiated into the world of learning differences. She should have seen his smiley face drawing, which consisted of two beady eyes beneath a "rainbow."

Abram enjoyed school. He was a careful worker who glowed over his achievements and looked crestfallen over his failures. Thanks to Teacher Greta and a principal who was willing to learn, Abram was allowed to blossom.

Some days he brought me gifts—a lone sunflower seed he found in his pocket, the plastic measuring cup from a medicine bottle, candy, the bottom part of a key chain, or a cap from a Coke bottle. Part of the gift was his shining eyes and smile, and the unspoken message behind them.

One time he pulled a wad of paper from his pocket. I unfolded a creation resembling a failed snowflake-making attempt, and studied what he had drawn. Creativity impresses me, and so does original art; yet I was at a loss to know what I was seeing. Risking impoliteness, I asked what it was.

"You have to know that for yourself," he said.

Summoning my imaginative forces, I guessed, "*Ein auto*" (a car).

He smilingly assured me that I was correct, and I thought I had just scraped by. But then I had a similar experience with a picture on the other side, and something clicked. My curiosity took over, and I gently asked if *he* still remembered what he had drawn. He shook his head no. I assured him it was okay not to remember. But it must have been awkward not to recognize his own drawings; maybe I should not have asked.

Term 2013-2014 brought little Johan, with round blue eyes that easily lit with joy or shimmered with tears. I liked the way he bunched up his little, stand-out ears when he was thinking. For the assignments on which Abram had drawn varied artwork, this placid boy drew suns. When he had to draw four items in a box, four suns appeared with rays of light streaking in all directions. "Draw seven items" brought forth seven suns, and so on. One page had thirty suns drawn on it. One day in a burst of creativity, he drew one pig in the midst of all the sunshine. In Plattdeutsch, he smilingly told me, "*Dot's un Schween*" (There's a pig).

The sunshine phase faded, and he drew long-stemmed flowers with a drip-line attached to each plant and a hose attached to a water faucet. Now *that* was creative! But he drew this as consistently as he had drawn sunshine. I think efficiency was his strong point.

Abram was back in my room a lot that term, along with two of his classmates—Gerhard and Wilhelm. Gerhard, older than the other second graders and big for his age, had rosy cheeks, a bright smile, and a quick temper. When the children waited in line, if the person in front of Gerhard was daydreaming instead of moving with the flow, that person could expect a push.

We had a reward system using Semple Math's place-value kit, and the boys worked toward a goal together. Having good manners was one of the things rewarded. Wilhelm, laid back and distracted, leisurely participated in this. Abram cared about earning points. But it was Gerhard who turned on the charm and energized the rest to enter into the spirit of competitive kindness.

Gerhard gallantly pulled out my chair when he saw opportunity. He opened the doors for others. He was quick to say, "Thank you," even for work assignments. When coming in late after recess, he explained in a syrupy voice, "Excuse me that I came in so late. I wanted to drink water first." His face glowed as he smiled at me.

One day they could each choose a pen as a prize. Since the pens were different colors, I pulled names to decide who could pick first. From past experience, I feared some complaints or hurt feelings. I told them, "In ten years from now, you may not remember the pen. But it could be that you will have a habit of being joyful, even when things don't go your way."

They took it to heart. Abram and Gerhard made a show of acting

delighted that Wilhelm got to pick first. Abram laughed (a strained laugh) when it was clear that he would be last. Gerhard, second to last, turned to Abram and asked, "Which color do you want?"

"Blue!" Abram said.

"Okay," Gerhard said. "Then I'll take the black one." Everyone was pleased, and the mood was one of celebration.

All the boys liked the new eraser for the dry-erase board, and tried to claim it—or complained that they could never get a turn with it. When I added pesos to the place-value kit because someone had left the new eraser for others, it became popular to choose the old eraser. One day Abram sadly told me that he never gets a chance to pick the old one first.

As the term passed, the boys gained confidence that reached beyond academics. They knew that not only their performance but also their *presence* counted. After I was absent for a while, I told them, "I *missed* you." Gerhard promptly said, "I *knew* that you would."

Abram, Gerhard, Wilhelm, and Johan are ordinary boys, yet to me they are extraordinary because of our relationship. I believe a healthy relationship with your students allows them to blossom and gives them confidence. Notice your students—not just what they can do, but what they dream of doing, and not only their

papers, but also their hearts. Remember to delight in *who they are*. They can tell whether you enjoy their presence or not.

When a child feels safe and delighted-in, the foundation for learning and growing has been laid. In this environment they will be free to blossom to the best of their ability.

On days when progress is slow or nonexistent, I want you to remember that if your student felt understood and cherished that day, you will have built well. It is important to stimulate their minds, to engage them in learning, and to do your part to make them successful; yet, at the end of the day, what they need most of all is to feel that they are valued. ■

Source: Originally published in *Special Education Bulletin*, Fall 2022 issue.
Reprinted with permission.

Martha Ann lives in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, and is employed by Shepherd's Pathway as a mentor for children and teens. In her years as a tutor, both in Pennsylvania and Mexico, she worked with a variety of learning challenges and emotional needs. She is grateful to all teachers, tutors, and anyone else who takes time to encourage a child.

Spicing It Up

Tips, ideas, and techniques to counter bland, lack-luster, and dull teaching

I enjoy spice cookies. Yum-mm—the cinnamon, cloves, and ginger. My mouth waters at the thought of them. But suppose the baker would neglect to add the spices to a batch of cookies. Think you'd enjoy those bland flour munchies? They'd hold the same nutritional value, but there would be no taste appeal.

Our goal in Spicing It Up is to offer ideas for spicing up your classroom and teaching so your students don't have to munch on "bland flour munchies." School may not always be fun but shouldn't it be tasteful? Interesting? Engaging?

Please send us the recipe for your favorite "spice cookies," i.e. your tips, ideas, and techniques for spicing up your classroom and teaching. Send to lightlines@christian-light.org or mail to LightLines, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803-1212.

Here are a few spicy ideas to get you started.

- When teaching the states or provinces and capitals, draw its outline on the basketball court or gym floor (or assign students to do it). Add the major cities, the capital, and major highways. You could label the major regions and landforms. Then tell the class at lunchtime, "Would you like to go to Wyoming for lunch? Yes? Okay! Laramie, you may lead the way to the city that bears your name."
- Help students to delight in the dictionary and increase their vocabulary. For example, instruct them to look up "snollygoster" and give its definition before dismissing to first break. Require them to use "snollygoster" in a sentence before last break.



"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

Advice for New Teachers

In seven words or less, share advice, lessons you've learned, or words of wisdom for new teachers. – From Fall 2023 LightLines

"Give clear directions. Make expectations clear."

"Ask. Heed the advice of experienced teachers."

"Communicate regularly with parents."

"Made a rule? Keep it!"

"Contact parents soon."

"Plan ahead."

"Compliment sincerely."

"Be consistent, kind, and pleasant. Be yourself."

"Talk to a trusted mentor every week."

"Pray for wisdom every day."

"Invest in your students."

"Be kind, understanding, enthusiastic, and cheerful daily."

"Plan your work and work your plan."

"Create a quiet classroom environment."

"Read the preface and appendices in guidebooks."

"Have personal devotions daily."

"Take one day at a time."

"Ask questions. Research. Take breaks from schoolwork."

"Procedures and routine create structure and security."

"Use teacher guides when available."

Next question: I am searching for tips to help students who already struggle with reading comprehension to solve two-step story problems in math. –*Teacher in Tennessee*

Please respond by October 10, 2023. We'll print your responses in the Spring 2024 issue of LightLines. Please send responses to lightlines@christianlight.org, fax them to 540-433-8896, or mail them to LightLines, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803. [u](#)

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