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Jesus' School...

"Take My [School] Upon You, and Learn of Me" | Ken Kauffman

Did Jesus go to school, or was He educated at home? If He went to school, where was it? Nazareth? It's intriguing to imagine what kind of student He might have been and what His school experience was like. This excerpt from *Smith's Bible Dictionary* gives us a glimpse into what schools were like in Jesus' day:

The schools were in connection with the synagogues, which were found in every village of the city and land. Their idea of the value of schools may be gained from such sayings from the Talmud as "The world is preserved by the breath of the children in the schools;" "A town in which there are no schools must perish;" "Jerusalem was destroyed because the education of children was neglected." Josephus says, "Our principal care is to educate our children." . . . Maimonides thus describes a school: "The teacher sat at the head, and the pupils surrounded him as the crown the head so that everyone could see the teacher and hear his words . . . The children read aloud to acquire fluency. The number of school-hours was limited, and during the heat of the summer was only four hours . . . The chief studies were their own language and literature, the chief schoolbook the Holy Scriptures; and there were special efforts to impress lessons of morality and chastity. Besides these they studied mathematics, astronomy, and the natural sciences.

The teachers in these synagogue schools were called *rabbis*. They had more education than the average Jewish boy. Once he had the credentials, a new rabbi might invite students to his

synagogue school urging them to "take my *yoke* upon you." In this case the *yoke* was his particular body of teachings. This was literally an invitation to "take my *school* upon you . . ." The Apostle Paul, for example, took up the "yoke" of Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).

In about A.D. 30, a man named Jesus appeared on the scene. He didn't have the formal education required to be a rabbi. His followers were a ragtag bunch, likely out of sync with societal norms. Although He was not associated with a particular synagogue, He was teaching like a rabbi, and at times, like a prophet. After pronouncing woe on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, He followed it with a gentle invitation to His audience, "Come unto me . . . I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Then astoundingly (Can you imagine the head-turning?), He invited everyone to come to His school. "Take my [school] upon you, and learn of me" (11:29). Only a learned rabbi opening enrollment to his school would say something like that! Their ears tingled.

What did Jesus mean? Where was or is Jesus' school? What was or is it like? What was or is its "feel," its culture? We'll explore these questions in upcoming articles. [\[i\]](#)

Ken taught school for eight years, has served on several school boards, and has served as a Christian Light school rep for nearly eighteen years. He and his wife Barb have six children and eleven grandchildren. They recently moved to Harrisonburg, Virginia, to work in-house at Christian Light. Ken is the editor of LightLines.



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Pedagogical Moments: The Story | Carolyn Martin

Once, long ago in a land across the sea, there lived a Great Teacher. To this Great Teacher came a young man from an influential family. He sat down with those who surrounded the Great Teacher. He listened to the Great Teacher's words of authority and wisdom. The young man, like many young men before him, had a question. He asked the Great Teacher, "Sir, what must I do so that I may live in the hereafter?"

The Great Teacher turned to the young man and said, "Do you know the Law?"

The young man replied that he had been taught the Law from his boyhood.

"And what is the first part of the Law?" asked the Great Teacher.

"It is to love the Lord God with one's whole heart, mind, and strength," stated the young man. Then to further show his learning, he continued, "And the second Law is to love one's neighbor as he loves himself."

"If you truly follow these Laws," the Great Teacher replied, "you will live."

But the young man was not satisfied. He asked, "But who is my neighbor?"

The Great Teacher turned to those who listened and said, "A certain man was on a journey when he fell among thieves who took what he had and left him for dead . . ."

Why should you use a story?

The use of the story is an ancient pedagogical method. Ancient oral history was presented as story (Creation, the Fall of man). Myths of human existence are man's story version of life (The Gilgamesh Epic). Values are passed on through story (*The Iliad*). Stories connect the listener to thoughts and ideas that are greater than the simply stated fact or opinion (Aesop's fables). Stories are powerful tools you can use in your classroom.

Stories catch our attention and help us remember things. More than one Monday morning conversation in my first-grade classroom was about a story the minister told at church the day before.

Stories bring to life other places and times. They invite us to see other perspectives than our own. Stories add flesh to otherwise dry facts.

Stories pass down traditions and shape the loves in our lives.

When do you use a story?

Stories have a place in every part of the school curriculum. Some subjects, such as reading and history, are story-oriented subjects. Can you imagine trying to teach first graders to read with no story, only lists of words or facts? It is the story that first makes reading palatable and attainable. Story also has its place in math and science and more.

Story in reading and literature

Literature and reading are all about story. These subjects dissect the story and examine its content. But in all the dissection, be careful that you don't kill the story. Nothing makes reading or literature class more boring than not allowing the story to speak for itself.

Story in history

History is full of stories of real people, places, and happenings, and it is perhaps my favorite subject to study. I've found, though, that many students and teachers list history as one of their least favorite subjects. Is it because they encounter history as names, places, events, and dates to be learned devoid of the story? Blessed is the history class taught by a teacher who makes Alexander the Great and his discouraged soldiers in far-flung India live again; who goes on a pilgrimage with Mansa Musa, the richest man who has ever lived; who walks among the Native Americans as a Moravian missionary; who works in the mines or the cloth mills as a child; or who captures the terror of Londoners during the Battle of Britain.

History is an excellent class to bring in story to what is being studied. If you can't tell the story, find a story that will do it for you. Paul Harvey's *The Rest of the Story* is a book of short anecdotes that can be read. Biographies can add interesting flesh to dry-bone facts. Choose stories that bring the personal close.

Story in science

The natural world is full of stories from Creation to the James Webb telescope. But science can also be thought of as dull, dry, and uninteresting to the student who doesn't understand it. Bring the story back into the dry facts. Introduce young nature learners to the stories of Robert McClung such as *Bufo*, *the Story of a Toad*; *Tiger*, *the Story of a Swallowtail Butterfly*; and others. That is, if you can find them. Ms. Frizzle and her Magic School Bus not

Illustrations by Gustave Doré

from top

"The ship drove fast"

Daniel in the Lions' Den

Edyrn with His Lady and Dwarf
Journey to Arthur's Court

The Descent of the Spirit

only delights young students but also gives them information in a fun and interesting way. Biographies and stories of scientists add human interest.

Story in math and language

While stories about the history of math and word usage and their importance in the world can be added to the daily lesson, story is also a great way to teach and recall concepts.

When teaching simple addition and subtraction to beginners, turn the facts into stories about the students. "Andy's mother gave him five cookies and told him to give two of them to his brother. He has how many left?" The use of story involves imagination, has sensory appeal, and holds attention. Stories can also be mnemonics to aid the memory of certain facts. "For the fact family of 4, 7, and 11, Polly can go to Seven-Eleven and buy four Slurpees."

Share the story of the Penn Walking Purchase when teaching perimeter and area to fourth graders. Make up a story about Tom and the fence he needs to keep his sheep in their pen. I can still remember my algebra teacher telling us a story about her figuring a time, distant, rate problem on a recent trip. Bring the story into the class.

Language and words all have stories. In spelling class, share the story of language change, the Great Vowel Shift, and how the printing press helped freeze spelling. Once students know that knife was once pronounced *kuh-NIF-uh* (and yes, that was in English), they will know how to spell *knife*.

Humans are hardwired for story. Tap into this inherent trait to bring interest and purpose into your classes.

... And the Great Teacher turned to the young man and asked, "Which of these three was the neighbor?"

—First published on thedockforlearning.org.

Used with permission. [u](#)

Carolyn calls the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia home. She's taught first grade at Hickory Hollow Christian School in Dayton, Virginia, for over thirty years. Carolyn enjoys reading books, taking photos, and exploring history. If time travel was possible, she'd go back to twelfth-century England and the High Middle Ages, but only for a brief visit, and with the ability to take along a modern camera.





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Effectively Reaching Them While Teaching Them . . .

Connecting With the Boys Men | Davin Martin

Teenage boys demand a lot from a male teacher, but their demands often come unspoken, communicated through body language or lack of engagement. *Are you for real, or are you teaching to do your good deed? Are you a man or a hypocrite? Are you going to pull the best out of me or rub my sins in my face?* I love the challenges they throw my way even if I don't always get it right. Here are a few techniques male teachers can use to connect with their teenage male students.

Techniques for Connecting

- Around seventh or eighth grade, retire the term *boys*. Ask, “Could I have a man to bring a table up from the basement?” rather than “Could one of you boys bring a table up from the basement?”
- Every morning, greet the men at the door, shake their hand, look them in the eye, and say, “Good morning, Paul!” If Paul returns a limp dishrag shake, tell him you want “a man’s handshake”—a good connection between thumb and index finger, a manful squeeze, direct eye contact, and a slight nod of the head. That usually gets a grin and a manful handshake.
- Use as much time as practical before the bell, at recess, during lunch, and after school to talk. Ask ordinary questions about hunting, fishing, dogs, chores, anything. Make mental notes of what they say to provide questions for tomorrow.
- Do something together. More male bonding can happen in an afternoon of work or one campfire cookout than in a month of school. Schedule shop classes that you can participate in, a work project at your place, or an overnight hike.
- Conduct devotions with the men by themselves. Make these inspirational. Calling out their strengthening manhood is incredibly more effective than scolding them into manhood. Make godly masculinity, not sexuality, the main topic.
- Relate to them as you would relate to any other man, especially when female teachers or students are absent. Of course, I’m not talking about being unmannerly, crude, or doing anything that hints of impurity. But in a volleyball game of only men, you might rib a young man for a blooper more than you would if ladies were around. You might use illustrations or stories in a class that you wouldn’t use if ladies were present.

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Some things never leave you. For nine months, I watched a child struggle with the world of traditional schooling and receive so much less than he needed. At home, he would watch the street from his bedroom window and use Legos to re-create the vehicles that passed by. He drew detailed semis—all Peterbilt—and colored beautifully, but all the artistic talent in the world couldn't help him learn to read or to memorize math facts in the way that most children do.

I see myself as a child, a girl who was reading by age four and thought standardized testing was fun.

School was easy. I cried once or twice over simple mistakes because I almost never made mistakes.

But as I taught this talented but struggling child, there were times I wished for a bit of his gifts. For me, it is difficult to draw circles, music notes, *anything*; he drew lovely little notes that almost sang.

We are slowly learning that *smart* doesn't apply only to numbers and letters; yet subconsciously, we still think that test scores and reading levels show us what *smart* looks like. If I can read widely and think deeply, I am smart. If a student can barely read and counts on his fingers for basic math facts, he is not smart.

Who gets to define *smart*? The makers of intelligence tests, who are themselves flawed? In the early development of IQ testing, the average white American soldier scored a mental age of thirteen, very near the cutoff for “feeble-mindedness.” Newly arrived immigrants consistently scored much lower than Americans who were familiar with the culture the tests were developed for. IQ tests have no doubt improved since then, but then who is the one person or group who is

qualified to define intelligence among all people?

On this broken earth, children are sometimes abused and neglected, and some are born with damaged brains. Regardless, no human should ever be labeled dumb or considered of less worth. Some brilliant minds are simply without voices to let themselves be known. Others have a level of intelligence that I don't believe tests can measure.

Learn to look at *smart* in broader, varying ways. It isn't really that some people are smart and others are not; rather, there are different kinds of smart. Philip Done lists six of them in his wonderfully crafted book, *The Art of Teaching Children*: Number Smart, Word Smart, Musically Smart, Spatially Smart (playing chess, making models), Visually Smart (drawing, painting), and Body Smart (kinesthetic, athletic). Not one of those six is worth more than another. The child who can jump the farthest in Jump the River has as much intrinsic value as the child who scores near perfection on achievement tests. And until we really *know* this in our hearts, we will not be where we should be.

I will always wonder what more I could have done to help that child and will remind myself that most days, I did all I could. But there are more children. All deserve love, a chance, and the knowledge that they are valuable. [L](#)

Lori calls both Arkansas and Utah home, but Idaho also has a piece of her heart from a year of teaching first and second grade there. She is currently working in a coffee shop and tutoring on the side. She loves books, children, photography, and her view of the Wasatch Front.





13' 8"

Voyager 1
(164 AU as of
July 2024)



1.52"
Mars



Sun

1"
Earth

The heavens declare...

Spacious Space

(And a Method to Make Sense of It) | Morris Yoder

All units have been scaled such that 1 AU (astronomical unit, or the average distance from the earth to the sun) is 1". This also corresponds to 1 light-year being scaled to ≈ 1 mile.

Orbits are displayed on page at a scale of 1 AU = 1". The sun and planet sizes not shown to scale.

The orbits of Uranus and Neptune are too large to display on this spread. Uranus would be 19.19" from the Sun and Neptune would be 30.07" away.

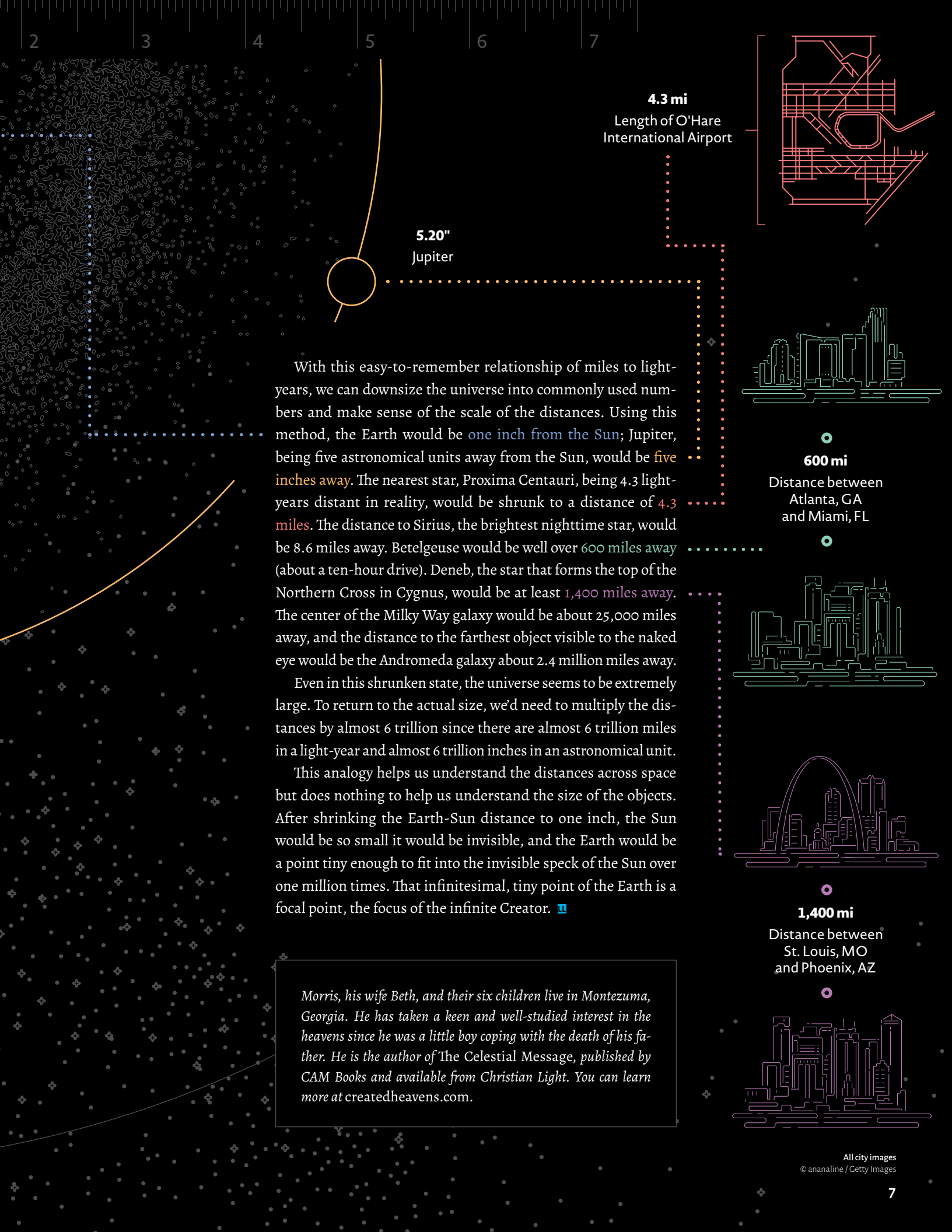


9.58"
Saturn

One hundred eighty-six miles per second sounds fast. It's a speed fast enough to circle the Earth over seven times in one second. It's also the speed of light. Six trillion miles per year describes about the same speed, but it's a lot harder to comprehend, and because of this, it doesn't really *sound* as fast. It's hard for us to crunch these big numbers. We have to shrink them down to be able to understand them.

In the same way, it's hard to comprehend the vast distance to the stars. It helps to downsize the distances to grasp the reality of the vastness of space. Large distances in space are often measured by astronomical units and light-years. The distances to the stars are usually expressed in light-years. When hearing about any distance expressed in light-years, our minds start to glaze over. Fortunately, there happens to be a unique relationship between light-years and miles that, when expressed as astronomical units and inches, allows us to bring things down to a size we can picture. There's a few more than 63,000 inches in one mile. There's also a few more than 63,000 astronomical units in one light-year. One astronomical unit is about 93 million miles, the distance from the Earth to the Sun. This allows us the simple trick of shrinking the distance from the Earth to the Sun down to one inch and at the same time having each light-year shrunk to one mile.

Asteroid Belt



4.3 mi
Length of O'Hare
International Airport

5.20"
Jupiter

With this easy-to-remember relationship of miles to light-years, we can downsize the universe into commonly used numbers and make sense of the scale of the distances. Using this method, the Earth would be **one inch from the Sun**; Jupiter, being five astronomical units away from the Sun, would be **five inches away**. The nearest star, Proxima Centauri, being 4.3 light-years distant in reality, would be shrunk to a distance of **4.3 miles**. The distance to Sirius, the brightest nighttime star, would be 8.6 miles away. Betelgeuse would be well over **600 miles away** (about a ten-hour drive). Deneb, the star that forms the top of the Northern Cross in Cygnus, would be at least **1,400 miles away**. The center of the Milky Way galaxy would be about 25,000 miles away, and the distance to the farthest object visible to the naked eye would be the Andromeda galaxy about 2.4 million miles away.

Even in this shrunk state, the universe seems to be extremely large. To return to the actual size, we'd need to multiply the distances by almost 6 trillion since there are almost 6 trillion miles in a light-year and almost 6 trillion inches in an astronomical unit.

This analogy helps us understand the distances across space but does nothing to help us understand the size of the objects. After shrinking the Earth-Sun distance to one inch, the Sun would be so small it would be invisible, and the Earth would be a point tiny enough to fit into the invisible speck of the Sun over one million times. That infinitesimal, tiny point of the Earth is a focal point, the focus of the infinite Creator. **■**

Morris, his wife Beth, and their six children live in Montezuma, Georgia. He has taken a keen and well-studied interest in the heavens since he was a little boy coping with the death of his father. He is the author of The Celestial Message, published by CAM Books and available from Christian Light. You can learn more at createdheavens.com.



600 mi
Distance between
Atlanta, GA
and Miami, FL



1,400 mi
Distance between
St. Louis, MO
and Phoenix, AZ



In which Teacher Elizabeth, an experienced teacher, writes to Teacher Julia, who is not so experienced . . .

Teacher's Eye



Dear Julia,
How does God guide us with His eye when we can't see Him looking?

Children love when someone looks. They live in their parents' gaze from birth. When those eyes look away, children call them back. "Mom, see my tower! Dad, look at the playhouse I made!" When they do wrong, they fear that their parents will see.

Then children come to school. Their parents can't see them there, but the room is full of others, watching, admiring, despising. Steven makes a helicopter propeller with his ruler. James stares and grins. Malinda pulls hominy out of her lunch box. Sarah arches her eyebrows and mock gags. Whose look matters?

In the classroom I am the substitute parent. My look approves or rebukes. But to a new pupil, my eyes are just one more pair in the room. How can he learn to be guided by them?

I make my look matter, not by shutting all other eyes. Steven's problem is not that James is watching. Malinda's problem is not that Sarah disapproves. I guide with my eyes by looking, always looking, and always responding to what I see. I look at Steven's spinning ruler; I look in Steven's eyes. I frown. "Steven, bring your spelling workbook to the class table." I look at James. "Is your geography finished?"


Oh, Teacher sees. He gets back to work.

"Sarah, did you choke on your celery?" I arch my eyebrows. "Come to me before you go play." I smile at Malinda. "I had hominy for breakfast. It's good."

Teacher noticed. She approves. Hmm.

Deborah colors her art picture beautifully. "Wow, that's pretty," I say, pausing beside her desk. Crist shares his ball glove with Joas. "Joas has your glove, doesn't he? That was nice of you." Lisa sings extra heartily one morning. "Good job!" I remark.

By experience the pupils learn my gaze is important and watch my eyes. "Does Teacher like what I'm doing? Will she tell me to stop?" The eye that looks is the eye that guides. Which is why that yet invisible Eye matters so much.

Sincerely,
Teacher Elizabeth 

Elizabeth Riall is a member of the Old Order Amish church in Humansville, Missouri. After homeschooling her siblings for two terms, and teaching in Ontario one winter, she has taught in the local one-room school since 2004.

This teacher had heard the old saying, "Don't smile before Thanksgiving." She came to see it differently.

Smile Before Thanksgiving | Lucy Martin

I was young. I was uncertain. I was inexperienced. I knew it too, but I wouldn't have told you. Somehow, telling someone would have reinforced the facts and withered the sprout of confidence struggling for root within this first-year high school teacher.

I sat ramrod straight in a chair not my own. This chair belonged to the eighth-grade homeroom teacher. And the class was seventh- and eighth-grade boys' study hall. So not only was I young, uncertain, and inexperienced, but I was also on foreign ground. My soil was the ninth-grade homeroom. The books and

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- Treat them like adults but expect them to act like children sometimes. When immaturity surfaces, calmly say, “All right, enough of that,” rather than lecturing them in a condescending way.
- Don’t take shortcuts. In zeal to develop good relationships, teachers can try too hard or aim for the wrong thing. Don’t aim for a great relationship now. Aim to mold the man he will be in five or ten years from now. Teachers who aim for the immediate great relationship are often scorned or manipulated.
- Take the initiative to break into their world. As a leader, you need to take the first step.

What really matters

These techniques might be helpful, but techniques are only techniques. What works for a young man in one community doesn’t work for another young man in another community. Furthermore, techniques can feel copied and pasted. Think about what fits you, your students, and your community. Your age also makes a difference. A teacher in his thirties will not have to work as hard for respect as a teacher in his twenties.

These techniques are most effective when they flow from a hopeful, patient, consistent, loving teacher. Ultimately, success is about your character and your love for the student. When a student messes up, a hopeful teacher says, “You can lose some battles and still win the war!” The daily grind of interactions often rubs away the veneer we bring to the first day of school. When

that’s off, and the young man sees you as a humble servant, a man growing in integrity, and a man who believes in him, he will open himself to discipleship in ways you might not expect.

Three models

Here I will briefly describe three male teachers who in very different ways disciplined me. Linford’s teaching faltered at times as he worked through the courses for the first time, but his heartfelt devotion to God set a standard for my teenage years. Duane simply loved his students. His devotions challenged me, his notes of encouragement made me want to live for God (of course, the candy bar helped too). He candidly shared some of the leadership questions he wrestled with. Steve was not quick to form deep emotional bonds with students, but his enthusiasm for teaching, his passion for the truth, and his light punches to the shoulder when I looked glum inspired my teaching career.

In your class, there’s a young man—a future father, preacher, teacher, or . . . an alcoholic or drug addict—that’s looking for answers to life’s complexities. Go mentor him. [u](#)

(We are planning to publish an article on lady teachers relating to young ladies in a future issue.)

In addition to his full-time job as a father to five sons, Davin runs a small farm to support his teaching habit, which he has engaged in over the last fifteen 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.



papers before me on the desk seemed a flimsy protection from the robust energy of seventh- and eighth-grade boys, still ruddy from a game of softball.

Few boys fresh from the freedom of air and grass and a ball game will submit easily to the fetters of algebra and English. Still restless, still grinning, still mischievous, their every rustle frayed away the remaining fabric of my courage. One more class would wind up the day and the week. But between me and the weekend's shore stretched the interminable ocean of this study hall.

I drew a shaky breath, pressed my lips into a firm line, and stared into those grin-puckered faces. I knew them all, knew them well. In algebra class they responded quite promptly to my voice, but Friday afternoon study hall transformed them into spirited steeds.

"Please, make them behave today," I prayed. "Please, let this week end well, Lord." I knew God stood behind me, but David's boyish energy still confronted me.

David was big, and he was bold. Blue eyes dancing, he cleared his throat provocatively. It was enough. It charged the air. He dared me to attack. I didn't plan to. Not yet. With every eye upon my quailing form, I rose. Breaths bated. Heads turned as I walked by. They watched. They wondered too, as I strode down one aisle and up the next. Would my fake poise shake theirs?

I was nearing David's desk. It loomed bigger. I could feel his brash composure. And then I saw it, lying on his desk—a clean sheet of notebook paper, clean but for one large sprawling word—SMILE!

Smile! What did he mean? Did he mean me? Did he want me to smile? Didn't he know teachers aren't to smile until Thanksgiving? Smile! The word followed me home that evening. It followed me under the pine trees and out over the lawn as I trimmed late summer's thinning grass. Slowly realization dawned. Uncertainty had been straining my face, robbing my smile. David wanted to see me smile, to sense my strength and composure. Though he probably didn't know it, he craved to see me in control. Gradually a new resolve rooted in my mind along

with a simple prayer for God's help.

Monday morning, with that resolve and prayer still growing in my heart, I set out. Smile! I practiced in the rearview mirror all the way to school. Throughout the next days, I discovered what determined effort it took to make my smiling thoughts break through the veil of my face. But to my surprise and joy, I found as I smiled a purposeful smile, that the smile reflected back into my heart, lighting it with strength and confidence.

David wasn't a babe, but from his youthful mouth God had placed strength in me. My attempts to smile were also not a toggle switch that powered me ever after with unshakable confidence.

One Friday afternoon ten years later, I stood before a typing class of softball-sweated eighth-grade boys, smiling.

"Are you always happy?" David asked.

"I think she is," another boy declared. My mind flashed back to that long-ago message from another David, now grown and married. As the boys bent to their keys, I compared the two scenes, the two Davids, and the two teachers.

Today I felt secure. I wondered if David would ever know the change his impish message had wrought in me.

I longed to share those words of a babe with other teachers. I learned that he who stands on the platform of teaching scatters away mischief with the smile of confidence, the light of God's strength. ■

—Reprinted from *LightLines*, August 2000

This year is Lucy's thirty-sixth term of teaching eighth graders at Paradise Mennonite School in Hagerstown, Maryland. In addition to eighth-grade subjects, she enjoys teaching high school home economics and art classes.

Pedagogical Meanderings

The Dock for Learning

On The Dock for Learning, conservative Anabaptist teachers, board members, and principals can find resources and advice gleaned from the experience of others. Named after pioneer Mennonite teacher Christopher Dock, the website provides a forum, blogs, video series, and hundreds of documents and recordings, all available without charge. What do you have to share? Join us at thedockforlearning.org.



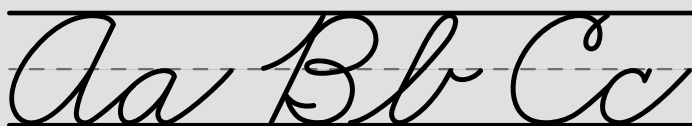
Update on Wisdom

The news is out. “Wisdom,” a Laysan Albatross estimated to be 72-73 years old and the world’s oldest known bird, was seen dancing with potential mates in March 2024 at Midway Atoll in the North Pacific Ocean. Her mate of 60 years, Akeakamai (*seeker of wisdom*) has not been seen for more than two years. Her appearance on the island and her courting behavior prompted one wild-life biologist to remark, “She is quite spry for a septuagenarian.”

—foxnews.com

Cursive Comes Back

In September 2023, the province of Ontario reintroduced cursive writing as a mandatory part of Ontario’s curriculum, beginning in Grade 3. In 2006, cursive writing became optional, and had basically faded from Ontario’s curriculum.



Those directing the change are convinced of the benefits of returning to cursive writing. Education Minister Stephen Lecce

said it is about more than teaching students how to sign their name. “The research has been very clear that cursive writing is a critical life skill in helping young people to express more substantively, to think more critically, and ultimately, to express more authentically,” he said in an interview.

Shelley Stagg Peterson, a professor at the University of Toronto’s Ontario Institute for Studies in Education said while there isn’t a lot of research specifically on cursive writing the work that has been done shows that it not only teaches students the skill of writing that script in and of itself, but it helps to reinforce overall literacy. “The more that young writers, beginning writers, are using their hands, they’re using another modality to form the letters, that kinesthetic reproduction helps them to think more about the words that they’re writing,” she said. “So it actually reinforces their reading, as well as their writing.”

—<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/cursive-writing-ontario-1.6885628>

Parochial Schools Are Not the Only Ones Struggling to Find Teachers

July 4, 2024. I received a call from a concerned church leader to “keep them in mind” for their need for a school principal/teacher. I responded to his request by reminding him of two things: I was recruited for my first teaching job ten days before school started, (The Lord usually provides, even if at the last minute.) and that they are in the same situation as many other schools. (They are not alone.)

I was astounded to read from various sources that some states are resorting to hiring “underqualified” teachers for the public schools, some who even lack certification. According to an infographic from teachershortages.com more than 270,000 underqualified teachers were hired for the last school term, especially in the southern U.S. states. The reason for my astonishment? Quite a few private or parochial schools from different states were prosecuted at their founding several decades ago for not having certified teachers on staff!

—KK



"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:

What tips do you have for effective reading classes when you have limited time? Due to a tight schedule, reading often gets pushed to the side at the end of the school day. What can I do to change this? —question asked at a teacher workshop

I am for math, language, and reading classes to be completed before noon. For the oral reading classes, I try to alternate the days they will be reading. Since Grades 1-3 have ten units, make sure that only two of those classes are on the same day. Have the one that usually takes longer be on the opposite day.

Grades 4-6 have only five units of reading so I usually alternate reading and Bible. For example, Grade 4 does Bible for three weeks, while Grade 5 does reading. Then we switch for three weeks.

If I was teaching Grades 2-4, I would aim for the following schedule. (You can modify this example to your situation.)

Monday:

Grade 2 Lesson 1, Introduction to story
Grade 3 Lesson 2, Oral reading class (ORC)
Grade 4 Lesson 4, ORC

Tuesday:

Grade 2 Lesson 2, ORC
Grade 3 Lesson 3, Introduction to story
Grade 4 Lesson 5, Quiz

Wednesday:

Grade 2 Lesson 3, Introduction to story
Grade 3 Lesson 4, ORC
Grade 4 Lesson 6, Introduction to story

Start with the introduction lessons, teach the study words and verses, while your oral reading classes for the day do their We Remember section. Then have your oral reading classes. Keep your reader in one hand as they read. I like to move around so I

am able to answer other students' questions while still listening as my class reads. In this way, you will never have more than two oral reading classes a day. While your other students work on reading their upcoming stories or work in Bible, you can focus on listening to your students read.

—Andrea Webb, McKenney Mennonite School, Rawlings, VA

If something needs to be dropped, social studies, science, or Bible should be sacrificed ahead of reading class, especially in Grades 1-5. Also, if students are good oral readers, and there are only a few of them, the entire story might not need to be read orally in class. If they are poor readers, they will need the practice. In some cases, younger students could read to an older student.

—Carolyn Martin, Hickory Hollow Christian School, Dayton, VA

Read the *Guidelines For Oral Reading* brochure available from Christian Light. Call 800-776-0478, email orders@christianlight.org, or download it at <https://christianlight.org/guidelines-for-oral-reading-brochure>.

Next question: What should I do with a student who races through her work, and then fails quizzes and tests? How do you deal with a hasty student who is motivated merely by speed?

—From questions posed at a fall workshop

Please respond by September 25, 2024. We'll print reader responses in a future issue of LightLines.

Please send your questions or responses to lightlines@christianlight.org, fax them to 540-433-8896, or mail them to LightLines, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803. [📧](#)

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