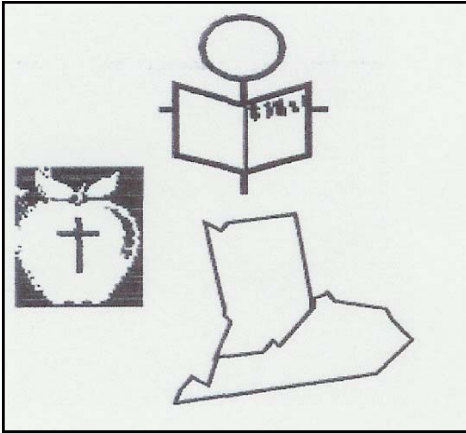


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A networking newsletter for the Christian Education Ministries of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA to equip, empower, and encourage believers of all ages to develop their relationship with God and neighbor through faith development and discipleship.



PRAYER IN SCHOOL

It has been said that as long as there are tests, there will be prayer in the classroom. Although community prayer is gone in the public classrooms, individual prayer is alive and well. Many Christians have bemoaned the fact that community prayer has been systematically taken out of public schools. Parochial schools still get to pray as a group, but students in the public schools do not have that luxury. Fighting to bring prayer back to the public classrooms is most likely an uphill, losing battle. In today's culture of inclusion and sensitivity, by the time prayer was allowed back in school, it would probably sound a bit differently than originally intended; possibly the prayer(s) would close "in the name of (your choice) Mohammed, Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, or some higher being, Amen."

Let us embrace the fact and encourage the students' actions to pray in school, read their Bibles, and even meet during non-instructional time as Bible Studies or youth groups. Let us not look at what we have lost, but instead, look at what students still have: a God who loves them and listens to everyone who calls upon the name of Jesus.

BACKGROUND OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

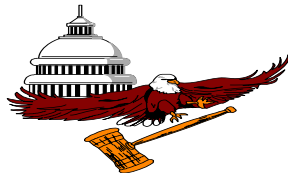
The Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." The U.S. Supreme Court, in 1962, interpreted this statement to mean that public schools must be neutral on subjects of religion. This has created a controversy that is still strong today. (continued on page 2)

RESOURCE CORNER

Introducing young children to **PRAYER** goes beyond memorization of familiar prayers. Two books that can help are *Picture Word Prayers* (Mary Erickson, Standard Publishing) and *What Shall We Pray About?* (Andy Robb Harvest, House Publishers). The first involves young children in "reading" prayers by incorporating pictures of familiar objects within the prayer words. The second introduces prayer to children with colorful pictures of everyday activities and people, then suggests prayers related to these. Topics in both books include friends, people who help us, nature, special occasions, and sharing God's love.



(BACKGROUND, continued) During non-instructional time, students in public schools have the right to voluntary individual prayer that does not apply pressure on other students or in no way disrupts the school's educational mission and activities. School Corporation organized activities (e.i. athletic events/activities, graduation ceremonies, school assemblies, etc.) are considered instructional time. School Corporations may not discriminate against student organized religious gatherings because of the religious content of the activity. The Establishment Clause prohibits adults praying with or in the presence of students in school during their official capacities as teachers or representatives of the school.



Excerpts from:
www.allaboutpopularissues.org/prayer-in-school.htm

In his book *Power Surge: Six Marks of Discipleship for a Changing Church* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers), Michael W. Foss, senior pastor at Prince of Peace, ELCA, reports people are given a plastic card, credit-card size, titled "*Marks of Discipleship*." One side starts with: "To the glory of God, I believe I am called . . ." and using Ephesians 4:12 as the focal verse the card states the six discipleship marks, one being: "I will strive to **PRAY** daily." How as Christian Educators do we encourage ourselves and others to **PRAY**?



Wherever I join my friend Sandy for lunch, I know that we are going to **PRAY FIRST**, regardless of where we are. But Sandy did

not always do this. Her family prayed at their home dinner table, but when they ate out, it was *food first* – and no prayer; while at work Sandy did not pray before eating. Slowly, the Holy Spirit convicted Sandy of her responsibility: to **PRAY** and openly show she is a disciple of Christ.

My older cat, Mittens, adopted a stray kitten. It wasn't long before Kittens was imitating Mittens. In this case, Sandy is "Mittens" and I am "Kittens" – learning by imitation and also being convicted to **PRAY** and openly show I am a disciple of Christ.

When we openly show marks of discipleship, we help equip others for their faith development.

When you are planning for fall Christian Education, don't forget about the Congregational Resource Center Library at Christian Theological Seminary. **BEFORE** you purchase, review materials or find something to supplement your curriculum. Remember that CRC will mail to you at no charge! Check it out at:

www.cts.edu/Library?Index.cfm?NavID=9&PageID=143
 or use the link on the I-K Synod web page:
www.iksynod.org.

