



Leading the Journey

An E-newsletter on EXCELLENCE in Leadership

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4 • A PUBLICATION OF THE PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE • November 2013



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Spiritual Leadership

Leadership, NAD Principals' Handbook (excerpt)

The principal is the spiritual leader of the school. While many aspects of spiritual leadership may be delegated to others, the personal influence of the principal as a positive role model to students, teachers, and parents cannot be underestimated. It is the pervasive influence of the principal's actions and concerns that inspires and encourages others to be drawn to Christ.

Making Deposits with Pastors

Datha Tickner

My dad was a pastor and the best example of what a pastor should be. I tend to hold most pastors up to a very high standard because of my dad and his tremendous support for Adventist education. He was always involved in school activities and made sure his church paid their subsidy. Yet, I know Adventist school administrators sometimes experience frustration in dealing with pastors and churches that don't support or promote their local church school.

My father used to always say, "You can't make a withdrawal without first making deposits." He was a master at building relationships with the purpose of getting someone to "come around." I'd like to offer a few ideas of how to start building relationships that could yield positive results for your school.

Let's do lunch! Call up each pastor in your constituency and schedule a date for lunch. You pay. Conversation should NOT be about what they owe your school. Rather, ask them about what is happening in their church programming right now. Ask what your school can do for them. Listen, listen, listen, and then make suggestions of how your school can be a presence at the church.

Need something fixed? Many churches are struggling with lack of regular offerings for church budget. Your students need service learning hours. Offer to send a group of students to a church for an all day work bee. They can pull weeds, wash windows, paint, and so much more.

Did you know...? Everyone likes being in the loop. Make an effort to communicate with your pastors as if they were staff on your campus or a parent. When you send out a parent letter with updates, send a copy to the pastors. Create an email list of all your pastors and send out a monthly calendar with upcoming events on your campus.

And today's feature is... Ask for bulletin board space in the church. Provide materials for the church's local board rep (or a parent church member) to put up
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Creating a Culture of Service

Robert Skoretz

As Seventh-day Adventist church school leaders, we search for meaningful ways to engage our students in Christian service learning. We believe that service is crucial to curriculum and spiritual growth on campus. In this article I will suggest three service focal points with examples for you to consider. We will look at international, backyard, and collaborative service.

International service trips expose students to new cultures, global issues, and, quite often, other religious traditions. Students develop significant relationships with children and adults whom they have come to serve. When these trips include reflection, journaling, and sharing, the overall impact can be life changing for our young people. Some would argue that such trips are not cost effective given all the money that is spent on travel. However, the vast majority of mission trip alumni I talk to commit to life-long mission service as a result of the initial investment of that first trip.

Loma Linda Academy plans a mission trip to Kenya every other year. The reason we like this trip so much is that it features significant activities, a dependable on site coordinator, and a safe and interesting location. Students come to know the Masai culture, labor to improve schools and clinics, and play with and teach young children. The coordinator, Andy Aho of Africa Mission Services, is committed to mission work among the Masai and carefully plans the projects for student groups so that there is always meaningful work to accomplish. Andy also runs a completely self-contained camp with fresh water, a kitchen staff to cook the food, and a camp guard. Not all of these elements are necessary for a successful trip but they are very helpful in the sustainability of regular international trips.

Backyard service is a crucial balance to the international trips. Students become aware of local neighborhood needs and learn sensitivity to community issues wherever they settle along life's journey. This type of service also leads to partnerships with service organizations and church groups already at work in the

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Deposits

pictures and news on a monthly basis. You must be faithful and consistent in updating it. Make it eye catching and interesting. You can have a quiz or scavenger hunt for students at your school that go to that church and offer a prize if they find the answer to something on the bulletin board. Have the pastor announce the winner during the announcement time. Think of any way you can make connections with the church and school.

First day, first pray. Invite your local pastors to your school on the first day of school and assign them a class or group where they can go to have a dedicatory thought and prayer for a new school year. You could offer to provide breakfast for them that morning and have some give-a-ways or goodie bags for them with school promotional products, gift cards, or coupons for things like a free gym night for the church at the school.

We could use your support. When you are faced with disciplining a student, you may want to call their pastor and briefly fill them in on the situation and the reason for the discipline. They will know the story and are prepared to offer support and encouragement to the family. It gives you a chance to tell the story from the school point of view so the pastor and school can present a unified front while still serving separate roles.

Some of these ideas will work, and some won't. You may want to create a variation. But you have to start making those deposits! It is vital that building relationships begin before any discussion can take place about financially supporting the school. Hopefully, the result will be mutual support, increased awareness of programming and increase subsidy stability. ☸

Culture of Service

area. Our students integrate into the larger community of people and groups who care about helping others.

Loma Linda Academy offers upperclassmen a religion course entitled, "Christian Missions," taught by Jessica Williams. Students plan service projects in the local community and partner with local establishments. This gives students a whole semester to understand the theological and practical aspects of service. Our campus chaplain, Jason Calvert, also partners with local church and community organizations to assist our student body in engaging in meaningful service.

Collaborative service expands partnerships to include the entire school family and wider community. Students become facilitators of simple service activities that are planned on campus where young and old, families, and community can come to work together. When families and children collaborate on these projects much is accomplished and they are encouraged to continue such projects as a family throughout the year.

Loma Linda Academy plans an annual family volunteer night, organized by Home and School leaders Kimberly Thomas and Alane Hegsted, that is held in the school gymnasium. Different projects are arranged at tables by both existing service organizations and school groups. Donations of money and materials take place in advance so all is ready for the event. Families are invited to come and work on the different projects together and each booth is staffed by high school students and faculty. Projects from last year include creating cards for military personnel, stocking backpacks for homeless teens, creating animal toys for the animal rescue program, and even having hair cut on site for Locks of Love! Each family left with a "Giving Box" designed to help them continue serving their community throughout the year.

All effective curriculum creates more than just isolated learning events, it changes the way in which students understand and interact with their world. Service learning in Seventh-day Adventist schools is no less ambitious. Let's create a culture of service among our students that will impact our world. ☸

Student-led Community of Faith

Matthew Butte

All Seventh-day Adventist schools aim to nurture the spiritual life of their students and to foster a community of faith and learning. This article proposes that in order for this aim to be achieved it requires at least three major commitments from the school's administration and faculty.

First, encourage students to take responsibility for *all* aspects of the school's religious life. For students to feel spiritually at home, they need opportunities to create meaningful acts of worship and service. Such acts are only relevant when they own them. Thus, students must have a voice in the decisions concerning the religious activities in their school. For high school, in particular, this means giving leadership of *all* religious activities over to a committee of students, with the help of an adult sponsor, who plan and implement every aspect of the school's religious life.

Second, fostering a community of faith and learning which helps to deepen individual spirituality requires a commitment to engage *every* student in some aspect of leadership in the school's religious life. Such a commitment is grounded in the ministry of Jesus in which we see Him welcome *everyone* at His table and in Paul's teaching of "the priesthood of *all* believers." In practice, this means the religious activities committee is not to place themselves as the "up front" leaders, but to invite their peers to lead and to participate, especially those who no one would expect to speak for a chapel service, or provide a special music, or speak for week of prayer. It is essential, then, to invite a diverse array of students to lead in worship – illustrating the image of Jesus' table in which all are welcome and there is no spiritual elite. Make it a goal that every student in your school has, at the very least, been asked to participate in a key role in at least one religious activity.

Finally, for a deeper spiritual ethos to exist on campus, remember that while there are unchanging elements of the gospel it is important to allow the students to work out the application themselves. When you allow students' greater control and voice in the religious life of your school, they are going to apply the gospel in ways which are sometimes uncomfortable for the adults. For example, they may not be as prepared or as polished as we would prefer. However, we must let this process happen and encourage them to critically reflect upon their own experiences and to learn from them. Surely, there is no better place for such learning to occur than a school – a place filled with professionals who understand students learn best by *doing*, not by being told. Giving up control is hard, but necessary, if we desire authentic faith and leadership from our students.

When we allow students ownership of the religious life in our school, its culture will be transformed, by God's grace, into a community of faith and learning that creates a safe and hospitable place for every student to nurture and to share their faith experience.