

Dear Servants in our Lord’s Kingdom,

We anxiously await coming together with you in October at the Wisconsin Lutheran State Teachers Conference around the theme, “Christ Be My Leader”. In preparation for this, we encourage you and your fellow faculty and staff members to go through the below as you prepare your hearts and minds for our time together. May Jesus bless your conversations and meditations, our upcoming conference, as well as your ministries and lives!

Your fellow servants in Christ,
Tim Mueller on behalf of the WLSTC Program Committee

Scripture & Discussion

There are thousands of books and articles written about leadership and there are an equal number of definitions of leadership as well.

Within the context of your school ministry, how would you define leadership?

John Maxwell defines leadership as ***influence***. As Christian educators, we could add that leadership is influence grounded in Christ who is our ultimate leader. We influence others in our communities, churches, families, and in ***Lutheran schools*** out of gratitude for what Christ has done for us. Christ our leader influences...and we do too.

As you reflect upon your role as teacher, principal, executive assistant, coach, etc., recognize that every single person within your school setting is a leader – every person influences. Therefore, as we consider our theme of “Christ Be My Leader,” we reflect on personal qualities of a Lutheran school leader.

1. The Lutheran school leader *follows* Jesus – the leader.
 - a. When Moses needed help leading the Children of Israel, he was encouraged to ***select capable men from all the people – men who fear God...(Exodus 18:21)***
 - b. In ***Acts 6:3*** when the New Testament church needed help in leading God’s people, it was noted... ***Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.***
 - c. In 2 Peter 3:18 we are reminded to...***grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.***

You are leaders in your school’s ministry because you are capable followers of Jesus – your leader. You are full of the Spirit. Therefore, staying connected to Jesus is paramount.

As you reflect upon the coming academic year, what can prevent you from growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus?

Throughout your school year, how can you help each other more boldly continue to follow Jesus – your leader?

2. The Lutheran school leader *forgives* like Jesus – your leader.
 - a. ***Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13***
 - b. ***In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace. Ephesians 1:7***
 - c. ***...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Psalm 103:12***

What pure and simple joy is ours knowing that we are forgiven leaders! And yet, when the pressures and pace of the pending school year ramp up, the ability to truly forgive can get clouded and difficult.

How can you “bear with...and forgive” your students more effectively this year? What gets in the way? What has proven to be helpful?

Conflict amongst faculty/staff is to be expected and can be healthy. Unresolved and unhealthy conflict is a culture killer. How can you “bear with...and forgive” each other more effectively this year? What gets in the way? What has proven to be helpful?

3. The Lutheran school leader *serves* like Jesus – the leader.
 - a. ***For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45***
 - b. ***In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used for his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Philippians 2:5-7***
 - c. ***...Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. Luke 22:26-27***

Your ministry is one of service. You all have different leadership roles as you serve. Reflect upon the qualities of Jesus’ life of service and upon your role of service and consider together:

What gives you great joy as you serve?

What are the most significant challenges you face as you serve?

As you reflect together as a school family, please note one very specific prayer request that you ask of your partners in ministry to consider as you strive to serve like Jesus.

During our annual conference in October as we consider our theme of Christ Be My Leader, Dr. Daniel Johnson will authentically reflect upon our collective leadership journey as we serve our leader Jesus. Are there themes or issues that you would like for him to consider? Dan has served as a Lutheran elementary and high school principal and currently serves as President at Wisconsin Lutheran College. He would welcome hearing about your leadership concerns, challenges, and joys that he might consider to incorporate into our discussion. Email him at daniel.johnson@wlc.edu.